

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Follow-up/Monitoring Visit to Chester & Ellesmere Port BCU
Cheshire Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted – February 2003

Follow-up Visit Conducted - March 2004



Follow up/monitoring visits to inspected BCUs

Chester & Ellesmere Port BCU – Cheshire Constabulary

Date of Inspection	Lead Inspector on revisit	BCU Commander	Date of final report	Date of monitoring visit
February 2003	Ch Supt Ian Shannon	Supt Ian HOPKINS (New since Inspection)	February 2003	March 2004

1. Significant developments since the original inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength).
 - Since the original inspection, the BCU Commander (following promotion to chief superintendent) has moved on. The new BCU Commander took up post in February 2004.
 - New command team members since the last inspection also include the detective chief inspector and one of the two chief inspectors (operations at Ellesmere Port).
 - The Chief Constable has instigated an operational policing review, 'Taking Control'. The review will affect Force structures, operating practices and policing styles.
 - Probationary constables within the BCU have increased from 48 at the time of the original inspection to 68.

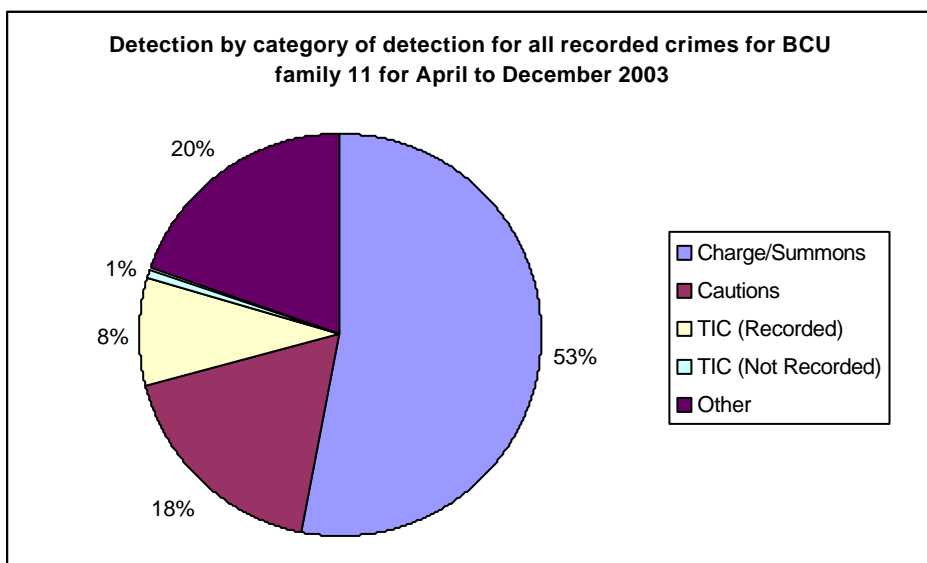
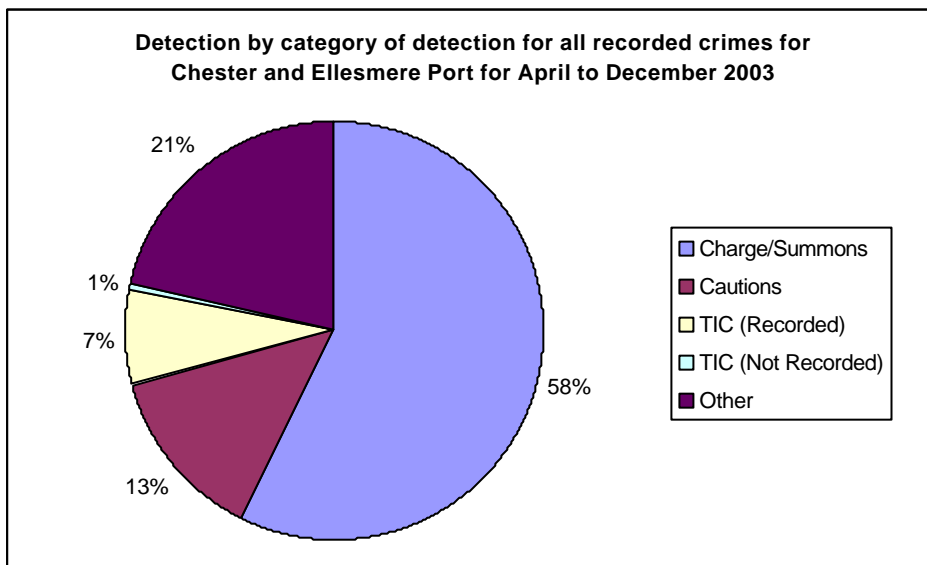
2. Performance

