



Promoting improvements  
in policing to make  
everyone safer

# Royal Air Force Police

An inspection of the leadership of the Royal Air Force  
Police in relation to its investigations

January 2017

© HMIC 2017

ISBN: 978-1-78655-220-4

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic)

# Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
About HMIC .....	9
About the Royal Air Force Police .....	9
Our commission.....	10
Terms of reference .....	10
Methodology .....	11
The structure of this report.....	11
<b>2. How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP, including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?</b> .....	<b>12</b>
What we were looking for .....	12
Findings .....	12
How the Royal Air Force defines the role of the RAFP and how it ensures that personnel understand the role .....	13
How the Provost Marshal (RAF) ensures that the RAFP conducts investigations that meet his expectations .....	17
<b>3. How effective are the oversight, governance, monitoring and assessment arrangements within the RAFP to ensure investigations are effective and kept free from improper interference?</b> .....	<b>24</b>
What we were looking for .....	24
Findings .....	25
How the Provost Marshal (RAF) uses management structures and reporting mechanisms to ensure that investigations are effective and are free from improper interference.....	25
How well RAFP personnel and commanding officers elsewhere in the Royal Air Force understand their responsibilities .....	28
How the Provost Marshal (RAF) assures the Royal Air Force and the public that the RAFP is independent of the chain of command and that the Royal Air Force and the public can have confidence in RAFP investigations.....	30

<b>4. How well does the RAFP use the National Intelligence Model in identifying strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing? .....</b>	<b>34</b>
What we were looking for .....	34
Findings .....	35
Whether the RAFP has a formal meeting structure that meets the requirements set out in the Code of Practice .....	37
How well the RAFP produces, assesses and uses intelligence and other information to identify strategic priorities and influence strategic planning and resourcing.....	39
<b>5. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>42</b>
How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?.....	42
How effective are the oversight, governance, monitoring and assessment arrangements within the RAFP to ensure investigations are effective and kept free from improper interference? .....	43
How well does the RAFP use the National Intelligence Model to identify strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing? .....	44
<b>Annex A – Methodology .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex B – List of case files reviewed.....</b>	<b>46</b>

## Summary

Section 4 of the Armed Forces Act 2011 places a statutory duty on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to inspect and report to the Secretary of State (Defence) on the independence and effectiveness of investigations carried out by the Royal Air Force Police (RAFP). This is the first statutory inspection of the RAFP by HMIC. The terms of reference for this inspection are as set out below.

- How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP, including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?
- How effective are the oversight and governance arrangements within the RAFP to ensure investigations are free from improper interference?
- How well does the RAFP monitor and assess the effectiveness of investigations?
- How well does the RAFP use the National Intelligence Model in identifying strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing?

This inspection took place in March 2016. We reviewed documents provided to us by the RAFP and we conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with RAFP personnel. During visits to Royal Air Force stations we examined 12 RAFP case investigation files.

We found that the role of the RAFP was comprehensively and consistently defined in various documents. RAFP personnel to whom we spoke understood their role. The Provost Marshal (RAF) had circulated to RAFP personnel comprehensive guidance on his expectations for the quality of investigations.

However, we found that RAFP personnel were regularly deployed away from their station to form an operational 'contingent force'. The process for selection was not widely known by those to whom we spoke, and many felt strongly that investigations were disrupted because of this deployment. We also found three issues that gave us cause for concern regarding the quality of investigations.

- First, we consider the range of training courses provided by the RAFP to be sufficient. However, these courses were not accredited by the College of Policing, the benefits of such accreditation being assurance to senior officers, the public and victims of crime that training – and therefore the competence of those that have completed it – is of a high quality.
- Second, the RAFP applied a policy that all commissioned officers should move roles more frequently than other ranks. Some RAFP commissioned officers with whom we spoke had been posted to roles for which they were not

trained. We found that succession planning was not always adequate and that for posts requiring specialist skills, such as the oversight of complex investigations, closer matching of skills or training prior to posting should apply. We consider it important that only personnel with appropriate experience and (where possible) accreditation should oversee investigations.

- Finally, a third of the case files we reviewed lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate that effective supervision had taken place.

We found that there were well-established management structures and effective reporting mechanisms. RAFP personnel and commanding officers elsewhere in the Royal Air Force understood their responsibilities. But we also found three issues that gave us cause for concern regarding the oversight of investigations.

- First, while the Provost Marshal (RAF) made good use of various internal and external governance mechanisms in order to provide him with assurance, we did not find evidence of performance monitoring to assess the effectiveness of investigations.
- Second, the RAFP would benefit from the introduction of a structured process by which the independence and overall quality of its investigations are regularly reviewed by other relevant professionals.
- Finally, we found that for the most serious or complex cases there was no separate, individual review of each case in common with Home Office police force arrangements where 'Gold Group'<sup>1</sup> meetings are held.

We found that personnel understood well the National Intelligence Model and they had ready access to relevant policies and documents. Strategic assessments provided clear direction and guidance in relation to force priorities. RAFP meetings were well structured and, with the exception of the issue we mention at the end of this paragraph, complied with the Code of Practice for the National Intelligence Model. We also found that the RAFP used the model to influence strategic planning and resourcing. However, in order to improve the quality of its strategic assessments and planning, the RAFP needs to apply more consistently certain aspects of the model across the force, particularly at flight and squadron levels.

We conclude that the Provost Marshal (RAF) provides effective leadership and strategic direction of the RAFP in relation to investigations but that the Provost Marshal (RAF) needs to take the following action in order to improve the quality of investigations:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Command structures*, College of Policing, 2013, available at: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/)

- Training courses provided by the RAFP should be accredited by the College of Policing;
- succession planning for RAFP commissioned officers should match skills more closely or ensure training prior to posting; and
- all relevant RAFP personnel should have the appropriate supervisory skills to lead and review investigations effectively.

The Provost Marshal (RAF) should also communicate more clearly the process he uses for his selection of personnel for contingent force deployments.

We also conclude that the RAFP has effective oversight, governance and monitoring to ensure that its investigations are kept free from improper interference, but that the RAFP should strengthen these arrangements. The RAFP should adopt a comprehensive system for monitoring the effectiveness of its investigations, make better use of the expertise that is available from other relevant professionals, and should establish a separate strategic oversight group for each serious or complex investigation.

Finally, we conclude that the RAFP's leadership is committed clearly to the National Intelligence Model. RAFP meetings held in line with the model's guidelines were mostly well structured. They effectively identified emerging issues, threats and priorities in the short term, but the RAFP needs to develop its force strategic assessment to identify demands adequately in the longer term to influence its planning and resourcing. The RAFP needs to improve its tactical assessments and tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings at flight and squadron levels, as well as its communication of decisions from those meetings to ensure that operational, intelligence-led, policing activity reflects policing priorities.

## **Recommendations and areas for improvement**

We have made six recommendations and we have identified five areas for improvement:

## Areas for improvement

- Understanding of the process used for the selection of personnel for contingent force deployments is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should communicate, to all those eligible, a description of the process so that the RAFP can address any perception of unfairness or negative impact on morale.
- The tactical tasking and co-ordination products are an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a system for the regular production of tactical assessments for the RAFP. Such assessments should ensure more frequent reporting of priority threats. Tactical assessments should include explicit, carefully considered recommendations for the use of intelligence-led policing tactics in order to tackle priority threats.
- Consistency in the tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce a consistent process for tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings across the RAFP, supported by the use of a standardised agenda. The process should enable the RAFP to manage priority threats, identify trends and make recommendations for the use of intelligence-led policing tactics.
- Mechanisms to brief, deploy and hold personnel to account for activity at flight and squadron levels are an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should improve communication processes in order to ensure that operational activity reflects priorities. RAFP personnel at flight and squadron levels should be more comprehensively briefed about relevant decisions taken at tactical tasking and co-ordinating meetings. This would enable the RAFP to direct its intelligence-led policing activity better. The outcomes of this activity should be regularly reported on, in order to inform further tasking and coordination meetings.
- The strategic assessment process is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should improve RAFP's use of the strategic assessment process to identify future demands more effectively. This will enable the RAFP to make a more accurate assessment of its capacity and capability to meet those demands.

## Recommendations

1. By 1 March 2017, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should, in conjunction with Provosts Marshal (Navy and Army), establish a mechanism whereby RAFP investigators are accredited by the College of Policing under the Professionalising the Investigation Programme.
2. By 1 December 2016, the Deputy Commander (Capability and Personnel) and the Provost Marshal (RAF) should identify the small number of RAFP commissioned officer posts for which it is vital that post holders have particular skills before assuming the responsibilities of the posts. The career managers and Provost Marshal (RAF) should apply more effective succession planning as soon as possible thereafter.
3. By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce and operate a mechanism to ensure that all relevant RAFP personnel have the appropriate supervisory skills to lead and review investigations effectively in a way that provides assurance to senior officers.
4. By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a comprehensive system for monitoring the effectiveness of investigations. This should include, but not be restricted to:
  - how well the RAFP supports victims of crime;
  - how well it records crime and allocates investigations;
  - whether it uses investigative tactics appropriately;
  - how well it supervises and assures the quality of its investigations;
  - whether it provides training to national standards; and
  - how well it learns lessons from past experience .
5. By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce a structured process by which the independence and overall quality of RAFP investigations is reviewed regularly by other relevant professionals.
6. By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a separate strategic oversight group for each serious or complex investigation, modelled on the 'Gold Group' concept but adapted for the military context. The oversight group should routinely consider the use of independent external reviews for serious or complex investigations.

