

Greater Manchester Police Integrated Operational Policing System (iOPS)

An inspection to review the force's action plan to reduce backlogs arising from the implementation of a new computer system

Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Summary	5
Is the force fully aware of the volume and type of backlogs that have occurred?	8
Does the force understand the threat and risk in the backlogs and is it prioritising accordingly?	11
Does the force have a plan to reduce the backlogs and return GMP to its pre-iOPS level of demand?	14
Is the force effectively engaging with local partners and keeping them informed?	15
Does the force have a robust plan to support its officers and staff and build their confidence in iOPS?	16
Does the force have an effective plan in place to prevent further backlogs occurring?	18
Annex A: Elements of iOPS	20

Foreword

This inspection was conducted at the request of the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and commissioned by the Mayor's Office of Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The terms of reference were set and agreed with HMICFRS under section 54(2BA) of the Police Act 1996.

This report is not a technical appraisal of the Integrated Operational Policing System (iOPS), GMP's legacy systems nor its ICT infrastructure. Rather it is a review of the issues and operational difficulties that have become apparent since the launch of iOPS, and the response put in place.

The report includes the evidence and documents presented by the force at the time of inspection, supplemented by our own observations and the experiences of the staff we spoke to. This report does not include any evidence from GMP's technical suppliers.

HMICFRS acknowledges the scale and complexity of the introduction of iOPS in GMP, and does not underestimate the challenges this presented. There is no doubt that some of the difficulties faced were unavoidable, however, different planning may have mitigated some of the issues encountered and there are obvious lessons to be learnt.

The reasons for the problems are similarly complex and multi-faceted. It is not our role to attribute specific cause nor responsibility. This is a matter for the force to resolve.

We are aware that since the completion of the inspection fieldwork, in November 2019, the force has continued to make progress in addressing some of the issues identified within this report.



Phil Gormley

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Introduction

About our inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in the public interest.

In July 2019, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) introduced a new computer system called the Integrated Operational Policing System¹ (iOPS), originally scheduled to go live in March 2018. There have been significant problems with the performance of iOPS resulting in serious backlogs of work and a loss of staff confidence in the system. The problems with iOPS attracted negative media attention, in particular, concerning fears that public and officer safety were being put at risk.

The focus of the Mayor's commission was for HMICFRS to review and assess the GMP recovery plan to remove the backlogs and restore staff and public confidence in iOPS.

Background

In 2019, GMP simultaneously replaced three ICT systems critical to how the force functions. The first was the command and control system which logs calls from members of the public and tracks the deployment of officers. The second and third were record management systems, containing intelligence, criminal investigations, custody records and files for court cases. iOPS also introduced systems to improve the use of mobile technology and demand management data. All forces need these capabilities to function.

All three legacy systems were old and GMP identified risks both to the force and the public should the systems fail. The force also recognised that it needed to invest in ICT to equip it for modern-day policing and to provide its workforce with the tools to police in an efficient and effective way.

The force decided to replace the old systems with one integrated system, iOPS. This contains two elements, one to replace the command and control system, called ControlWorks, and one to replace the records management systems, called PoliceWorks.

¹ See [Annex A](#).

The force predicted the introduction of the new system would change the way it operated, resulting in a number of benefits and efficiencies including:

- providing better quality information to officers and managers;
- officers being able to work remotely from mobile devices;
- reducing the need for duplication across multiple systems; and
- better information sharing with partner organisations.

We have commented on the need for GMP to deliver these expected benefits in our most recent PEEL² inspection report on GMP.

Changing strategic computer systems is a complex undertaking and the introduction of iOPS has been a long-term programme for the force. It has been subject to several delays because of technical problems, extending the start date from the original implementation planned for March 2018.

In July 2019, iOPS went live. A major factor in this decision was the serious risk that the old systems could fail. The process for the transition from the old ICT systems to the new iOPS system is referred to as the 'cutover'. The first stage was to migrate the force data from the old ICT systems to a legacy data store, which is a copy of all force data. Then the new PoliceWorks systems would be populated with agreed information from the legacy data store and commence usage.

