

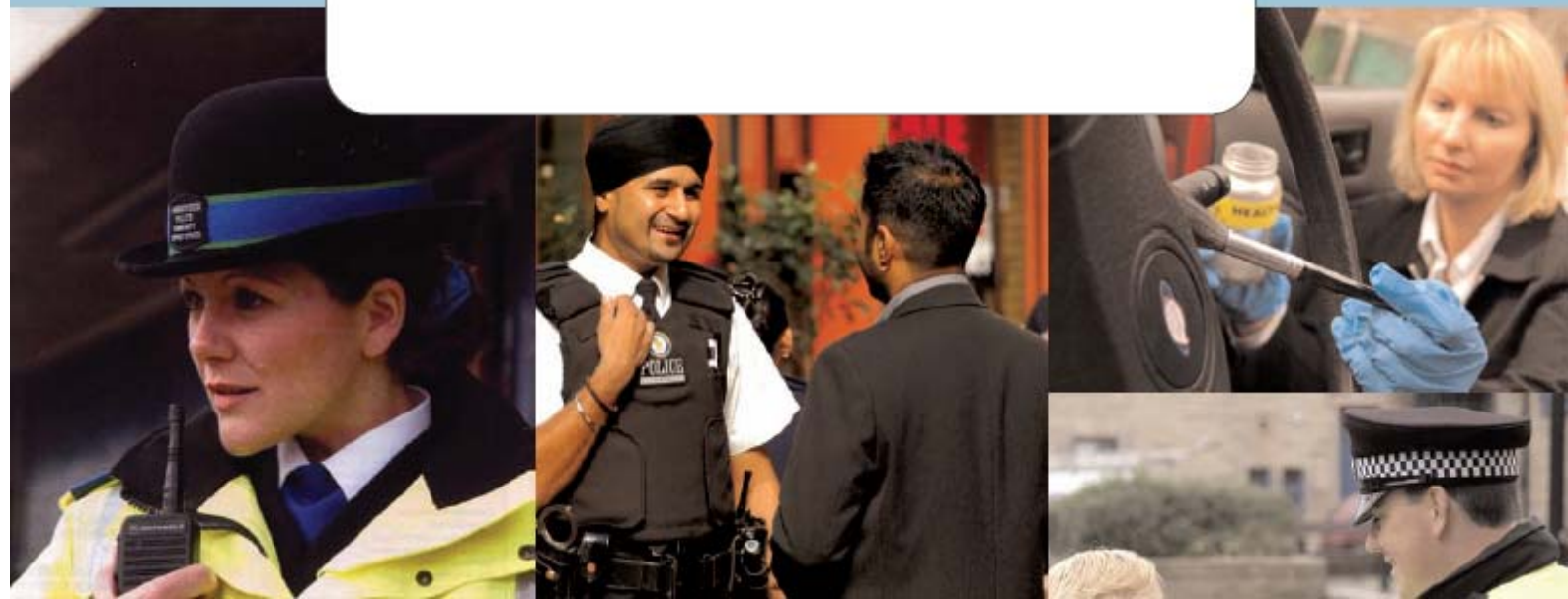
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



HMIC Inspection Report

Essex Police
Major Crime

July 2008



Essex Police – HMIC Inspection Report

July 2008

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Contents

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09
Programmed Frameworks
Major Crime
Future Programmed Inspections
The Grading Process
Developing Practice
Force Overview and Context

Findings

Major Crime

Recommendations

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Appendix 2: Developing practice

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005, and thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking more probing inspections of fewer topics. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that neighbourhood policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/>) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;
- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of neighbourhood policing.

July 2008

In addition, we are currently developing a scrutiny of strategic resource leverage, and are liaising with the Audit Commission on a methodology for the anticipated inspection of police authorities.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime and neighbourhood policing in each of the 44 forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

While this document includes the full graded report for the major crime inspection, the inspection relating to serious and organised crime is detailed in a separate thematic report.

Major Crime

This framework covers the force effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with homicide and other major crimes that will normally require a force to set up a major incident room. There is only one statutory performance indicator at present, although other indicators shown in the report facilitate appropriate comparisons of performance between forces; the indicators suggested give some context regarding the volume of such crimes, success in detections and trends over time, but they need to be interpreted with care. The assessment is primarily qualitative, with a judgement as to the extent to which the force predicts and prevents major crime as opposed to solely discovering and reacting to such crime. Major crime includes any investigation that requires the deployment of a senior investigating officer and specialist assets.