# 1. Introduction

## About HMIC

- 1.1. HMIC independently assesses police forces and policing activity from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against terrorism – in the public interest. In preparing our reports, we ask the questions which citizens would ask, and publish the answers in accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence.
- 1.2. HMIC is independent of government and the police. HM Inspectors of Constabulary are appointed by the Crown – they are not employees of the police service or government.
- 1.3. HMIC decides on the depth, frequency and areas to inspect based on our judgements about what is in the public interest.
- 1.4. In making these judgements, we consider the risks to the public, the risks to the integrity of policing, service quality, public concerns, the operating environment, the burden of inspection and the potential benefits to society from the improvements that might arise from the inspection.
- 1.5. HMIC’s annual inspection programme is subject to the approval of the Home Secretary in accordance with the amendments to the Police Act 1996 made by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

## About the Royal Air Force Police

- 1.6. The Royal Air Force Police, to which we also refer in this report as “the RAFP” and “the force”, is led by a Royal Air Force officer of Group Captain rank, who holds the title Provost Marshal (RAF), and is the chief officer of the RAFP. The post holder is appointed by HM The Queen. He is responsible solely to the Royal Air Force Board of the Defence Council for the conduct and direction of all RAFP investigations, which are to be conducted independently of the chain of command.
- 1.7. The RAFP has 1,150 personnel. The force also has 990 military provost guard service personnel, 160 RAFP reserves and 89 civil servants. They are deployed to Royal Air Force stations in the United Kingdom and across the world.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Air stations overseas include stations at British Overseas Territories such as the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar.

- 1.8. RAFF personnel are formed into units called flights, which are based at most Royal Air Force stations. Groups of flights are called squadrons, of which there are ten in the RAFF. These ten squadrons are organised under three wings or regional and support headquarters.
- 1.9. The RAFF in the United Kingdom comprises: RAFF headquarters; two regional headquarters covering the north and south regions of the United Kingdom, each with their own special investigation and intelligence branch; and a third RAFF wing that provides specialist security force elements and provides policing support functions to the two regional wings.

## **Our commission**

- 1.10. Section 4 of the Armed Forces Act 2011, which came into force on 4 June 2014, places a statutory duty on HMIC to inspect and report to the Secretary of State (Defence) on the independence and effectiveness of investigations carried out by each service police force: the Royal Navy Police; the Royal Military Police; and the Royal Air Force Police.

## **Terms of reference**

- 1.11. This is HMIC's first statutory inspection of the RAFF. The terms of reference for this inspection are as follows:
  - How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFF, including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?
  - How effective are the oversight and governance arrangements within the RAFF to ensure investigations are free from improper interference?
  - How well does the RAFF monitor and assess the effectiveness of investigations?
  - How well does the RAFF use the National Intelligence Model in identifying strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing?
- 1.12. In March 2009, HMIC inspected the special investigation branch of the RAFF. That inspection was conducted at the invitation of the Ministry of Defence. In this first statutory inspection of the RAFF we have, where relevant, included commentary on the RAFF's progress since the 2009 inspection.

## **Methodology**

- 1.13. This inspection took place in March 2016.
- 1.14. We reviewed documents provided to us by the RAFP that described the force's role.
- 1.15. We visited eight Royal Air Force stations where we conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with RAFP personnel. During these visits we examined twelve RAFP case investigation files.
- 1.16. A detailed description of the methodology for this inspection can be found at Annex A – Methodology, and a list of the types of case files we reviewed can be found at Annex B – List of case files reviewed.
- 1.17. HMIC is grateful to the personnel of the RAFP who contributed to this inspection and to other Royal Air Force personnel for their time and support during the inspection process.

## **The structure of this report**

- 1.18. In order to provide a helpful report which is evidence-based, concise and easy to follow, we have laid out our findings and conclusions in a logical order:
  - chapter 2 provides our findings in relation to the effectiveness of the RAFP's strategic leadership (the first question in our terms of reference);
  - chapter 3 provides our findings in relation to the effectiveness of the RAFP's oversight and governance arrangements, including how well the RAFP monitors and assesses investigations (the second and third questions in our terms of reference);
  - chapter 4 provides our findings in relation to how well the RAFP uses the National Intelligence Model for strategic planning purposes (the fourth question in our terms of reference); and
  - chapter 5 provides our conclusions, in the form of our response to the questions posed in our terms of reference.
- 1.19. A list of the six recommendations we make in this report and a description of five areas in which we consider that the RAFP needs to improve can be found on page 7 and 8.

## **2. How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP, including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?**

### **What we were looking for**

- 2.1. We consider that, in any police force, it is necessary for senior leaders to provide clear purpose and direction to those they lead. If done well, this helps personnel to understand their role clearly.
- 2.2. We also consider that senior leaders have a vital role to play in ensuring that, with the assistance of properly defined policies, personnel meet the expectations and standards that are placed upon them.
- 2.3. Therefore, in order to establish the effectiveness of the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP in relation to investigations, we looked for:
  - how the Royal Air Force defines the role of the RAFP, and how it ensures that the role is understood by RAFP personnel; and
  - how the Provost Marshal (RAF) ensures that the RAFP conducts investigations that meet his expectations.

### **Findings**

- 2.4. In summary, we found that the role of the RAFP was comprehensively and consistently defined in various documents. RAFP personnel to whom we spoke understood their role. The Provost Marshal (RAF) had circulated to RAFP personnel comprehensive guidance on his expectations for the quality of investigations.
- 2.5. However, we found that RAFP personnel were regularly deployed away from their station to form an operational 'contingent force'. The process for selection was not widely known by those we spoke with and a strong perception existed that investigations were disrupted because of this deployment.
- 2.6. We also found three issues that gave us cause for concern regarding the quality of investigations. Training courses provided by the RAFP were not accredited by the College of Policing; succession planning for RAFP commissioned officers was not always adequate; and a third of the case files

we reviewed lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate that effective supervision had taken place.

## **How the Royal Air Force defines the role of the RAFP and how it ensures that personnel understand the role**

- 2.7. The Armed Forces Act 2006 defines the role of the RAFP concerning the investigation of military 'service offences'.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the 1999 Queen's Regulations<sup>4</sup> define the terms and conditions under which Royal Air Force personnel are expected to operate and describe the responsibilities and powers of the RAFP in that context.
- 2.8. Through our document review, we found that the role of the RAFP had been described by leaders in various documents at different times. Although the descriptions differed from document to document there was consistency in their meaning. Collectively, they defined comprehensively the RAFP's role.

### **Royal Air Force Command Plan (2015)**

- 2.9. A plan issued in 2015 described the resources needed to meet the risks identified in the Royal Air Force's strategic approach to future challenges.<sup>5</sup> It provided direction and guidance for the development of the Royal Air Force over the next 20 years. It also detailed the implementation of strategy and outlined the performance management and reporting processes. In particular, it defined specific policing, counter-intelligence and protective security requirements for the RAFP.

### **Security Strategy for Air (2013)**

- 2.10. A document issued in 2013 set out the priorities for the protection of Royal Air Force assets including its personnel, equipment and information.<sup>6</sup> It was reinforced by policy and provided direction for RAFP activity specifically concerning the management of risks to aircraft, air stations and air operations.

---

<sup>3</sup> Military service offences as defined in section 50(2) of the Armed Forces Act 2006 are specified offences which can be committed by military personnel. They include criminal conduct such as theft and assault, and non-criminal conduct such as being absent without leave, or contravening standing orders. Sections 116-118 of the Armed Forces Act 2006, available at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/52/part/5/chapter/1/crossheading/duty-of-service-policeman-following-investigation](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/52/part/5/chapter/1/crossheading/duty-of-service-policeman-following-investigation).

<sup>4</sup> *The Queen's Regulations for the Royal Air Force*, Fifth Edition 1999, Amendment List No 40, available at: [www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/5C146FE5\\_5056\\_A318\\_A8831351C830E2B4.pdf](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/5C146FE5_5056_A318_A8831351C830E2B4.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *Royal Air Force Command Plan 2015*, Ministry of Defence, 2015, (unpublished).

<sup>6</sup> *Security Strategy for Air 2013*, Ministry of Defence, 2013, (unpublished).

### **RAFP Mission Directive (2016)**

2.11. A document issued in 2016 contained references to the higher-level direction mentioned above (paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10). It reiterated priorities and objectives set by the Royal Air Force for the RAFP and defined the purpose and vision set by the Provost Marshal (RAF).<sup>7</sup> In particular, it set investigative priorities in order to improve policing practice by reducing delays and increasing the use of intelligence-led operations. It also set Mission directives for regional headquarters or wings, with senior officers nominated to be personally responsible for elements of the mission, such as plans to investigate and reduce sexual offending.

### **Air Publication 1722 (2015)**

2.12. A document issued in 2015 reflected the investigative role set out in the Armed Forces Act 2006 and in Queen's Regulations, and it also referred to expectations set out in the Royal Air Force Command Plan:

“As part of the Royal Air Force’s integrated Force Protection Force, the Royal Air Force Police are to provide law enforcement, counter intelligence and protective security capabilities enabling the delivery of air power and supporting wider Defence activity”.<sup>8</sup>

2.13. The RAFP had circulated the document that contained this mission statement to all RAFP officers and warrant officers and we found that those RAFP personnel we interviewed understood the mission statement.