To support the cutover phase, the force implemented a governance structure and prepared contingencies in case any anticipated issues arose. It also put in place a team of specialists to react to problems as they happened.

Despite this, problems became worse than anticipated. Three principal issues, individually and in combination, adversely affected the workforce's ability to operate iOPS. Technical issues with the force ICT systems and infrastructure; changes to operational and working practices; and the training provided to operate the system.

These resulted in a loss of confidence by staff, particularly in the PoliceWorks system, and reduced force performance.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for this inspection were to review the recovery plan put in place by GMP to resolve the difficulties and backlogs created by the implementation of iOPS.

² PEEL is HMICFRS's annual assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Forces are assessed on their effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.

We were asked to examine these questions:

1. Is the force 'sighted on' (fully aware of) the volume and type of backlogs that have occurred?
2. Does the force understand the threat and risk in the backlogs and is it prioritising accordingly?
3. Does the force have a plan to reduce the backlogs and return GMP to its pre-iOPS 'state'?
4. Is the force effectively engaging with external partners and keeping them informed?
5. Does the force have a robust plan to support its officers and staff and build their confidence in iOPS?
6. Does the force have an effective plan in place to prevent further backlogs occurring?

It was not within the scope of our inspection to review:

- the programme management preceding the introduction of iOPS; or
- the functionality of iOPS as an ICT system.

However, in order to assess the force's ability to return to their pre-iOPS state, it is necessary to examine both the pre and post-iOPS position to understand why the backlogs occurred. The technical capability of the system and the ability and confidence of staff to operate it, is relevant to reducing the backlogs and preventing a reoccurrence.

Methodology

The inspection was conducted during October and November 2019. We collated and analysed all relevant documents, plans and data. Interviews and focus groups were held with key individuals, staff, partners, union and staff association representatives. Unannounced reality testing was undertaken at police stations and in departments to understand staff perspectives. We specifically focused our attention on aspects of the business particularly affected by iOPS:

- crime recording and investigation;
- incident recording and response;
- criminal justice processes;
- criminal intelligence;
- vulnerability; and
- staff and partner confidence.

We are grateful for the candour and contribution of all those we met and spoke to.

Summary

Is the force fully aware of the volume and type of backlogs that have occurred?

We refer to the amount of unresolved work the force is dealing with as its backlogs. As two examples, this could be a call from a member of the public who is still waiting for a police officer to speak to them, or a crime that is still being investigated.

Following the introduction of iOPS, the force saw a large increase in the backlogs it had across the organisation. These didn't occur due to one particular factor but were a combination of the complex and significant change both in its ICT and in its processes.

GMP is a complex organisation with high levels of demand and limited resources. The force's ability to process this demand is based upon the productivity of its workforce; how much they can do during a working day. Critically, the introduction of iOPS lowered this productivity, creating a range of backlogs.

During the implementation of iOPS, difficulties meant the system didn't work as effectively and efficiently as intended. The new systems also required staff to adopt new working practices. This combination of systems' failure and unfamiliar processes substantially reduced organisational and individual productivity.

The force now understands the cause and volume of these backlogs. Data is being prepared on a live-time basis, which enables the organisation to identify and respond to backlogs.

Does the force understand the threat and risk in the backlogs and is it prioritising accordingly?

The force is prioritising action on most of the areas of high risk, but it doesn't yet have a full understanding of the threat and risk that all the backlogs contain.

With the introduction of iOPS, the force changed the process for officers to submit referrals which ensure vulnerable people get the support they need. As a result, the number of referrals dramatically reduced.

Referrals to Greater Manchester Victims' Services reduced by 87 percent. [MARAC](#) referrals for high-risk domestic abuse victims reduced by 50 percent. As part of Operation Alban and to better understand its demand, GMP conducted an internal audit which demonstrated that in one area, between 12–31 July 2019, only 28 percent of child protection incidents were referred to children's social care.