Current BCU Performance compared with Inspection					
Performance indicator	Performance Apr - Dec 2001	Original Inspection Performance Apr-Dec 2002	Re-visit Inspection Performance April-Dec 2003	Actual Change from 2002 to 2003	% Change from 2002 to 2003
Recorded Crime per 1,000 Population	60.0	71.43	80.34	8.91	13%
Recorded Crime Detection Rate	22.85	25.3%	24.0%	-1.3	-
Domestic Burglary per 1,000 Households	9.86	11.13	12.37	1.24	11%
Domestic Burglary Detection Rate	24.0	21.6%	25.0%	3.4	-
Robberies per 1,000 Population	0.38	0.64	0.63	-0.005	-1%
Robbery Crime Detection Rate	27.63	26%	14.3%	-11.7	-
Vehicle Crimes per 1,000 Population	11.06	11.7	11.18	-0.52	-4%
Vehicle Crime Detection Rate	4.88	9.2%	12.2%	3	-
Violent Crimes per 1,000 Population	6.25	10.42	12.63	2.21	21%
Violent Crime Detection Rate	73.24	63.5%	57.2%	-6.3	-
Serious or fatal road traffic collisions/ 1,000 population	-	0.44	0.43	-0.01	-2.27%

- At the time of the original inspection in to the BCU performance there had been increases in:
 - All recorded crimes per 1,000 population
 - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 population
 - Recorded violent crime per 1,000 population
 - Recorded vehicle crime per 1,000 population
 - Recorded robberies per 1,000 population
 - Serious/fatal road traffic collisions per 1,000 population
 (Using data for April to December 2002 as compared with the same period in 2001).
- At the time of the original inspection detection rates had risen for total recorded crime and vehicle crime, but fallen for domestic burglary, violent crime and robbery.
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary was pleased to note that the detection rate for residential burglary had risen since the inspection and is

currently the best in the 'family' of most similar BCUs. The detection rate for vehicle crime had also improved and is good compared with the BCU family. The violent crime detection rate had fallen but was still better than the average for the family of BCUs.

- However, this generally positive assessment is slightly tempered by the number of detections that do not end in sanctioned detections which contribute to 'closing the criminal justice gap' and which may have a positive impact on crime reduction (grouped under the category of 'other detections'). It is acknowledged that non-sanctioned detections ('other') are only very slightly higher than for the BCU family but it is an area of performance that maybe worthy of further attention, in order to maximise the impact of criminal investigation on crime reduction.



- The level of vehicle crime remains high compared with the BCU family but it was pleasing to note that this position was improving and the inspection team noted that considerable effort had been put into effective partnership activity to reduce vehicle crime.
- However, the inspection team was disappointed to find that in terms of the levels of total recorded crime, violent crime and domestic burglary the levels of crime were high compared with the BCU family and were continuing to get worse.
- The inspection team believe that some of the increase in violent crime and in total recorded crime is attributable to initiatives to ensure that national crime recording standards are applied properly; this improvement in recording practice is welcomed. However, this will only explain some of the increase and does not explain the rise in residential burglary.
- The inspection team was not convinced that the reasons for these increases were well understood by the BCU and was also not convinced that a sufficiently rigorous approach to preventing this apparent decline in performance had been taken.
- However, the early steps taken by the new BCU Commander to embed performance management impressed the inspection team. There were also a number of specific initiatives, including a rural policing project, a community safety centre in Chester and Operation Yellow Card, which clearly have the potential to impact on crime and disorder reduction.