The grading system has changed this year to allow for a single ACPO threshold standard against which forces will be assessed as compliant, not compliant or exceeding compliance. It is recognised that collaborative arrangements can be used where appropriate. At a high level, the ACPO lead summarises the threshold standard as set out below:

- Intelligence – Compliance with the 2005 ACPO National Intelligence Model guidance on the shared understanding of and response to the risks and demands of the major crime threat, with effective intelligence and data sharing internally, with neighbouring forces and with key partners.
- Prevention – Effective proactive partnerships to prevent major crime in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights; this includes precursor offending and options such as Osman warnings.
- Enforcement – Compliance with the 2006 ACPO *Murder Investigation Manual* and guidance in the 2005 ACPO major incident room standardised administrative procedures, having sufficient resources to meet and manage the predicted demand and contingency to meet extraordinary demand from major crime investigation and review.

July 2008

- Performance management and resilience – Efficiency through robust performance measures linking costs/resources, inputs and outputs to goals (ie the outcomes of reduction and prevention, detection and conviction work).

Future Programmed Inspections

Following these serious and organised crime and major crime assessments, HMIC plans work in the following areas:

Inspection area	Dates
Neighbourhood policing	April 2008 – September 2008
Developing citizen focus	April 2008 – September 2008
Civil contingencies	September 2008 – May 2009
Public order	September 2008 – May 2009
Critical incidents	September 2008 – May 2009
Professional standards	June 2009 – December 2009
Information management	June 2009 – December 2009
Leadership	June 2009 – December 2009

The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to meet the standard, exceed the standard or fail to meet the standard.

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the ACPO agreed standards as the starting point for its SGC. The standards against which forces are measured are communicated to all forces and police authorities some time before the inspection starts. The standards are set at a level that ensures that risk to the public is identified, managed and mitigated as far as is feasible; all forces should find the standards achievable.

Exceeding the standard

Where a force can demonstrate capacity and capability that exceed the agreed national standards, it is expected that risk assessment and business cases justify the availability of 'additional' resources, and that they are deployed appropriately. For example, some forces require a higher level of capacity/capability to counter extraordinary threat levels or to discharge a regional or lead force remit. Without such a rationale, an over-investment would almost certainly represent poor value for money and thus attract criticism.

Failing to meet the standard

This assessment is appropriate when a force cannot provide evidence that it meets a number of significant criteria that correlate with the ACPO national standards. Where evidence is provided to confirm that the particular issue has been properly risk assessed and the risk is being managed, then the report may not necessarily draw an adverse conclusion. The assessment may also give some credit in situations where a force has the ability to remedy any deficiencies promptly, in terms of time and investment levels needed.

Developing Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected (described as a 'strength') in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces; each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required. HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

Essex Police covers 1,404 square miles, including a number of large towns with a population of between 100,000 and 150,000 (Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Southend). The area also includes a number of medium-sized towns (Maldon and Braintree) and smaller market towns (Hadleigh and Saffron Walden) with significant agricultural links. Population densities vary significantly; the larger urban communities tend to be found in the south along the Thames corridor and more rural communities to the north.

The county's towns are linked by a number of key roads including the M25, M11, A12 and A13. Essex Police also covers one of the largest expanses of coastline in the UK. This, together with Stansted Airport (the third busiest London airport) and the ports of Tilbury and Harwich, links the UK to other countries and sees many visitors entering the UK through Essex.

Demographic Description of Force Area

The county has a population of just over 1.6 million people, an increase of 5% since 1991, which is forecast to rise by 24% to over 2 million by 2021. Essex had 72,000 residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in 2001. There were 38,000 residents from ethnic groups other than white and 34,000 from white minority groups. People from all BME groups made up 3.5% of Essex residents in 2001, the largest group coming from India, with a smaller number of Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani and Chinese heritage. Across England, 13% of people belong to BME groups. People from ethnic groups other than white made up 2.9% of Essex residents. Three times as many people across England were from these groups (9.1%). White minority groups made up 2.6% of the Essex population compared with 3.9% across England.

The average earnings for a full-time employee are £31,755; this is above the UK average of £28,210. The average pay for males within the county is a third higher than that of an average female equivalent. A high percentage of residents work as management or senior officials, closely followed by administrative and clerical occupations.

Over 15% of residents hold qualifications to degree level or equivalent. Almost 30% of residents have no formal qualifications.

Local authorities in Essex set some of the lowest council taxes in the country. Like other police forces, Essex is dependent on central government for 75% of its funding; the remaining 25% is met by council tax funding. This means that a gearing effect arises, whereby council tax increases are high in percentage terms if the annual increase in government financial support is significantly less than the increase in the annual budget requirement. This forms the backdrop to what Essex perceives as an uncertain grant-funding future. To address these uncertainties around funding and expenditure, the force has devised a three-year medium-term approach to financial and service planning to ensure delivery of operational goals.

Structural Description of Force including Staff Changes at Chief Officer Level

The force headquarters is based in Chelmsford, with many of its support functions including the force information room (FIR) and Essex Police Training College also located at HQ

The last major restructure within Essex took place in April 2006 when the number of divisions was reduced from seven to five.