The force has now put processes in place to quality assure these incidents and ensure the number of referrals returns to normal levels. However, at the time of our inspection, the force did not have a plan to backdate this or review unreferral incidents. Therefore, the force can't be confident it has identified and appropriately referred all people at risk to partner agencies.

The call handlers and dispatch staff we spoke to, who deploy officers to incidents under a graded response process, were not trained in PoliceWorks. They need to be able to access and interrogate the system in order to properly understand information held and assess the risk presented by an incident. The force has recognised this problem and training for these staff was due to be completed by December 2019.

Even when staff have received training, users reported that searches on ControlWorks and PoliceWorks sometimes returned inconsistent or incorrect information about risks. We found examples where officers reported that they were unable to retrieve or readily access data when searching iOPS. In one domestic abuse incident involving a sexual offender, the risk had not been properly identified and it was graded as appropriate for telephone resolution. Unlike the old system, iOPS has no capability to search for different spellings of the same name, known as phonetic searching. This means the force can't be sure that its officers and staff have all the known information available when they assess the level of risk and make operational decisions.

Does the force have a plan to reduce the backlogs and return GMP to its pre-iOPS level of demand?

In response to the increasing backlogs and in order to regain control, the force commenced Operation Alban. This has been led by the deputy chief constable, supported by a dedicated command structure, and involves shifting and abstracting resources from specialist branches from across the organisation to support tackling backlogs.

This will reduce the immediate backlogs but is diverting resources away from other important areas of work such as neighbourhood policing. It is not a sustainable long-term solution and has consequences for staff and service delivery, which the force recognises.

Is the force effectively engaging with external partners and keeping them informed?

The force was inconsistent in its engagement with external partners as part of the preparation and implementation of the iOPS programme. Some of the partners who operate at a force-wide level such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and court services were effectively communicated with. But engagement with local partners such as children's and adults' services was not as well structured or consistent.

The force is rectifying this and making sure that it effectively engages with all its external partners. Partners told us they were reassured by the force's response to concerns and issues they had raised. The force has communicated with them at a strategic level to inform them of the backlogs and the action it is taking to address

the problems. This has resulted in staff from some partner organisations co-locating into police premises to support the ongoing work to reduce the backlogs.

Does the force have a robust plan to support its officers and staff and build their confidence in iOPS?

At the time of our inspection, we found that the force's plan to support its officers and staff and build their confidence in iOPS was not sufficiently robust.

Many of the staff we spoke to still lack confidence in iOPS and the PoliceWorks system. In particular, problems with the system's speed and functionality, coupled with issues regarding data quality and the ability to search systems, were major concerns. There were high levels of uncertainty regarding the 'workarounds' put in place to resolve some of these problems.

The force had identified this prior to the inspection and has tried to support its workforce and increase their confidence. This has included additional training, better communications and an increased number of 'superusers' able to support and help their colleagues.

However, officers and staff told us they felt they were being blamed for the backlogs occurring and were not being listened to when they raised concerns. They also told us that communications from the force and the chief officer team could have been better, both generally and in response to specific issues.

Does the force have an effective plan in place to prevent further backlogs occurring?

Preventing future backlogs will require a coherent plan to ensure issues which have contributed to the significant increase are prioritised and addressed. The force cannot continually commit resources to resolve these problems, as this will have consequences elsewhere.

The ability of the force to achieve a sustainable position is predicated on productivity returning to pre-iOPS levels. This requires:

- the force ICT system and infrastructure to function effectively;
- staff being trained and confident in the new ICT systems; and
- the adoption of new operational and working processes.

The force has taken some action to address these points. For example, it is working closely with the designers of the iOPS system to update it and resolve technical issues. However, at the time of our inspection, there was no overarching plan which assured us of its ability to prevent the recurrence of further backlogs.

Is the force fully aware of the volume and type of backlogs that have occurred?