3. Inspection Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
<p><i>The senior management team develops and corporately agrees (i) a coherent and inclusive policing approach, which includes (ii) an effective performance regime for the strategic management of Chester and Ellesmere Port BCU. (iii) This must be effectively led and communicated to all staff.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Taking Control' review has been instigated at Force level and is expected to be complete by August 2004. The BCU now operates the corporate performance management framework and uses corporate personal performance indicators (PPIs) that were introduced in December 2003. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The previous BCU Commander has been involved in the Force level review since mid 2003. However, since the last inspection, there is no evidence that the BCU has progressed significantly in developing a local policing approach and clear messages, which would, inform staff and set out the BCU policing style, local delivery mechanisms and clarify the performance focus. The need for action in this key area remained evident at the time of the monitoring visit and was demonstrated in mixed perceptions and direction amongst operational staff and their supervisors. The new BCU Commander, who arrived in post during February 2004, recognises that greater clarity is required. He has already taken steps to raise command team visibility and he assured the Inspection team that this recommendation would be acted on within six months. It is disappointing that this approach had not been adopted prior to his appointment. There is a distinct and generally effective focus on crime detection levels driven by the detective chief inspector, which is reflected in BCU performance against this indicator. This approach is evidenced both in the use of performance data and in the focus of attention on

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal performance indicator information is used to assess staff activity.• The BCU has a business plan, which was reviewed by the assistant chief constable in October 2003. This plan incorporates BCU policing objectives.• BCU priorities have been circulated to staff in a pamphlet.• A well considered NIM control strategy has been developed.• Regular BCU management meetings include consideration of performance issues but (other than in respect of performance in the area of crime detection) a sense of rigour and urgency was not evident.	<p>detection in management and tasking and co-ordinating meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• However, the BCU has not established a range of indicators that fully reflect delivery against targets for all its business plans and consequently a similarly effective approach is less evident in respect of other aspects of BCU performance, notably in reducing crime.• There is clear scope for development of PPIs to better reflect the outcomes expected from different policing roles within the BCU. Inspectors are clearly using PPIs to address performance but the information is generally not being used in a sophisticated or consistent way and in consequence many staff are conscious of the need to deliver quantitative, but not necessarily qualitative, results. The links between PPIs and desired outcomes is not always clear.• Operational staff are aware of the main control strategy priorities but there is limited evidence that they are able to link the individual and team activities being demanded of them with the outcomes that are desired in the strategy. Improved communication would enhance staff awareness of priorities and of their role in achieving them and would enhance performance.
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Recommendation 2	
<i>The senior management team ensures inspectors are made aware of their vital role in driving performance. This group, particularly patrols or 'block' inspectors, should be provided with direction and clarity concerning their roles and leadership responsibilities. Senior management needs to ensure that inspectors have clear ownership and understanding of all BCU priorities.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management team workshops have been held with inspectors and sergeants to define leadership responsibilities and terms of reference. • Individual responsibilities for inspectors have been set out and documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspectors have five weekly performance review meetings with a chief inspector. • Inspectors understand their responsibilities and have an appreciation of what they individually are expected to achieve. A corporate understanding is less well developed. • Inspectors acknowledge that more precise performance information about BCU objectives would enable them to direct their staff more effectively.

Recommendation 3	
<i>The senior management team, with appropriate guidance and advice from headquarters, prepares and implements relevant diversity strategies for the BCU.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy document ' Equality and Diversity' has been produced by the Force and distributed to staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCU staff have received the Force policy document. This document sets out Force standards and requirements for behaviour and conduct. • There is no evidence that the BCU has undertaken local implementation of strategies in support of the Force policy or that senior managers have been notably proactive in promoting and explaining the Force strategy. • However, there was evidence of effective challenges being made in relation to inappropriate conduct within the BCU. • There is evidence that staff see diversity in terms of compliance. An approach that develops a broader awareness and

	<p>understanding is still required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is also evidence that, in addition to the Force policy, BCU staff would welcome practical information on the diverse cultures represented within the BCU area, which would support them in their day-to-day contacts with the public.
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Recommendation 4