2.14. At the time of the inspection, the Provost Marshal (RAF) was undertaking a review of the mission statement to ensure that it remained relevant and would address anticipated security and policing challenges, such as the introduction of new aircraft to some Royal Air Force stations in the United Kingdom.

### **RAFP Policing and Security Plan (2016-2017)**

2.15. A document issued in 2016 described how the priorities and objectives in the Mission Directive (see paragraph 2.11) would be achieved by defining ‘ends’, ‘ways’ and ‘means’. It also highlighted some of the risks that had been identified that might prevent some objectives being reached. We saw a more comprehensive list of risks to success contained in a risk register during our review of documents.

---

<sup>7</sup> *RAFP Mission Directive 2016*, Ministry of Defence, 2016, (unpublished).

<sup>8</sup> *Air Publication 1722*, Ministry of Defence, 2015, (unpublished).

## **Terms of reference for posts**

- 2.16. We found that, for each post held by RAFP personnel, there was a detailed written description of their duties – a form of job description – which the RAFP called 'terms of reference'. For our document review, the RAFP provided us with 18 examples of these terms of reference, for posts across various parts of the RAFP: national and regional headquarters; investigations and policing support; the special investigation and intelligence branch; and posts for RAFP personnel on other Royal Air Force stations.
- 2.17. We found that all the terms of reference were written in a consistent format. Each contained a description of the post-holder's duties, in the form of a "primary purpose" and a set of "secondary purposes" for each post. The terms of reference also included information such as the post-holder's level of authority and responsibility, and to whom they were accountable.
- 2.18. RAFP personnel we spoke with had seen their respective terms of reference and understood their roles and duties. These terms of reference helped determine the relevant training that RAFP personnel should receive. Supervisors and senior officers used them to assess the performance of RAFP personnel.

## **Breadth of role and other commitments**

- 2.19. We found that, while the RAFP's mission was straightforward and clear, the responsibilities set by the Royal Air Force were varied and complex. Policing, investigations, protective security and counter intelligence functions needed to fit into standing commitments made by the Royal Air Force in the 2013 Defence Strategic Direction.<sup>9</sup> These included long-term and planned 'committed force' deployments such as aviation security for air operations in Cyprus, protective security for military nuclear material while in air transport and policing other Royal Air Force stations overseas.
- 2.20. The RAFP was also required to contribute to the Royal Air Force 'responsive force' commitment, capable of short-notice global security deployments, reactive operations to stations in the United Kingdom and military intervention. The RAFP contribution to 'responsive force' came in the form of a 'contingent force' that required 60 RAFP personnel to be on five days' notice for deployment to anywhere in the world. The majority of RAFP personnel were required to undertake contingent force responsibilities. Senior RAFP personnel at headquarters, in consultation with senior officers at RAFP squadron and wing commands, managed selection of those personnel.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Defence Strategic Direction of 2013*, Ministry of Defence, 2013 (unpublished).

- 2.21. Many of the RAFP personnel we spoke with told us that, depending where personnel usually worked, contingent force deployments took RAFP personnel away from their stations and therefore disrupted their investigations. Others spoke of the high frequency of this responsibility and that not all RAFP personnel undertook the role.
- 2.22. We appreciate that being away from station and having to move on short notice to anywhere in the world for protracted periods of time may be demanding. However, we did not find any evidence that policing or investigations had been affected adversely. We found that the policing responsibilities of those deployed elsewhere were invariably allocated to other RAFP personnel. However, we found that the perception of the high frequency of contingent force deployments was having a negative impact on the morale of some RAFP personnel.
- 2.23. We examined the process adopted at RAFP headquarters for the selection of RAFP personnel for abstraction to contingent force deployments. We found that senior officers considered a range of factors before taking decisions. They accessed databases containing details of relevant skills so that they only selected appropriately skilled personnel, considered details of previous deployments so that they could make a fair allocation, and appreciated the health and fitness of personnel.
- 2.24. In addition, the decisions about contingent force were taken in consultation with senior officers at RAFP squadron and wing command level who could appeal if they felt the impact of the abstraction of any particular member of RAFP personnel would be seriously detrimental to achieving a strategic priority of the RAFP. We found the process effective, but it was not widely known or understood by those affected.

### **Area for improvement 1**

- Understanding of the process used for the selection of personnel for contingent force deployments is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should communicate, to all those eligible, a description of the process so that the RAFP can address any perception of unfairness or negative impact on morale.

## How the Provost Marshal (RAF) ensures that the RAFP conducts investigations that meet his expectations

2.25. We consider that, in order to enable RAFP personnel to meet the expectations that are set for them, the RAFP must clearly define and explain those expectations. Furthermore, those expectations must be fully integrated in – and implemented through – effective systems, working practices, monitoring and checking procedures. Consequently, for this aspect of our inspection, we assessed the RAFP's approach in the following five areas:

- policies and guidance;
- training;
- skills and experience;
- supervision and reviews of investigations; and
- crime recording.

### Policies and guidance

2.26. We found that the Royal Air Force had adopted *The Royal Air Force Ethos, Core Values and Standards*, a set of four core values which all Royal Air Force personnel (including RAFP personnel) were expected to observe.<sup>10</sup>

2.27. In addition, the expectations of RAFP personnel were enshrined in law through a statutory Code of Practice. Powers held by RAFP personnel are similar to those held by Home Office police officers, and the safeguards for the RAFP's questioning and treatment of people are similar to those for Home Office police forces in England and Wales. The military police's powers and safeguards are published in *The Service Police Codes of Practice*.<sup>11</sup>

2.28. We found that, in addition to *The Service Police Codes of Practice*, the Provost Marshal (RAF) had issued a *Royal Air Force Police Code of Conduct*<sup>12</sup> through an internal policy note it promulgated in 2016.

---

<sup>10</sup> The four core values are respect, integrity, service and excellence. The standards state clearly that it is to the law that personnel must answer. *Ethos, Core Values and Standards*, Royal Air Force, Air Publication 1, Second Edition, Revised 2008. Available at: [www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/AB5499A3\\_1143\\_EC82\\_2E7A5599F6DCAA55.pdf](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/AB5499A3_1143_EC82_2E7A5599F6DCAA55.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> *The Service Police Codes of Practice*, Ministry of Defence, 2015. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410011/20150319\\_SPCOP\\_Final\\_March\\_2015.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410011/20150319_SPCOP_Final_March_2015.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> *Royal Air Force Police Code of Conduct*, HQ Air Publication 1722, 2016 (unpublished).

2.29. We examined the *Royal Air Force Police Code of Conduct* and found that it set out clear expectations across a range of areas such as:

- honesty and integrity;
- equality and diversity;
- the proportionate use of force;
- fitness for duty; and
- challenging and reporting improper conduct.

2.30. We also examined various policies and procedures for investigations that the RAFP supplied to us for our document review. These included a series of documents entitled 'tactics, techniques and procedures', which the Provost Marshal (RAF) had issued in connection with a range of investigative and other policing matters.<sup>13</sup>

2.31. We found that these documents provided comprehensive guidance on the standards required by the RAFP for investigations, as well as procedures for how investigations should be undertaken. They included procedures that were derived from College of Policing standards,<sup>14</sup> which had been adapted to take account of the military context.

2.32. Through our interviews with RAFP personnel, we were satisfied that, in general, they understood the Royal Air Force's and RAFP's expectations of them and that they knew where to find the relevant policy and guidance documents.

## **Training**

2.33. The Royal Air Force's policy was to recruit personnel for specific 'trades' such as pilots, engineers or police. Service personnel trained and developed experience in their specific trades before becoming eligible for promotion.

2.34. We found that the RAFP used a centralised database, which contained details of training for RAFP personnel. This enabled managers to monitor overall training levels and it effectively informed their deployment decisions, so that they allocated personnel to posts for which they were adequately trained. We

---

<sup>13</sup> The subject areas of the tactics, techniques and procedures included interviewing, search, identification, custody, forensic recovery, investigating crimes, dealing with victims, disclosure, crime reporting, powers of arrest, and jurisdiction.

<sup>14</sup> The College of Policing defines and publishes guidance for Home Office police forces in a range of 'Authorised Professional Practice' documents. For more information see [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/)

also noted that the terms of reference for posts (see paragraph 2.16) often contained a section entitled 'competences', which set out in detail the training requirements for post-holders.