Following the introduction of iOPS, the force saw a large increase in backlogs across the organisation, by which we mean the amount of unresolved demand the force still needs to work on. For example, this could be a call from a member of the public waiting for a police officer to speak to them, or a crime that is still being investigated.

The force anticipated some backlogs would be generated during the initial transfer, or 'cutover', for them to plateau and then return towards the pre-iOPS 'business as usual' levels. This did not happen, and problems continued, resulting in further increases to backlogs. They soon became unmanageable within the normal operating model and the resource levels available to the force.

The most significant backlogs identified by the force were:

- unresourced incidents in the control room;
- time taken for to answer 999 telephone calls;
- the number of ongoing criminal investigations; and
- the number of intelligence submissions awaiting assessment and evaluation.

Simultaneously, the force experienced large reductions in other important areas:

- referrals to victims' services;
- MARAC referrals for high-risk domestic abuse victims; and
- successful electronic transfer of prosecution papers to the CPS.

The force identified these prior to our inspection and, in general, it has a good understanding of the volume and type of backlogs which have occurred since it launched iOPS.

These were generated by a combination of factors and were the result of the complex and significant change in both the force ICT systems and in its operational and working processes. GMP as an organisation receives a high level of demand and has limited resources. In general terms, the introduction of iOPS contributed to a reduction in the organisation's productivity and its ability to process work through the system. This meant that incoming demand exceeded the amount being resolved, creating backlogs.

Some of the issues which contributed to this were a consequence of the challenging exercise to migrate legacy data into a new system. For example, fully understanding and mitigating the process changes within the PoliceWorks system for the multitude of tasks that were generated when several thousands of legacy investigations were moved across to the new system.

The initial transfer to iOPS generated an inevitable and unavoidable backlog. The force's main ICT systems were shut down for 72 hours and replaced by paper records while the existing digital records migrated to iOPS. These paper records created during the migration period then needed to be back record converted onto iOPS. This consumed considerable time and capacity causing a duplication of work. In addition, some legacy demand which included ongoing investigations, did not successfully transfer from the old systems, so could no longer be worked on.

During implementation, the custody applications and systems failed. This meant that the force had to move to its contingency plans and use paper records. As a result, it was unable to transfer prosecution files electronically to the CPS. This again created duplication of effort.

Following the implementation, three principal issues, either individually or in combination, adversely affected the workforce's ability to operate iOPS. These were:

- technical problems with force ICT systems and existing infrastructure;
- necessary changes to working practices; and
- the training provided to operate the PoliceWorks element of iOPS.

The problems faced by staff mainly related to the speed with which they could access the system and that it was unavailable for periods of time. On occasions, staff experienced long delays, in some cases waiting over 30 minutes for the PoliceWorks system to load. The introduction of iOPS required many systems of work to be changed and some of these, such as recording crime, searching records and making victim referrals, now take longer. Some of these changes to systems of work were planned and foreseen, others were contingencies put in place to mitigate problems which emerged following the transition to iOPS.

Training a workforce of 10,000 is a major undertaking, further complicated by the postponed implementation of iOPS. This meant most staff received training many months prior to the system going live and by the time iOPS was implemented, had lost knowledge and confidence in the system. Refresher training was delivered to mitigate the impact of the delays, but staff reported it as ineffective. The training primarily focused on technical aspects of iOPS, not the changed methods of working and new operational practices demanded for its introduction. In short, staff told us they felt ill prepared for the changes necessitated by iOPS.

At the time of our inspection, the iOPS systems had been operational for four months. During this period, backlogs were emerging and being discovered. For example, in the week prior to our inspection, the force identified 604 legacy crimes which hadn't migrated to the new system. It reviewed the crimes and identified that most had either been investigated and required filing or had been allocated for investigation. However, 74 crimes – some of which were serious or complex involving vulnerable

victims – had not been allocated. The force told us it has reviewed each of these crimes to ensure appropriate investigations and proper support for the victims.

It was beyond the scope of our inspection to comment in detail on the effectiveness of the transfer or availability of information held on legacy systems.