The senior management team develops formalised internal communication structures within the BCU for regularly consulting staff, and for the provision of feedback and information sharing

Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was disappointing to note that the SMT did not agree a communications strategy until February 2004. • It was clear that this had not yet been fully implemented. However, a range of actions was in place and some positive changes are apparent. • Regular tasking and co-ordinating and pre-tasking and co-ordinating meetings, which include operational staff, are in place. • A formalised meetings schedule between the BCU Commander and Federation representatives has been established. • The chief inspector operations (Ellesmere Port) have arranged similar meetings with (Force level) UNISON representatives. • Corporate information is provided to staff through the ‘core brief’, although this is largely disseminated by e-mail. • A sergeants ‘forum’ is now held regularly meeting with the chief inspector operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regrettably most staff who were seen still considered communication to be overwhelmingly top down and e-mail was seen as the primary communication tool, this was resented. • There is evidence that the pre-tasking and co-ordinating and sergeants meetings provide a contact point for staff to raise issues, which affect operational delivery. • The BCU has effective mechanisms in place to communicate operational information and tasking requirements. These methods are well understood and used by staff. • Recent seminars connected with the Force ‘Taking Control’ review has provided opportunities to communicate Force level organisational change issues. • Similar mechanisms at BCU level are necessary and are now being developed by the BCU Commander. • There is evidence that informal communication has been improved by the presence of the chief inspector at Ellesmere Port (a move which is welcomed by staff – although this may

	<p>exacerbate the perception that, to all intents, two BCUs remain).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is also evidence of some positive effects from increased 'visibility' by the chief inspectors and resource manager since the last Inspection and more recently by the new BCU Commander.
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Recommendation 5

The PPI System is reviewed and adjusted to bring it more closely in line with the performance priorities for the BCU

Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU has adopted the new Force PPI performance framework. • Regular performance data distinguishes intelligence items that are relevant to the BCU control strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes to the PPI system that have taken place were driven by the Force and introduced in December. • PPIs do drive some staff activity but there are concerns amongst operational staff that the indicators reflect data that is 'available' rather than that which is 'appropriate' to their role and BCU aims. • There is evidence that the superficial nature of some PPIs is producing a league table approach to individual and team performance, which does not effectively connect with BCU objectives, a clear example being the prevalence of intelligence submissions of limited value. • The action plan submitted to HMIC following the 2003 Inspection did not acknowledge that the PPIs required development to link with BCU priorities and consequently no adjustments were made at BCU level prior to the introduction of corporate PPIs in December 2003. • This Inspection team concurs with the original Inspection findings. Many of the PPIs still do not clearly link activity to desired outcomes and a more sophisticated approach and further development is required

	<p>and this is recognised at Force level and now, belatedly, by the BCU SMT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noteworthy that some front line operational staff and first line supervisors have already taken steps to design and use supplementary local PPIs, which should be explored by the BCU SMT.
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Recommendation 6

The BCU puts in place a comprehensive implementation plan with identified milestones and target dates for the full implementation of the NIM. In addition, existing proactive and reactive structures should be reviewed to ensure the BCU has the capacity to successfully address crime trends across the full range of BVPI targets.

Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider roll out and development of the NIM is part of a Force level implementation project. The BCU is supporting this drive and is viewed as performing comparatively well in this area. • The BCU has an intelligence unit in place, led by an inspector and including two trained analysts. • The BCU has produced a detailed strategic analysis and a control strategy, which is being used to guide activity. • Regular Tasking and Co-ordinating meetings are held. • The BCU has a system in place to record and track specific tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear evidence that the intelligence unit is driving targeted activity through problem and target offender profiling. • Effective use is made of a BCU tasking database, which communicates and tracks required actions. • Operational staff receive effective briefings and are well informed about offender and problem profiles. • There is evidence that crime (and in particular crime detection) is very well represented within the BCU NIM processes. The approach, within the NIM model, on the BCU, to public reassurance and satisfaction and to address quality of life issues, requires some further development, and the BCU SMT is considering this. However, the Inspection team recognise that some excellent work is being done by local officers and partners to address anti-social behaviour.