Policing is delivered by the five territorial divisions plus a division at Stansted Airport and is supported by three centrally co-ordinated divisions: crime, mobile support and communications.

Following a number of changes to the chief officer team (late 2006) there has been a period of stability and the team, including the Director of Finance and Administration is considered to be strong and with the necessary experience to deliver an appropriate level of service.

There have been no major changes to the Police Authority (PA) and there remains a positive and professional relationship between the force and members.

In terms of resources, the Essex net revenue expenditure on services for 2007/08 is estimated to be £241.8 million.

Essex has 3464 police officers, 2310 police staff and 440 police community support officers. The force also has 561 special constables to support regular officers.

Strategic Priorities

Essex Police Authority and Essex Police strategy outlines the strategic objectives for the policing of Essex over the next three years and provides a framework for the local policing plan. It represents the shared aim of the PA and Essex Police to deliver a first-class policing service that is focused on the needs of the citizen.

Essex Police is committed to delivering a style of policing that is visible and accessible, and that improves face-to-face contact with the public.

The strategy reflects local consultation and contains the following overarching priorities for 2007/8.

- to increase police visibility and reassurance;
- to improve both the timeliness and the quality of response to calls for assistance;
and
- to tackle anti-social behaviour and disorder.

Force Performance Overview

Force development since 2007 inspections

Essex has demonstrated strong performance against many of the priorities and targets set by the PA during 2006/7. There has been a notable achievement in crime reduction whilst sanction detections have increased. The force has one of the lowest crime rates in England.

Two main goals have been to make accessibility to policing services easier and improve the way in which the service is delivered. This has been achieved by increasing the opening hours of police stations (12 out of 47 police stations are open 24 hrs a day), providing one stop shops in the county and the introduction of a non emergency telephone number for the force.

There has also been steady progress in the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing (NP) across Essex. Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) cover 144 areas, the areas are all based on wards. Each NPT has either a PC or PCSO as a single point of contact with details fully accessible via the force website, central telephony system or through a variety of posters and newsletters.

July 2008

Essex has appointed 440 PCSOs to form part of NPTs and has achieved a proportionate share of the 16,000 PCSOs required to be in place nationally by the end of April 2007.

In relation to the previous HMIC baseline assessment for 2005/6 areas for improvement have been closely monitored using a tracker system featuring within chief officer led performance meetings.

The force has been working on improving its service around domestic violence (graded Poor in 2007) and a revisit is planned by HMIC in August 2008 to assess progress.

Force development since 2007 inspections

Essex Police has continued to work collaboratively with Kent to maximise resources, realise savings and improve frontline policing. In addition to collaborative policing, the forces are working together to review professional HQ support functions and budgets, identifying savings and improving services. Seven such reviews are planned for the current year.

The year saw the implementation of a centralised, non-emergency switch board. Supported by a new, single non-emergency number which was launched in March 2008, the switchboard now offers a 24-hour, 7-day service countywide.

The Mounted Unit, comprising 4 horses, a sergeant and 6 constables, was launched in December 2007. This additional capability has enabled Essex Police to conduct patrols in communities where historically engagement has been difficult. Patrols are set to increase as the unit develops.

The new Dunmow Police Station was opened in June 2008 after the force identified the need for a greater police presence in the area as Stansted Airport and the A120/M11 corridor developed. Designed to replace the existing 1842 building, the new station provides modern facilities to complement those already available at Divisional HQ in Braintree.

Protective Services

Regional collaboration on counter-terrorism

In 2006, Essex Police became lead force for the policing of counter-terrorism in the Eastern Region on behalf of ACPO (TAM). The DCC has set up a regional co-ordination board and leads on the significant work in building the capacity of the regional counter-terrorism unit, which is scheduled to move into new premises in June 2008.

Ongoing collaboration between Essex and Kent on Protective Services

Having secured Government funding, Essex and Kent became one of thirteen demonstrator sites in July 2007, working together to develop and integrate marine capability, ports command, air support and Automated Number Plate Recognition technology.

Major Crime

GRADE	Meets the standard
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Contextual factors

This element of the inspection report details Essex capacity and capability to identify and assess the risks from major crime, as well as its response in preventing and investigating these crime types, prioritising those which pose the greatest threat to individuals or communities.

Of the offences in the major crime category, the force is under threat from a high level of life threatening and gun crime (per 1,000 population) in comparison with its most similar forces (MSF), noting peaks in the late summer months of 2006 and 2007.