Does the force understand the threat and risk in the backlogs and is it prioritising accordingly?

The force is prioritising action on most of the areas of high risk, but it doesn't yet have a full understanding of the nature of the threat and risk that all the backlogs contain.

As the force developed its understanding of the backlogs, it began to identify and prioritise those containing the most threat and risk, such as incidents involving vulnerable people. However, this took time to achieve, meaning it exposed these vulnerable people to potential risk of harm.

The number of referrals the force made to partner agencies significantly reduced. This was caused by the change to PoliceWorks which, unlike the old system, does not have an automated process. This change had not been effectively communicated to operational staff. As a result, the force didn't know if officers were generating the referrals and could not be sure it understood the level of threat and risk.

It took three months for the force to introduce a business process to quality assure that referrals were being made for child protection or domestic abuse incidents. Safeguarding units began to complete a daily search to identify and assess those which had not resulted in a referral. However, this was not completed retrospectively and, at the time of inspection, we were told that the force had no plans to do so. This may have prevented vulnerable people receiving the help they need. For example, an audit of backlogs in one district found that from 12–31 July 2019, only 28 percent of child protection incidents resulted in a referral. This is significantly lower than would normally be expected.

A similar process was also needed to address requests under the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (DVDS). The changes brought about by iOPS meant that 137 requests under DVDS went unaddressed for three months. Once identified, this backlog was prioritised by the force and resources allocated to reduce it.

When officers attend a domestic abuse incident, they should assess the level of risk and complete a referral. Following the introduction of iOPS, the number of high-risk domestic abuse referrals to MARAC reduced by more than 50 percent in many districts across the force. There were also 686 domestic abuse incidents which had not been risk assessed, in some cases for over 100 days. Once the force identified this, it commenced reviewing these cases. Until it has completed the review, it can't be sure it has identified the risk and made the appropriate referrals.

The introduction of iOPS changed the way in which victims of crime were referred to victims' services. The changes made the process more complicated and as a result, these referrals reduced by 87 percent. The force has subsequently adapted the process to remedy this. However, it has no plans to review those crimes that weren't referred at the time of report, meaning a number of victims may not have received the support they need.

Operation Encompass is designed to provide safeguarding for children who have been present at domestic abuse incidents, by informing the school they attend at the earliest opportunity. The GMP referral template loaded into PoliceWorks does not have a field to record this information. This means the force has experienced difficulties and delays informing schools. This issue will be rectified by an enhancement to PoliceWorks, however until that time officers have been reminded to record the school details within a free text field.

There is a nationally agreed target that all police forces will answer 999 calls in under 10 seconds. This is because the police must assume that those ringing 999 are facing a life or death emergency. After the initial launch of iOPS, the time the force took to answer emergency 999 calls increased from 12 seconds to 48 seconds. This was due to the increased complexity when compared with their legacy command and control system, and unfamiliarity with iOPS. At the time of the inspection, the average time to answer a 999 call had improved to 22 seconds. However, this still fails to meet the national target.

Call handlers and dispatch staff, who deploy officers to incidents under a graded response process, were not trained in PoliceWorks. They told us they need to be able to access and interrogate the system in order to properly understand the information held and assess the risk presented by an incident. The force has recognised this problem and training for these staff was due to be completed by December 2019.

There are risks relating to the information on iOPS being hard to retrieve, inconsistent, or inaccurate. The system has no capability to search for different spellings of the same name, known as phonetic searching. This means that if an officer doesn't know the spelling of someone's name, they may potentially miss important risk information. The alternative is to search every possible spelling. Even when the spelling is correct, for complicated technical reasons, users report that the system will sometimes return different search results against the same search criteria. This requires urgent remedial action.

During the inspection, the staff we spoke to provided numerous examples of information, such as criminal history and historic incidents, that they were unable to find via iOPS. This information could have been missed if officers had not been able to research the old ICT database. Consequently, they were concerned that their assessment of risk might have been adversely affected.