- 2.35. We found that the RAFP had an 'in-house' training programme, which it shared with the other service police forces.<sup>15</sup> Training was provided to personnel in accordance with their experience and the duties that they undertook.
- 2.36. Recruits to the RAFP undertook an initial course. This was followed by a programme of development using a series of training activities for completion in the workplace. RAFP personnel were also required to complete a 'task book', in which they recorded evidence of competency in core skills such as arrest, crime scene management and stop and search. Trainees were expected to submit their task books to supervisors for endorsement.
- 2.37. The core skills covered by the task books were supplemented by a number of specialist training courses provided by the RAFP. These covered areas such as volume crime, serious crime, management of investigations and crime scene investigation.
- 2.38. Personnel we spoke with understood clearly the importance of their responsibilities to victims of crime and were well aware of the armed forces Code of Practice regarding the services to be provided to victims of crime.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.39. We also found that all RAFP personnel received training about 'improper interference' in investigations, the importance of which we discuss in the next chapter of our report (see paragraph 3.2). This training was provided in a number of areas relating to integrity and professionalism. We were informed that similar training was provided to senior Royal Air Force officers outside of the RAFP.
- 2.40. In addition to the in-house programme, the RAFP also used other course providers such as Home Office police forces and the College of Policing to provide specialised training. Examples here included training courses for senior investigating officers.
- 2.41. We consider the range of training courses provided by the RAFP to be sufficient. However, as we found in our inspections of the Royal Military Police in 2014 and the Royal Navy Police in 2015, the College of Policing had not accredited these courses. The College of Policing has a robust system for

---

<sup>15</sup> The Royal Navy Police, Royal Military Police and Royal Air Force Police train at the Defence College of Policing and Guarding in Hampshire.

<sup>16</sup> *Joint Service Publication 839 – Victims' Services*, Ministry of Defence, 2015, Annex A. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/488634/20151116-JSP839.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488634/20151116-JSP839.pdf)

accreditation, the benefits of which are to provide assurance to senior officers, the public and victims of crime that training – and therefore the competence of those that undergo it – is of a high quality. In particular, the College of Policing’s Professionalising the Investigation Programme<sup>17</sup> would be of value to the RAFF.

### **Recommendation 1**

- By 1 March 2017, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should, in conjunction with Provosts Marshal (Navy and Army), establish a mechanism whereby RAFF investigators are accredited by the College of Policing under the Professionalising the Investigation Programme.

### **Skills and experience**

- 2.42. In common with the Royal Navy Police and the Royal Military Police, the RAFF had a number of specialist posts that required investment – such as attendance at training courses or an investment in time – where there was a need to build skills, knowledge, experience and working relationships.
- 2.43. During our inspection of the Royal Military Police in 2014 and the Royal Navy Police in 2015, we identified that their policy was to move service personnel every two to three years. We reported that this affected adversely their specialist posts and we recommended that extended tenure should be introduced.
- 2.44. During this inspection, we found that the Ministry of Defence had adopted a new employment model, which allowed service personnel (including those in specialist posts) to stay in post for up to five years. The RAFF was applying this new model. Although it was too early to assess its effect, the careful management of this model should reduce the impact on specialist posts so that skills, knowledge, experience and working relationships are maintained for longer.
- 2.45. The new employment model applies to all ranks. However, in order to sustain management structures and provide professional development opportunities, the RAFF expects its commissioned officers<sup>18</sup> to move more frequently than other ranks.
- 2.46. The movement of all RAFF personnel was overseen by career managers, who were not part of the RAFF. We found that the Provost Marshal (RAF),

---

<sup>17</sup> See [www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Investigation/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Investigation/Pages/default.aspx)

<sup>18</sup> Commissioned officers in the Royal Air Force hold the rank of flying officer and above.

while having a positive relationship with the career managers, had only a limited input into decisions concerning the movement of RAFP commissioned officers. Some RAFP commissioned officers with whom we spoke had been posted to roles for which they had not been trained. They suggested to us that succession planning was not always adequate and that for certain posts - where the skills set was specialised, such as the oversight of complex investigations- closer matching of skills or training prior to posting should apply.

- 2.47. We consider it important that only personnel with appropriate experience, and (where possible) accreditation, should oversee investigations.
- 2.48. We also consider that the RAFP must balance the need to develop the careers of its personnel with the need to ensure that, for certain posts it matches more closely the skills and experience at the point of posting. We consider that such a balance is achievable.

### **Recommendation 2**

- By 1 December 2016, the Deputy Commander (Capability and Personnel) and the Provost Marshal (RAF) should identify the small number of RAFP commissioned officer posts for which it is vital that post holders have particular skills before assuming the responsibilities of the posts, and the career managers and Provost Marshal (RAF) should apply more effective succession planning as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Supervision and reviews of investigations**

- 2.49. We found that the majority of investigations undertaken by the RAFP related to disciplinary matters, and allegations of theft, fraud and sexual offences. Such investigations were usually conducted by RAFP personnel at the rank of corporal and supervised by senior non-commissioned officers or warrant officers. In those cases the RAFP considered most serious, such as historical child sexual exploitation, rape and breaches of the Official Secrets Act, investigations were conducted by senior investigating officers at the rank of Flight Lieutenant and supervised by senior RAFP officers.
- 2.50. We learned that formal supervisory reviews of investigations took place at 7 days, 28 days and 100 days from the date the case file was commenced. Personnel we spoke to understood this process. We examined the RAFP's computerised investigation management system which it used to record the progress of investigations, we found that the RAFP carried out these reviews on the required days.

- 2.51. We examined a sample of twelve case files and the corresponding entries on the computerised investigation management system. We found that, in the majority of cases, the lines of enquiry and offences investigated were appropriate and consistent with the circumstances of the case. We found examples of good supervision and compliance with relevant policies.
- 2.52. However, in four cases we found that the supervisory review process, while conducted on time, lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate that effective supervision had taken place. In two cases, significant lines of enquiry had not been followed and this had not been identified or addressed by the supervisor who first reviewed the case. These lines of enquiry included recovering CCTV footage, taking a statement from an examining doctor, and interviewing a suspect.
- 2.53. Conversely, during interviews and focus groups we were told that supervisors sometimes asked investigators to create lines of enquiry which investigators felt to be unnecessary. In our case file review, we found a minor assault allegation where this appeared<sup>19</sup> to be the case. In this example, there were no aggravating or exacerbating factors. Here, a number of statements were taken that duplicated the evidence already obtained.

### **Recommendation 3**

- By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce and operate a mechanism to ensure that all relevant RAFP personnel have the appropriate supervisory skills to lead and review investigations effectively in a way that provides assurance to senior officers.

- 2.54. We learned that the RAFP regional headquarters held weekly management meetings which representatives from squadrons and flights attended in person or by telephone conferencing. These meetings reviewed crimes and incidents of note in the preceding seven days, as well as the progress of all serious investigations and the availability of resources.
- 2.55. We attended two of these meetings and examined the records of decisions of previous meetings. We found that the meetings were well structured and the process enabled effective scrutiny. At the meetings we attended we saw actions being allocated to named individuals and a proper record kept, so as to ensure that personnel were held to account. The meetings provided an

---

<sup>19</sup> We did not speak directly with either the investigator or supervisor.

opportunity for reporting and escalation of any instances of suspected improper interference in an investigation (see paragraph 3.2).

- 2.56. The monthly investigations meeting at the RAFP headquarters, chaired by the Provost Marshal (RAF), oversaw serious investigations. We attended one of these meetings and examined the records of decisions of previous meetings. We found that this meeting was also well structured and the process enabled effective scrutiny.
- 2.57. At this meeting we saw decisions taken concerning resources for investigations, expenditure on information technology for investigators and skills development for analysts. The progress of investigations was examined, particularly where forensic submissions had been made and where Service Prosecution Authority advice had been sought. Finally, priorities were set for investigations, and the resources needed to complete them effectively – such as forensic and covert support – were allocated.

### **Crime recording**

- 2.58. The service police crime bureau<sup>20</sup> (which records crimes reported to the RAFP) was inspected during the HMIC inspection of the Royal Military Police in 2015.<sup>21</sup> At that time we concluded that there was insufficient oversight of the crime recording system and the post of crime registrar was needed to ensure compliance with crime recording rules, as in Home Office police forces.<sup>22</sup>
- 2.59. We were informed during the RAFP inspection that a role profile and job description (rather than terms of reference) for a crime registrar had been completed and that an appointment would be made in the near future.
- 2.60. We found that, in common with the other service police forces, the RAFP used templates that provide structured and effective processes for crime recording.

---

<sup>20</sup> The service police crime bureau is a joint unit supporting service police investigators, staffed by personnel from the service police forces (the Royal Navy Police, the Royal Military Police and Royal Air Force Police). The bureau records crimes on behalf of each of these forces.

<sup>21</sup> *An inspection of the leadership of the Royal Military Police in relation to its investigation*, HMIC, 2015. Available from: [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/an-inspection-of-the-leadership-of-the-rmp-in-relation-to-its-investigation/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/an-inspection-of-the-leadership-of-the-rmp-in-relation-to-its-investigation/)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 19.

### 3. How effective are the oversight, governance, monitoring and assessment arrangements within the RAFP to ensure investigations are effective and kept free from improper interference?

#### What we were looking for

- 3.1. The RAFP is responsible for the policing of Royal Air Force service personnel and civilian members of staff who are subject to service law and discipline. RAFP personnel operate in the United Kingdom and abroad. They report to both the Provost Marshal (RAF) and to the commanding officer of the Royal Air Force air station to which they are deployed (see paragraph 3.21).
- 3.2. This creates a special challenge for the RAFP. In a military context, including when at war, the RAFP needs to carry out investigations effectively and with a sufficient degree of independence to make sure that they are kept free from improper interference.
- 3.3. In this respect, safeguards have been provided in the Armed Forces Act 2006, which prohibits improper interference and places a duty on the Provost Marshal (RAF) to ensure that investigations are not interfered with.<sup>23</sup> The Armed Forces Act 2006 also places a duty on commanding officers of other air stations, who must notify the RAFP if a Schedule 2 offence<sup>24</sup> has or may have been committed, or if any other offence has been committed in 'prescribed circumstances'.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Section 115A(2) of the Armed Forces Act 2006 as amended states: "The Provost Marshal of the force has a duty, owed to the Defence Council, to seek to ensure that all investigations carried out by the force are free from improper interference". Section 115A(3) of the Armed Forces Act 2006 as amended states: "Improper interference includes, in particular, any attempt by a person who is not a service policeman to direct an investigation which is being carried out by the force".