Recommendation 7	
<i>The senior management team revisits briefing and tasking to ensure that staff reliance upon self-briefing is minimised and that all staff are briefed in a way that allows them to fully support BCU performance.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic systems provide the BCU with an efficient means of distributing information to its staff. • The geography of the BCU produces reliance on these systems as the primary ‘tool’ for briefing, although face-to-face briefing has been enhanced since the last inspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have ready access to operational information and briefing which is provided mainly electronically. • A degree of self-briefing continues to be a necessity but there is no evidence that staff lack the information they require for effective patrol activity. • Debriefing needs to be developed, this was recognised by the BCU SMT but the Inspection team urges them to address this issue soon. • The BCU is exploring the use of video conferencing to improve contact and communication.

Suggestions made during the initial Inspection		
1.	That a replacement team leader for the crime car team is appointed.	In place.
2.	Address the duplicated CID structures (at Chester and Ellesmere Port).	A combined structure has been implemented.
3.	Raise profile of the SMT amongst BCU staff (whilst this was not a recommendation, it was critical to the effective implementation of improved communications and to the delivery of visible and accessible leadership).	A chief inspector is now based at Ellesmere Port and there is some evidence of increased ‘visibility’ by the SMT. The Inspection team is disappointed that this issue has not yet been adequately addressed, although they were impressed by the commitment now being displayed by the new BCU Commander. A diary system to monitor visits has now been introduced but it is suggested that a more rigorous process needs to be put in place. This should include regular patrol by SMT members and

		a programme of structured visits to stations on the BCU.
4.	Division of functional roles and responsibilities of the two detective inspectors.	Implemented
5.	Enhance BCU unification in particular with regard to resource allocation.	The perception that Chester and Ellesmere Port operate as subdivisions persists.
6.	Change responsibilities of the community safety inspector towards a more focused/dedicated role.	Role and responsibilities reviewed and amended.
7.	Review health and safety policies and procedures – ensuring training needs are identified and addressed.	Unarmed defence training and related operational training is being delivered but the weight of probationer training appears to have impeded further development.
8.	Maintain focus on sickness levels.	BCU performance sustained and improved.
9.	Establish BCU tutor group.	Current BCU capacity prevents implementation of a tutor unit, the Inspection team concur with the judgement of the BCU Commander.
10.	Increase use of PDR task sheets for police staff as a management tool.	Not fully tested.
11.	Make staff aware of grievance procedures.	Staff are aware of the process but it was not clear that it was valued.
12.	Optimise Special Constabulary deployment in line with BCU priorities.	Not tested, but special constables are now deployed with community action team officers.
13.	BCU Commander to chair tasking and co-ordinating meetings.	The BCU Commander has attended 9 of 21 tasking and co-ordinating meetings held since March 2003.

4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up Action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	No - See below
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	In parts
Has performance in relation to national/local targets improved? If not, are the reasons for deterioration understood (e.g. transition to NCRS) and being addressed?	Overall, No
Have any problems arisen since the Inspection that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	Yes – see below
Other than notification of monitoring outcome to regional office (lead staff officer), is any further action required by HMIC Inspection team – e.g. contact with PSU?	Yes - see below

- The Inspection team considers that not all the recommendations made have been rigorously addressed. An initial resistance to the recommendations exacerbated this. However, the Inspection team is satisfied that the recommendations are now accepted.
 - There has been an increase in recorded crime, notably in the areas of burglary dwelling, violence and total recorded crime, and performance in these areas is poor compared with the BCU family and getting worse.
 - The Inspection team recognises that the detection rates for vehicle crime and burglary dwelling are good compared with the BCU family and have continued to improve since the 2003 Inspection.
- **Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary, in consultation with the Chief Constable, believes that it is appropriate for a further re-inspection of the BCU to take place in approximately six months, to support the Force and to ensure that all the recommendations made in the February 2003 Inspection have been fully acted on.**

Chief Superintendent Ian Shannon
5/4/04