Examples included a domestic abuse incident involving a high-risk sex offender. This information wasn't visible to the officer searching on PoliceWorks and the incident had been sent for resolution over the telephone. Also, a domestic abuse victim who had over 100 domestic abuse incidents linked to their record, was not visible on PoliceWorks. In both examples the information was clearly visible on the old ICT system. These and other examples have had a significant impact on officer

confidence that the quality of the information returned from a search is accurate. The force cannot be confident that its officers and staff have all the known information visible to them when they are making important operational decisions.

Recommendations

- The force needs to develop a full understanding of the threat and risk contained within all its backlogs. In particular, it should review all domestic abuse incidents recorded by the force between the launch of iOPS and October 2019 to ensure that an appropriate response has been provided and referral made to the relevant agency.
- The force should satisfy itself that all districts have completed a full audit of child protection incidents which occurred between the introduction of iOPS and the implementation of a quality assurance process which commenced in October 2019, to ensure appropriate referrals to partner agencies have been made.
- The force should take steps to enhance the search capability within iOPS to ensure that the facility for the system to search for different spellings of the same name (phonetic searching) is available at the earliest opportunity.
- The force should review those cases where victims of crime were not referred to victims' services following the introduction of iOPS to ensure that any vulnerable victims receive appropriate support.
- The force should ensure that all necessary data previously available on the legacy systems is easily searchable and accessible to officers and staff.

Does the force have a plan to reduce the backlogs and return GMP to its pre-iOPS level of demand?

The force does have a plan to reduce the backlogs and return to its pre-iOPS state. Because of the unmanageable backlogs the force was experiencing, it commenced Operation Alban to tackle them and keep the public safe.

This has been led by the deputy chief constable, supported by a dedicated command structure, and involves shifting and abstracting resources from across the organisation. It has seven key areas of focus and each of these has a strategic lead.

This plan will reduce the immediate backlogs, but it relies on resources being diverted from other important areas of work such as neighbourhood policing, as well as the use of overtime and employing temporary agency staff.

This approach has other potentially serious consequences, including not meeting the national standards for the recording and classification of crime, and delays in allocating criminal investigations. The intensification of work and the additional hours may also impact on staff wellbeing. The force is aware of this and has developed a plan to support its workforce.

The force, its officers and staff have remained resolutely focused on reducing the backlogs in demand and this has had a positive effect. There remains some way to go to return to pre-iOPS levels but without such a co-ordinated and focused drive, the backlogs would not have reduced as significantly as they have. By the time we inspected the force there were tangible results, for example:

- unresourced incidents in the control room returned to pre-iOPS levels;
- time to answer 999 telephone calls reduced;
- ongoing criminal investigations reduced by 12 percent from their peak;
- intelligence submissions awaiting assessment reduced;
- electronic transfer of prosecution papers to the CPS is now 95 percent successful; and
- victims' services referrals increased to 50 percent of their original level.

The force recognises that it still has some way to go to address all the backlogs and has planned some additional activities to reduce them. It is also trying to ensure it achieves the expected increase in efficiency using the new ICT.

Is the force effectively engaging with local partners and keeping them informed?

The force engaged inconsistently with its external partners during the preparation and planning for the implementation of iOPS. However, it has remedied this and is now working closely with all its partners and keeping them properly informed.

During the inspection, we spoke to affected partners. We found that for organisations operating at a force-wide level, such as the CPS and court services, there had been effective engagement prior to implementation, strategic impact assessments had been undertaken and contingency plans developed.

But for organisations and partnerships operating at a more local level, such as children's and adult services, the engagement was not as consistent or well structured. The force could have prepared its local partners better for the anticipated delays and created contingency plans to mitigate foreseeable problems. Also, its engagement wasn't early enough.

This meant that local partners were not properly or sufficiently able to respond when problems started to materialise. One of the more serious problems was the reduction in safeguarding referrals and the risks created. This delayed the timely flow of information between the police and its partner organisations to support the assessment and safeguarding of vulnerable people and children.