<sup>24</sup> Offences listed under Schedule 2 to the Armed Forces Act 2006 include murder, manslaughter, war crimes and other serious offences.

<sup>25</sup> Prescribed circumstances, as provided for in Sections 113-114 of the Armed Forces Act 2006, are set out in the Armed Forces (Part 5 of the Armed Forces Act 2006) Regulations 2009, which states that only persons subject to service law may be considered to have committed an offence in prescribed circumstances; prescribed circumstances include, for example, where: a person subject to service law has been assaulted on at least two occasions by another person subject to service law; or serious injury has been inflicted on a person subject to service law by a person of superior rank or rate while the assailant was carrying out his duties.

- 3.4. We consider that, even with the legal safeguards in place, the RAFP needs effective oversight and governance arrangements in order to ensure that its investigations are free from improper interference, and that the effectiveness of its investigations is monitored and assessed. Consequently we looked for:
- how the Provost Marshal (RAF) uses management structures and reporting mechanisms to ensure that RAFP investigations are effective and are free from improper interference;
  - how well RAFP personnel and commanding officers elsewhere in the Royal Air Force understand their responsibilities; and
  - how the Provost Marshal (RAF) assures the Royal Air Force and the public that the RAFP is independent of the chain of command; and that the Royal Air Force and the public can have confidence in RAFP investigations.

## Findings

- 3.5. In summary, we found that management structures and responsibilities to prevent improper interference were understood by those we spoke with, and mechanisms were in place to assure the public that the RAFP is independent of the chain of command. However, we did not find evidence of performance monitoring to assess the effectiveness of investigations; the independence and overall quality of investigations was not regularly reviewed by other relevant professionals; and, for the most serious or complex cases, there was no separate, individual reviews of cases in common with Home Office police force arrangements where 'Gold Group'<sup>26</sup> meetings are held.

## **How the Provost Marshal (RAF) uses management structures and reporting mechanisms to ensure that investigations are effective and are free from improper interference**

### **Oversight mechanism**

- 3.6. Operational command of the RAFP comes under Air Officer Commanding Number 2 Group. This officer exercises command and control of security and general policing activity, but has no involvement in investigations. The Provost Marshal (RAF) reports to the Assistant Chief of Air Staff on the content, but not the conduct, of investigations. This provides information at Air Force Board level of any risks to the effectiveness of investigations and/or to the

---

<sup>26</sup> College of Policing (2013); *Command structures*. [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/)

reputation of the Royal Air Force. The Provost Marshal (RAF) is independent from the chain of command with regard to the conduct of police investigations.

- 3.7. We also found that the Provost Marshal (RAF) was encouraged to raise any matters of concern, such as any instances where improper interference was suspected, with the Assistant Chief of Air Staff or, if the Provost Marshal (RAF) considered necessary, with the Chief of Air Staff in person. This arrangement provides the Provost Marshal (RAF) with direct access to the most senior member of the Royal Air Force.

### **Performance monitoring**

- 3.8. We found that, as part of the RAFP's reporting mechanisms, it supplied a weekly performance monitoring pack to all its senior officers. This included data relating to the progress of serious or complex investigations on Royal Air Force stations and special investigation and intelligence branch cases over 100 days old.
- 3.9. However, while we found that meetings and documents were used to manage investigations, we did not find evidence of performance monitoring to assess the effectiveness of investigations.
- 3.10. For inspections of Home Office police forces, HMIC examines whether the police are effective at investigating offending, including the way the police support victims during a criminal investigation.<sup>27</sup>
- 3.11. In Home Office forces, standards of investigation are defined in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice,<sup>28</sup> which describes how the police should: support victims of crime; record crimes and allocate cases for investigation; make best use of investigative methods; supervise and quality assure investigations; train officers and staff to national standards; and learn lessons where appropriate. Senior officers of Home Office police forces are expected to use performance information about these standards as indicators to monitor and assess the effectiveness of investigations in their forces.
- 3.12. In the RAFP, we did not find a systematic and regular process for the collection of management and performance information, through which the RAFP could identify indicators of success and use them to monitor performance. For example, while the RAFP held information on crime detections, numbers of arrests, and levels of complaints, we did not see the

---

<sup>27</sup> HMIC's PEEL inspection methodology is set out on HMIC's website:

[www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/2016-peel-assessment/#effectiveness](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/2016-peel-assessment/#effectiveness)

<sup>28</sup> See the College of Policing's website for more information: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/)

RAFP bringing these together and using them as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of its investigations.

#### **Recommendation 4**

- By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a comprehensive system for monitoring the effectiveness of investigations. This should include, but not be restricted to:
  - how well the RAFP supports victims of crime;
  - how well it records crime and allocates investigations;
  - whether it uses investigative tactics appropriately;
  - how well it supervises and assures the quality of its investigations;
  - whether it provides training to national standards; and
  - how well it learns lessons from past experience.

#### **Technical evaluations**

- 3.13. We saw evidence that the RAFP professional standards unit undertook 'technical evaluations' (a process similar to an inspection) of the special investigation and intelligence branch. These evaluations were normally undertaken biennially. They focussed on compliance with the tactics, techniques and procedures that the Provost Marshal (RAF) had approved. The evaluations also sought to identify whether improper interference had occurred in investigations.
- 3.14. Prior to the evaluation, a self-assessment questionnaire was completed by the branch under evaluation. This was followed by an evaluation visit, after which a report was prepared and submitted to the Provost Marshal (RAF).
- 3.15. Technical evaluation reports contained an overview of the branch's performance and detailed good practice or areas for improvement. If a technical evaluation revealed significant concerns, the branch would receive further attention, sometimes in the form of unannounced visits.
- 3.16. Squadron and wing headquarters undertook similar evaluations of all other RAFP flights. We examined a 2015 evaluation of RAF Leeming and found that it focused on procedures such as security, investigations and crime reduction. We saw a plan that had been created to make improvements, following deficiencies that had been found during the evaluation, and we examined the positive progress that had been made: the creation of a crime reduction plan

shortly after the evaluation; and the development of that plan to focus on alcohol-related offending.

- 3.17. In addition to the reviews of investigations carried out by supervisors (see paragraph 2.52), the professional standards unit also provided a crime review capability, as well as dealing with complaints made about RAFP personnel and conducting technical evaluations. In one of our case reviews, we found that the professional standards department had reviewed the case and recommended new lines of enquiry.

### **Lessons learned**

- 3.18. We also saw documents that described the process of identifying and reporting 'lessons learned' following RAFP operations and investigations. This involved the referral of details to a regular forum for discussion about how the lesson could be integrated into training, tactics, techniques and procedures.
- 3.19. We examined the minutes of two meetings of this regular forum and saw examples of lessons learned that included sharing knowledge concerning the taking of some forensic samples and the need for media plans in high-profile sensitive policing investigations. We found that one lesson – identified in January 2015 – about delays in access to the police national computer, remained a concern for the personnel to whom we spoke.

## **How well RAFP personnel and commanding officers elsewhere in the Royal Air Force understand their responsibilities**

- 3.20. The Provost Marshal (RAF) has direct command of all RAFP personnel who are posted to any of the Royal Air Force's stations in the United Kingdom or to operational deployments overseas.<sup>29</sup> However, as we indicated earlier (see paragraph 3.1), RAFP personnel have two chains of command. They report to senior officers in the RAFP and to the commanding officers of the stations to which they are deployed.
- 3.21. Commanding officers of stations have the power to deal with certain offences, but must refer all Schedule 2 offences (see paragraph 3.3) and other serious offences to the RAFP to investigate.<sup>30</sup> The special investigation and

---

<sup>29</sup> The Armed Forces operate some joint service deployments to locations (such as the Falkland Islands, Cyprus and Gibraltar) where one service Provost Marshal provides technical direction to all service police personnel deployed to that location.

<sup>30</sup> Certain duties of commanding officers are set out in sections 113-115 of the Armed Forces Act 2006. The offences they must (by law) refer are those specified in Schedule 2 to the Armed Forces Act 2006 and those which have been committed in 'prescribed circumstances' as defined in the Armed Forces (Part 5 of the Armed Forces Act 2006) Regulations 2009.

intelligence branch investigates serious or complex cases and other matters which, due to their nature, require a special investigation. Other RAFF personnel investigate less serious offences and may bring cases for the commanding officer of the station to hear and judge.