We were pleased to find that, once the impact on vulnerability and the reductions in referrals had been identified, the force responded effectively. It engaged at a strategic level with its partners to inform them of the backlog in demand and the action the force was taking to address the issues. This has resulted in staff from some partner organisations co-locating into police premises to support efforts to resolve the problems.

But the force should have made all its partners aware that they may receive increased demand as a result of Operation Alban. Some told us that their workload unexpectedly increased as they were receiving 'batches' of safeguarding referrals, which they then needed to review. A lack of co-ordinated activity may simply transfer risk from one organisation to another.

Recommendation

The force needs to ensure it effectively engages with partners at force and local level when undertaking significant change programmes.

Does the force have a robust plan to support its officers and staff and build their confidence in iOPS?

While the force has tried to support its workforce to improve confidence in the PoliceWorks element of iOPS, this support does not resolve the fundamental issues which staff regard as preventing them from effectively doing their jobs. In contrast, the ControlWorks system has had a greater degree of acceptance by staff. We found that staff confidence with this system is high.

During the inspection, we found staff motivated to do a good job with a real desire to keep people safe. However, they remain frustrated with the PoliceWorks system. They were clear regarding the problems presented by PoliceWorks and its significant impact on their efficiency and confidence. They articulated the following unresolved concerns with the system:

- logon time and the speed of the system when returning information;
- the inconsistency or accuracy of migrated historical data from previous force ICT systems;
- the need for greater functionality or range of options within the search facility;
- the ability of the search facility to return accurate results so that users do not have to search legacy systems; and
- confusion in the processes they are expected to follow, with changes to system 'workarounds' and frequent updates which they have found difficult to keep up with.

Officers and staff need to be confident that the data they can access is accurate and contains all the information they require to make effective decisions and assess levels of risk to support them to do their job. We have heard many examples from officers and staff who have experienced inaccuracies and missing data which they fear could have a significant impact on the safety of the public.

Officers also need to be confident in their ability to use the system. Due to iOPS being delayed, training for some staff was delivered many months prior to the implementation. Refresher training was provided but we were told this was ineffective and did not provide them with the skills and information they needed.

The force informed us of the post-implementation activities which it has put in place to support its officers and staff. These activities included: additional 'superusers' (people who have received additional training to help them to provide guidance and support to colleagues within the operational environment); refresher training

opportunities; drop in clinics to provide workload management advice and support; and information updates emailed to all staff. The force has also arranged workshops to better understand the concerns of its staff, such as the prevalence of inaccurate search information.

However, staff told us that they did not necessarily have time to access this support due to the levels of operational demand and the focus on reducing backlogs. The force should ensure that all staff receive additional training or support appropriate to their role.

The force may also wish to review their workforce communication strategy. Staff felt that communications from the force and the chief officer team had not been effective, both generally and in response to specific issues. They told us they felt at times they were being blamed for the increased demand and expected to trust a system in which they have very little confidence.

It is apparent that during implementation of the iOPS system, staff were reporting significant problems. Staff believe they weren't listened to and lack confidence that their concerns were being addressed by the force. Numerous officers gave examples of issues raised with the helpdesk that had not been acknowledged or dealt with.

The force needs to develop a more effective communication and engagement plan and apply sufficient resource to deliver it. This should demonstrate to staff that it is listening to their feedback. It should provide clear communication that concerns have been heard and that the most significant issues are being prioritised and addressed. It needs to show how it intends to rectify the problems, and how it plans to improve confidence and user experience of PoliceWorks.

Recommendations

- The force should review its internal communication plan to ensure all staff are informed, consulted and engaged in the ongoing development of iOPS.
- The force should review and evaluate the operational effectiveness of its training plan for iOPS to ensure all staff are appropriately trained to enable them to carry out their role.

Does the force have an effective plan in place to prevent further backlogs occurring?