- 3.22. We found that RAFF personnel at all ranks had a good understanding of their responsibilities, the concept of improper interference, and the relevant legislation. RAFF personnel we interviewed were able to describe in detail their powers, and the obligations placed on the Provost Marshal (RAF) and commanding officers of other stations and units. Evidence from our fieldwork, in particular our review of case files, led us to form the view that investigators had a strong sense of independence.
- 3.23. Furthermore, the personnel we spoke with were unaware of any occasions where there had been improper interference in investigations, and they were clear about how to escalate matters should any such interference occur. They told us that when commanding officers referred offences to them for investigation, they were given proper access to witnesses and evidence.
- 3.24. We found that the RAFF, in consultation with commanding officers of stations, had developed policing and security plans for all Royal Air Force stations. These plans varied in format from station to station but the most comprehensive examples referred to the strategic direction provided by the Royal Air Force and by the Provost Marshal (RAF). They included the policing and security priorities of the commanding officer of the station; and they described the RAFF activity to reduce crime and risks by, for example, prevention work with the local community, gathering intelligence and law enforcement operations.
- 3.25. Meetings took place quarterly between the RAFF and commanding officers of stations in order to assess new risks, review policing activity, and monitor progress against priorities.
- 3.26. Commanding officers of stations demonstrated a good understanding of the legislation and their responsibilities, particularly their duty to notify the RAFF of any Schedule 2 offences and any offences committed in prescribed circumstances (see paragraphs 3.3 and 3.22). In particular, they were supportive of the RAFF personnel who operated on their stations, and they understood the scope of their involvement in investigations.
- 3.27. We learned that senior officers in charge of RAFF regional headquarters regularly meet commanding officers of stations in their area to update them on investigations, changes to legislation and to remind them of their responsibilities. The senior RAFF officers we spoke with believed that commanding officers across the Royal Air Force understood the legislation and the responsibilities placed on them.

## **How the Provost Marshal (RAF) assures the Royal Air Force and the public that the RAFP is independent of the chain of command and that the Royal Air Force and the public can have confidence in RAFP investigations**

### **Tri-service investigations policy and protocol with police forces**

- 3.28. We found that the RAFP has reciprocal arrangements with the Royal Navy Police and the Royal Military Police for the referral and investigation of cases where a particularly high degree of independence was required, such as allegations against RAFP personnel. These arrangements were enshrined in the *Tri-Service Investigations Policy*.<sup>31</sup>
- 3.29. We examined a copy of the policy. The policy's intent was clear: “to ensure and increase confidence and transparency in the Service Police, and maintain high standards and good policing practice.” It then described the originating force’s responsibility to carry out urgent and essential tasks such as preserving evidence or securing a crime scene.
- 3.30. We found that, in addition to the *Tri-Service Investigations Policy*, a protocol had been agreed between the three service police forces, the Ministry of Defence Police, and the Association of Chief Police Officers (now called the National Police Chiefs’ Council).<sup>32</sup> This allowed for the transfer of investigations from the RAFP to Home Office police forces under a flexible approach based on consultation and agreement at a local level. In particular, the protocol allowed for the referral to Home Office police forces of the investigation of any incident involving death on Ministry of Defence property.
- 3.31. In addition, while we found that the RAFP had drawn on the expertise of other relevant professionals to review the quality of investigations, such as an investigation into a suicide and the possession, by members of the RAF, of indecent images of children, we did not find any evidence of the RAFP doing so to ensure the independence of its investigations. We consider that the RAFP would benefit from a structured process by which the independence and overall quality of investigations is reviewed from time to time by other relevant professionals on a regular basis.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Tri-Service Investigations Policy*, jointly issued by the Provost Marshal (Navy), Provost Marshal (Army) and Provost Marshal (Royal Air Force), May 2015 (unpublished).

<sup>32</sup> A Protocol between the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Ministry of Defence Police and the Service Police, April 2014

## Recommendation 5

- By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce a structured process by which the independence and overall quality of RAFP investigations is reviewed regularly by other relevant professionals.

- 3.32. We were briefed about two specific investigations, both serious. One involved an allegation of rape and the other an allegation of historical child abuse. We found evidence of good leadership in both investigations, with no suggestion of any improper interference. However, there had not been any strategic oversight beyond a monthly investigations meeting (see paragraph 2.58).
- 3.33. While the monthly investigations meetings allowed senior officers to review all investigations at a single meeting, this arrangement was not sufficient to provide the levels of scrutiny necessary for the most serious or complex cases. We consider that such cases should be subject to separate, individual reviews in common with Home Office police force arrangements where 'Gold Group'<sup>33</sup> meetings are held.

## Recommendation 6

- By 1 December 2016, the Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a separate strategic oversight group for each serious or complex investigation, modelled on the 'Gold Group' concept but adapted for the military context. The oversight group should routinely consider the use of independent external reviews for serious or complex investigations.

## Independent prosecution arrangements

- 3.34. The Service Prosecuting Authority, which was established by the Armed Forces Act 2006, exists to provide an independent prosecution service for the armed forces.
- 3.35. Because it is a separate part of the Ministry of Defence, the Service Prosecuting Authority is considered by RAFP personnel as an important factor in assuring the Royal Air Force and the public that RAFP investigations are subject to an independent prosecution process.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Command structures*, College of Policing, 2013. Available at: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/)

- 3.36. In our interviews, RAFP personnel described a positive working relationship with the Service Prosecuting Authority, particularly the independent support and advice it provided during RAFP investigations. However, they also told us that there was no appeal process from the RAFP to the Service Prosecuting Authority where a decision has been made not to prosecute a particular case. This is unlike the process that exists between Home Office police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service, where the police can appeal so that the evidence for prosecution can be reconsidered by a more senior member of the Crown Prosecution Service. We found that the Service Prosecuting Authority was in the process of revising its procedures to enable an appeal.
- 3.37. The Director of Service Prosecutions was signatory to a protocol<sup>34</sup> that had been agreed with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ministry of Defence. This protocol dealt with the issue of 'concurrent jurisdiction', where an allegation against a person subject to service law could be heard by a military court or a civil court. We found a good level of knowledge of the protocol among senior RAFP officers we spoke to.

### **Independent assurance by other organisations**

- 3.38. In addition to the independent inspection that HMIC conducts, certain aspects of the RAFP's operations are subject to independent oversight by a range of bodies including the Service Complaints Commissioner, the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) and the Interception of Communications Commissioner's Office.
- 3.39. The 2014 OSC inspection report was positive about the RAFP's approach to surveillance. We found that, where OSC had made recommendations, senior officers had been quick to improve practice, for example improving the RAFP's management of covert human intelligence sources.

### **Media and press**

- 3.40. We found that the RAFP had a comprehensive media and engagement plan which described when and how internal and external messages would be communicated through the media. In particular, one principal objective within the plan was to "support investigations and increase the confidence in victims."<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> *Protocol on the exercise of criminal jurisdiction in England and Wales between the Director of Service Prosecutions and the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ministry of Defence*, Service Prosecuting Authority, Crown Prosecution Service and Ministry of Defence, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> *RAF Police Media and Engagement Plan*, January 2016, page 1, paragraph 3 (unpublished).

- 3.41. In addition, the plan encouraged communication that promoted the work of the RAFP and informed a wide audience, including the public, of the way in which victims and witnesses would be treated.
- 3.42. We saw evidence of media and press publications, including an internal magazine for the RAFP, press releases about RAFP appeals for witnesses and posters that contained monthly messages from the Provost Marshal (RAF) to all RAFP personnel. We also saw other documents displayed on walls in the offices we visited. These documents defined the strategic priorities of the RAFP, set the standards for investigations, or focused attention on victims and witnesses.
- 3.43. RAFP personnel we spoke with were familiar with the plan and appreciated the importance of internal messages, as well as external messages to update and appeal to the public.

## 4. How well does the RAFP use the National Intelligence Model in identifying strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing?

### What we were looking for

- 4.1. The National Intelligence Model (the model) is a business process used by Home Office police forces (and other organisations) to provide focus to operational policing and to make sure resources are used to best effect. The model is set out in a Code of Practice.<sup>36</sup>
- 4.2. At a strategic level, the RAFP uses the model to assess current and emerging threats to the public. The RAFP uses this assessment to help prioritise its policing activity and allocate resources.
- 4.3. The model is underpinned by a set of minimum standards, namely that the organisation:
  - has governance and command structures;
  - can demonstrate knowledge management;
  - gathers information and makes use of intelligence; and
  - has a tasking and coordination process.
- 4.4. To assess how well the RAFP uses the model to identify strategic policing priorities and allocate resources we considered:
  - how well the model is understood and supported by relevant and accurate documents that describe threats (i.e. tactical and strategic assessments), and how accessible policies, procedures and training are across the RAFP;
  - whether the RAFP has a formal meeting structure that meets the requirements set out in the Code of Practice; and
  - how well the RAFP produces, assesses and uses intelligence and other information to identify strategic priorities and influence strategic planning and resourcing.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Code of Practice: National Intelligence Model*, Home Office, National Centre for Policing Excellence and Centrex, 2005, paragraph 3.1.1, page 6. Available at: <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/npia/NIM-Code-of-Practice.pdf>

## Findings

4.5. In summary, we found that personnel understood the model well, and had ready access to relevant policies and documents. Strategic assessments provided clear direction and guidance in relation to force priorities. RAFF meetings were well structured and, with the exception of the issue we mention at the end of this paragraph, were compliant with the Code of Practice. We also found that the RAFF used the model to influence strategic planning and resourcing. However, in order to improve the quality of strategic assessments and planning, the RAFF needs to apply certain aspects of the model more consistently across the force, particularly at flight and squadron levels.

### **How well the model is understood and supported by relevant and accurate documents that describe threats, and how accessible policies, procedures and training are across the RAFF**

- 4.6. We found that the RAFF provided all relevant RAFF personnel with training about the model. The training included an explanation to personnel of how to apply the model in their day-to-day work. We also found that information relating to the model was easily accessible. In offices we visited, we saw posters on display describing the model. We found that the model was comprehensively described in the tactics, techniques and procedures approved by the Provost Marshal (RAF).
- 4.7. RAFF personnel to whom we spoke had a good understanding of the model's principles and their individual responsibilities within it.
- 4.8. We examined the most recent strategic assessment.<sup>37</sup> We found that this was based on official frameworks,<sup>38</sup> and that it used a risk management matrix to rank the order of threats. The strategic assessment described the levels of crime and the context of other threats as well as the number of RAFF investigations and the type of intelligence it gathered. The strategic assessment was reviewed and updated quarterly.

---

<sup>37</sup> The *Code of Practice: National Intelligence Model* states (paragraph 5.1.2, page 10) that the “aim of the Strategic Assessment is to identify the medium to long term issues that are apparent or emerging and to determine resource, funding and communication requirements”.

<sup>38</sup> The ‘4 Ps’ framework (prevent, prepare, protect and pursue) which appears in the Government’s counter terrorism and serious and organised crime strategies, and the PIER framework (prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance) defined within the Code of Practice for the Model.

- 4.9. We examined more detailed assessments of individual threats, called problem profiles. These problem profiles included analyses of sexual offences and theft and substance misuse, describing when and where these offences were most prevalent. In addition, we examined two examples of another form of profile – subject profiles – that described the intelligence and information known about Royal Air Force personnel suspected of being involved in serious crime. The RAFP used these problem and subject profiles to inform its specific operations and investigations to prevent and detect crime (see paragraph 4.24).
- 4.10. The Code of Practice for the model defines the use of a tactical assessment<sup>39</sup> to inform the Tactical Tasking and Coordination meeting (see paragraph 4.15). This assessment should report increases or trends in priority threats and suggest intelligence-led interventions for prevention, intelligence and enforcement activity. This is important as it provides a cycle of intelligence to inform the assessment of strategic priorities on a continuous basis. We found evidence that, although the RAFP did not usually create tactical assessments, each Royal Air Force station had policing and security plans (see paragraph 3.25) and details of what the RAFP called ‘deliberate operations’. These included co-ordinated action to deal with a specific problem such as drink-driving on an air station.
- 4.11. We found that policing and security plans, as well as the ‘deliberate operations’, focused on the station commander’s priorities, as well as priority threats identified by the RAFP. However, we found that the format of stations’ policing and security plans was inconsistent and, while they described RAFP activity, reports on their progress were made only on a quarterly basis. Similarly, ‘deliberate operations’ were conducted infrequently at each station. We consider that these reports did not identify with sufficient frequency or consistency for the Provost Marshal (RAF)’s purposes those trends in priority threats in which the RAFP could make interventions.

## Area for improvement 2

- The tactical tasking and co-ordination products are an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should establish a system for the regular production of tactical assessments for the RAFP. Such assessments should ensure more frequent reporting of priority threats. Tactical assessments should include explicit, carefully considered recommendations for the use of intelligence-led policing tactics in order to tackle priority threats.

<sup>39</sup> The *Code of Practice: National Intelligence Model* states (paragraph 5.2.2, page 10) that the “areas the tactical assessment will cover will include appropriate interventions for intelligence gathering, enforcement and prevention activities; the identification of emerging patterns of crime and incidents; and a performance assessment”.

## Whether the RAFP has a formal meeting structure that meets the requirements set out in the Code of Practice

- 4.12. We found that the RAFP's arrangements for regular meetings to discuss intelligence-related matters (generally known among organisations that have adopted the model as 'Tasking and Coordination meetings') complied with the requirements of the model, except in one respect: the processes adopted for the Tactical Tasking and Coordination meetings lacked sufficient consistency from meeting to meeting.
- 4.13. The Provost Marshal (RAF) chaired the quarterly RAFP-wide Strategic Tasking and Coordination meeting, which was attended in person by senior RAFP officers. We attended this meeting, which we discuss later in this chapter (see paragraph 4.27).
- 4.14. We also attended a weekly RAFP-wide Tactical Tasking and Coordination meeting. This was chaired by the Provost Marshal (RAF) and was attended by senior RAFP personnel from each of the regions. We saw that all current operational demands<sup>40</sup> placed on the RAFP were considered and discussed against the resources available.
- 4.15. Drug intelligence and failures of compulsory drug testing were discussed, and a focus on high-risk stations for drug use was proposed. However, at this meeting it was unclear to us how policing activity to tackle the problem would be directed.
- 4.16. We reviewed the decisions made at previous Tactical Tasking and Coordination meetings across the RAFP at both squadron and wing levels and found that little consistency in the agendas for these meetings. Therefore, the manner in which the meetings functioned varied from meeting to meeting. Consistency is important because one of the main principles of the model is aggregation: the local collation of similar crime, incidents, events and intelligence in order to inform a larger picture at regional and national levels<sup>41</sup> (and in the case of the RAFP, international level as well)]. Without consistency, the process of aggregation is harder to follow. Consequently, the larger picture – in the form of the strategic assessment – is less likely to be comprehensive and accurate. This reduces its value to the leadership.
- 4.17. The extent to which squadrons adopted the model varied widely between the stations we visited. We found inconsistent direction: personnel at some

---

<sup>40</sup> Operational demands included 'committed force' and 'responsive force' expectations, aviation security commitments and 'deliberate' and 'surge' operations.

<sup>41</sup> *Code of Practice: National Intelligence Model*, Home Office, National Centre for Policing Excellence and Centrex, 2005, paragraphs 3.1.4 and 5.1.2, pages 6 and 10.

stations were given the task of gathering intelligence while others were not. We also found inconsistent allocation of tasks and use of intelligence to inform the day-to-day activity of RAFP personnel at those stations. However, we did find RAFP activity that achieved priorities set in local policing and security plans as we discussed earlier (see paragraph 3.25), but this was only reported on quarterly. In respect of RAF Leeming, we also saw examples of comprehensive crime reduction planning, detailed intelligence requirements for a drug offender, and a community engagement plan. Although we would not expect all stations to have identical problems and respective RAFP flights to have identical actions, we would expect to see common standards and levels of intelligence gathering, tasking and intelligence-led activity.

- 4.18. This intelligence-led activity, such as routine prevention and enforcement work, should be focussed on the priority threats set at the strategic tasking and coordination meeting and with commanding officers at Royal Air Force stations. The results of this activity can then be assessed and evaluated to inform successive meetings.

#### **Area for improvements 3 and 4**

- Consistency in the tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should introduce a consistent process for tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings across the RAFP, supported by the use of a standardised agenda. The process should enable the RAFP to manage priority threats, identify trends and make recommendations for the use of intelligence-led policing tactics.
- Mechanisms to brief, deploy and hold personnel to account for activity at flight and squadron levels are an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should improve communication processes in order to ensure that operational activity reflects priorities. RAFP personnel at flight and squadron levels should be more comprehensively briefed about relevant decisions taken at tactical tasking and co-ordinating meetings. This would enable the RAFP to direct its intelligence-led policing activity better. The outcomes of this activity should be regularly reported on, in order to inform further tasking and coordination meetings.

## **How well the RAFP produces, assesses and uses intelligence and other information to identify strategic priorities and influence strategic planning and resourcing**

- 4.19. We found that the force intelligence bureau, responsible for collating all RAFP intelligence, liaised closely with national intelligence agencies and Home Office police forces. The force intelligence bureau used the intelligence and threat assessments provided by these bodies in order to inform the RAFP strategic assessment.
- 4.20. We spoke with RAFP personnel in the force intelligence bureau and found that they were trained to national standards<sup>42</sup> and that they handled intelligence in accordance with the Approved Professional Practice defined by the College of Policing.<sup>43</sup>
- 4.21. We found that the force intelligence bureau used intelligence to inform RAFP activities such as proactive intelligence-led investigations into organised drug dealing, deliberate operations concerning station security, and policing of protests. These activities were planned and reflected priorities set by the Provost Marshal (RAF) and station commanders.
- 4.22. Force intelligence bureau staff had identified intelligence gaps – particularly around sexual offending and domestic abuse – and limitations created by a weak communication infrastructure, namely a reliance on ‘stand-alone’ computers that restricted intelligence from being shared.
- 4.23. We found that the RAFP had set out its requirements for the collection of intelligence at the strategic level. These requirements featured in a comprehensive document, known as an ‘intelligence requirement’, which was compiled on a six-monthly basis by the force intelligence bureau. The intelligence requirement focused on the priority areas within the strategic assessment. However, we found little evidence that the intelligence requirement was known and fully understood by personnel we spoke to at flight level (see paragraph 4.18).
- 4.24. The strategic assessment informed the quarterly Strategic Tasking and Coordination meeting (see paragraph 4.14). We attended one of these meetings, which was chaired by the Provost Marshal (RAF). We also examined the records of decisions of previous meetings.

---

<sup>42</sup> The analysts we interviewed had completed the National Intelligence Analysts Course accredited by the College of Policing.