The force has improved management information and can use this to prevent backlogs from building. By using the PoliceWorks dashboard within iOPS for force data and management information, the force is now better equipped to identify and analyse its demand. The dashboard provides detailed live-time management information, which can be viewed by everyone in the force to monitor and keep up to date with outstanding demand. This includes overall incidents and vulnerability demand such as domestic abuse and missing people. The availability of this information enables the force to monitor and react to ongoing backlogs more quickly.

However, sustainably preventing future backlogs will require a coherent plan to ensure issues which have contributed to the significant increase are prioritised and addressed. The force cannot continually commit resources to resolve these problems, as this will have significant consequences elsewhere.

The ability of the force to achieve a sustainable position is predicated on productivity returning to pre-iOPS levels. The key factors affecting this are:

- the capability of the force ICT systems and infrastructure to function effectively;
- staff being trained and confident in new ICT systems; and
- the adoption of new operational and working processes.

The force has put measures in place to prevent backlogs reoccurring in some areas of policing. For example, scheduled updates are being agreed with the ICT provider to address some of the issues identified and improve how the system works. One system upgrade occurred during our inspection and more are planned for January 2020.

But for other issues that contributed to the backlogs and to the workforce's lack of confidence in the system, plans are less clear. The force now needs to develop a comprehensive plan which addresses the key factors identified above. Critically, officers and staff need to have an understanding of the changes, and know what is expected of them. If the force is able to achieve this, then it has the potential to realise the operational and cultural benefits iOPS was intended to deliver.

Recommendation

The force should develop a sustainable approach to address the underlying problems with systems capability, training and the new operational and working processes.

Annex A: Elements of iOPS

The new Integrated Operational Policing System (iOPS) has four elements included within the programme of change. iOPS includes PoliceWorks, ControlWorks, Cognos and Mobile:

PoliceWorks

The iOPS PoliceWorks Records Management System covers a broad spectrum of police records. It includes crimes, investigations, custody, case preparation, prosecutions and appeal, managing the workflows of each event type and guiding users through the process.

It includes dashboards which provide users with access to their workload, summaries of data at a high level, and the ability to explore this in more detail and update individual records.

It allows GMP to gather and report on data that is accepted by the Police National Database (PND) and allows for searches against the Person, Object, Location and Event (POLE) criteria.

PoliceWorks can also integrate with national systems including Libra, the Police National Computer (PNC) and PND, as well as other third-party solutions, giving access to critical information. The PoliceWorks solution is designed to support the 'digital first' concept, removing the need for paper case files.

ControlWorks

iOPS ControlWorks is the new command and control system primarily used by the force Operational Communications Branch (OCB) officers and staff.

Benefits of ControlWorks include:

- **Mapping:** an active part of ControlWorks, mapping allows users to see exactly where people are in relation to incidents. It can also suggest the right resource to deploy based on response times, which should enable GMP to improve its service to the public.
- **User friendly:** there are several screens that display information, such as basic layout, incidents and maps.
- **Promotes collaboration:** maximises collaboration between other emergency responders and partner agencies.

Cognos

Cognos is the force data and management information solution that will help GMP monitor demand on each division, district or department. It will also assist it in strategic planning, by identifying longer-term trends.

An important feature of Cognos is to help GMP identify data quality issues, to ensure operational and performance data are accurate.

Mobile

All frontline operational staff received a new mobile device between Quarter 4 2019 and Quarter 1 2020. GMP invested in the Samsung S9 which meant that not only can all current applications be used on a much faster device, but also, the force can develop and deploy new apps to support operational police work.

As crime and communities change, the force needs reliable technology that will keep pace with the modern world.

Some of the new applications that will be introduced over time are:

- PDF scanners;
- QR Code readers and Digital Access to Forms which will make administrative tasks quicker; and
- Mobile Fingerprint Suspect Biometrics allowing fingerprints to be obtained and searched against the Live Scan and Immigration databases.

March 2020 | © HMICFRS 2020 | ISBN: 978-1-78655-986-9

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