<sup>43</sup> *Intelligence report*, College of Policing, 2015. Available at: [www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/intelligence-management/intelligence-report/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/intelligence-management/intelligence-report/)

- 4.25. The purpose of the meeting was for the Provost Marshal (RAF) to decide the strategic policing priorities for the year ahead.<sup>44</sup>
- 4.26. The meeting determined that the strategic priorities for the RAFP would be:
- terrorism;
  - espionage;
  - substance misuse;
  - sexual offences;
  - domestic extremism;
  - loss/compromise of information;
  - domestic abuse;
  - fraud; and
  - theft.
- 4.27. We found that these priorities were used as the basis for the control strategy<sup>45</sup> (another component of the model) which described how each priority would be addressed by the RAFP, under the themes of: 'prevention'; 'intelligence'; 'enforcement'; and 'reputation activity'.
- 4.28. We examined the control strategy and found that plans had been created for each priority under the responsibility of a nominated senior RAFP officer. The plans were comprehensive and detailed specific activity designed to reduce the threat that was linked to the priority. Some plans were based on good practice from the College of Policing, such as one relating to how the RAFP would reduce domestic abuse. However, we found that not all senior officers had access to good practice or learning from the College of Policing, Royal Navy Police or Royal Military Police. Senior officers we spoke to were concerned that their plans might not reflect current good practice.
- 4.29. We found that senior officers combined effectively the lessons learned (see paragraph 3.19) with technical evaluations (see paragraph 3.14) to help the

---

<sup>44</sup> The *Code of practice: National Intelligence Model* states (paragraph 4.1.1, page 9) that the "purpose of a Strategic Tasking and Co-ordinating Group is to consider the strategic assessment in order to set a control strategy and establish an intelligence requirement for the level at which it is operating".

<sup>45</sup> The control strategy is the collection of development plans that in aggregation set out how the RAFP will tackle proactively the policing priorities identified in the RAF Police and Security Strategic Assessment.

development of tactics, techniques and procedures (see paragraph 2.31). They also oversaw any changes to training of RAFP personnel in their areas of expertise, such as how to provide care for victims of domestic abuse, which helped them devise their control strategy plans.

- 4.30. We examined these plans and found that they included good examples of prevention work, such as raising awareness and training personnel. However, plans to enforce the law and to fill intelligence gaps were less well developed.
- 4.31. In the Strategic Tasking and Coordination meeting we attended, we found that the reporting of activity and outcomes in relation to control strategy plans was effective and plan owners were held to account. However, as discussed earlier (see paragraph 4.18), the RAFP must improve its mechanisms to brief, allocate tasks and hold personnel to account for activity at flight and squadron levels.
- 4.32. We found that the annual strategic assessment provided the RAFP with a means to address the current and emerging issues in the short term (i.e. 12 months ahead) and it helped influence most strategic planning and resourcing. However, it did not adequately identify demands and threats in the long term (beyond 12 months ahead).
- 4.33. The ability to understand clearly the future demands the RAFP may face is important in order for it to determine the capacity and capability it needs to meet those demands.

#### **Area for improvement 5**

- The strategic assessment process is an area for improvement. The Provost Marshal (RAF) should improve RAFP's use of the strategic assessment process to identify future demands more effectively. This will enable the RAFP to make a more accurate assessment of its capacity and capability to meet those demands.

## 5. Conclusions

5.1. Our terms of reference required us to address the following questions.

### **How effective is the overall strategic leadership and direction of the RAFP including the structures and mechanisms in support of these areas?**

- 5.2. The evidence for this aspect of the inspection showed that the RAFP was well led overall. We found a clear mission directive from the Provost Marshal (RAF), with strong leadership and clear priorities. The workforce was committed, professional and clearly understood its role. The various documents we examined set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the RAFP and included comprehensive guidance on the Provost Marshal's expectations for the quality of investigations. Against this evidence of good strategic leadership, the inspection also revealed opportunities to strengthen it further.
- 5.3. While training was effective, courses were not accredited by the College of Policing. This led to our first recommendation.
- 5.4. We consider it important that only personnel with appropriate experience, and (where possible) accreditation, should oversee investigations. However, commissioned officers change roles more frequently than other ranks. Succession planning was not always adequate and in respect of certain posts requiring specialist skills – such as the oversight of complex investigations – the RAFP should match skills more closely or provide training prior to posting. This led to our second recommendation.
- 5.5. A third of the case files we reviewed lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate that effective supervision had taken place and supervisors sometimes asked investigators to create lines of enquiry which investigators felt to be unnecessary. This led to our third recommendation.
- 5.6. We identified an area for improvement concerning communication of the process used for the selection of personnel for contingent force deployments.
- 5.7. On balance, we conclude that the Provost Marshal (RAF) provided effective leadership and strategic direction of the RAFP in relation to investigations but that the RAFP need to take particular action in order to improve matters in the three areas we outlined in paragraphs 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5; and make general improvements in the area we describe at paragraph 5.6.

## **How effective are the oversight, governance, monitoring and assessment arrangements within the RAFF to ensure investigations are effective and kept free from improper interference?**

- 5.8. The evidence for this aspect of the inspection fell into two broad areas: the arrangements to ensure that investigations were effective in general; and specifically the arrangements to ensure that investigations were kept free from proper interference.
- 5.9. In the first area, our inspection revealed evidence of good oversight, governance and monitoring arrangements, such as the reviews of investigations by senior officers at set times, technical evaluations by the professional standards department and the lessons learnt forum. These arrangements were strong and they provided assurance. In one aspect, we were prompted to make our fourth recommendation concerning the RAFF's arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of its investigations.
- 5.10. In the second area, the inspection revealed evidence of good arrangements to ensure that investigations were kept free from improper interference, such as the Provost Marshal (RAF)'s direct access to the Chief of Air Staff. This and the various other measures we found – the independent Service Prosecuting Authority, the knowledge of and requirements for commanding officers to refer certain cases to the RAFF, the Tri-service Investigation Policy and external inspection – provided assurance that investigations were independently carried out.
- 5.11. However, we considered that, in order to provide further assurance, the RAFF would benefit from the introduction of a structured process by which the independence and overall quality of its investigations are regularly reviewed by other relevant professionals. This formed our fifth recommendation. In addition, for the most serious or complex cases 'Gold Group' meetings should be held. This led to our sixth recommendation.
- 5.12. We conclude that, while there are effective oversight, governance, and monitoring arrangements within the RAFF to ensure investigations are kept free from improper interference, these arrangements should be strengthened in the manner we describe in paragraphs 5.9 and 5.11.

## **How well does the RAFP use the National Intelligence Model to identify strategic policing priorities that influence strategic planning and resourcing?**

- 5.13. The evidence for this aspect of our inspection identified a clear commitment to the National Intelligence Model from the RAFP's leadership. Personnel understood the model and guidance was clear and accessible. RAFP meetings under the National Intelligence Model process were mostly well structured. They effectively identified emerging issues, threats and priorities in the short term. In addition, the RAFP intelligence products we reviewed provided personnel with clear direction and guidance in relation to force priorities.
- 5.14. However, when we looked at Tactical Tasking and Coordination products, and mechanisms to brief, task and hold personnel to account for intelligence-led activity at flight and squadron levels, we found inconsistency. In addition, when we looked at the RAFP's ability to assess and predict future issues that may affect the force, we found that the force strategic assessment did not adequately identify demands and threats in the longer term.
- 5.15. Therefore, we conclude that, in order to better inform strategic planning and resourcing, the RAFP should improve its use of the National Intelligence Model. Specifically, the RAFP should use the model more consistently at a tactical level and should identify strategic policing priorities that influence its longer-term strategic planning and resourcing. This prompted four further areas for improvement.

## Annex A – Methodology

The inspection was carried out in three stages.

### **Initial visit**

During the first stage in February 2016, HMIC made a one-day visit to RAF Marham to understand the RAFP's structure and how it operates.

### **Document review**

The second stage consisted of a review of over 3,000 pages of documents provided by the force that described the structure, leadership and operational procedures of the RAFP.

### **Field inspection visits**

The field inspection took place in March 2016 and included visits to Royal Air Force stations at Honington (RAFP headquarters), Henlow (the support headquarters), Halton (south regional headquarters and special investigation and intelligence branch), Brize Norton, Waddington and Cranwell (north regional headquarters and special investigation and intelligence branch). We also visited RAF Leeming.

We interviewed the Provost Marshal (RAF), the deputy Provost Marshal, and commanding officers from the regional headquarters and the special investigation and intelligence branch. We held focus groups with junior RAFP personnel and also with other Royal Air Force personnel.

We obtained from the RAFP a list of case files from which we selected twelve at random. We examined these to see how strategic leadership and direction affected day-to-day practice. We also examined the RAFP's arrangements for the training and skill development of its personnel.

## Annex B – List of case files reviewed

- Alleged battery and ill treatment of a subordinate
- Prejudicial to good order and service discipline
- Fraud
- Fraud
- Indecent assault
- Attempted unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13
- Possession/Distribution of indecent images of children
- Alleged possession of component parts of a firearm (3 suspects)
- Firearms (possession of ammunition)
- Possession/Supply of controlled substance
- Possession/Supply of controlled substance (8 suspects)
- Assault