	2006	2007	Change	MSF** group mean
Life-threatening & gun crime per 1,000 pop.	0.352	0.384	+9.09%	0.322
No. of abductions per 10,000 population	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.001
% of abduction crimes detected/convicted	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
No. of attempted murders per 10,000 population	0.061	0.097	59.02%	0.079
% of attempted murder crimes detected/convicted	120.00%	43.75%	-76.25pp*	94.89%
No. of blackmail offences per 10,000 population	0.298	0.115	-61.41%	0.140
% of blackmail offences detected/convicted	10.20%	21.05%	+10.85pp*	44.92%
No. of kidnappings per 10,000 population	0.213	0.237	+11.27%	0.270
% of kidnapping crimes detected/convicted	45.71%	43.59%	-2.12pp*	44.70%

Essex Police – HMIC Inspection Report

July 2008

No. of manslaughter per 10,000 population	0.018	0.036	+100.00%	0.015
% of manslaughter crimes detected/convicted	33.33%	83.33%	+50pp*	Not Applicable
No. of murders per 10,000 population	0.115	0.085	-26.09%	0.084
% of murders detected/convicted	89.47%	100.00%	+10.53pp*	109.98%
No. of rapes per 10,000 population	2.272	1.738	-23.50%	2.180
% of rapes detected/convicted	22.99%	19.93%	-3.06pp*	23.04%

**"pp" is Percentage Points.

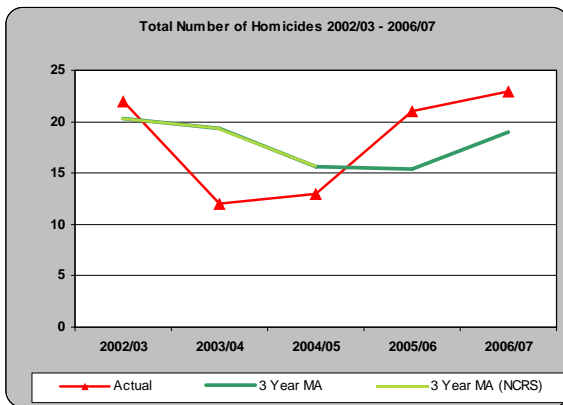
**Most Similar Family (MSF) for Essex is: Avon & Somerset; Cheshire; Derbyshire; Hampshire; Hertfordshire; Kent and; Warwickshire.

July 2008

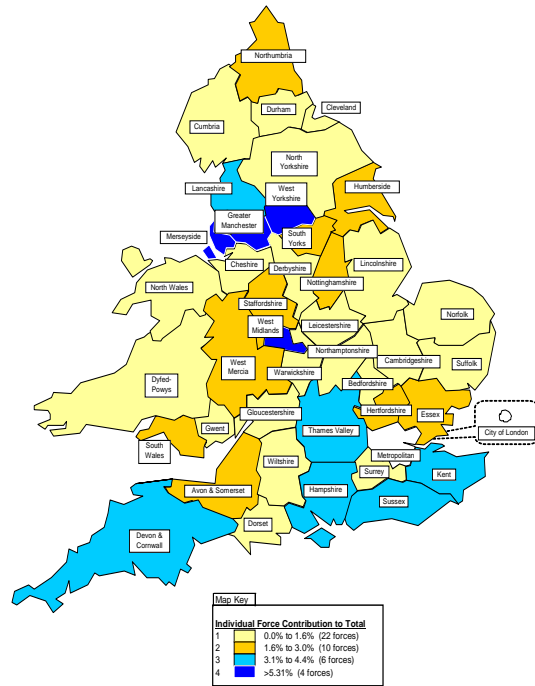
Major crime investigation in Essex is broadly similar to peer forces, apart from offences of rape and blackmail with detection and conviction rates being below those of the MSF group average.

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool, released on 25 September 2007, revealed that Essex faces a medium level of demand in respect of the policing response to homicide offences, although they have fallen significantly and are consistent with the average for MSF peer forces.

While the three-year trend is upward including a 2006/7 peak, a recent downturn in offending has brought the force below the MSF average.



Homicides (2001/02 to 2006/07), Contribution to Total, Excl. MPS

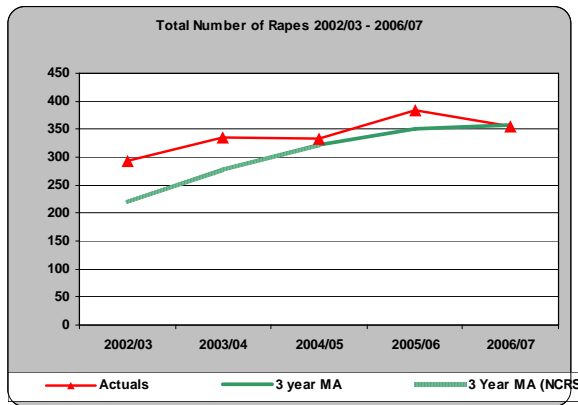


Essex is bordered by two other forces which also indicate raised demand for this crime type. (Excluding MPS).

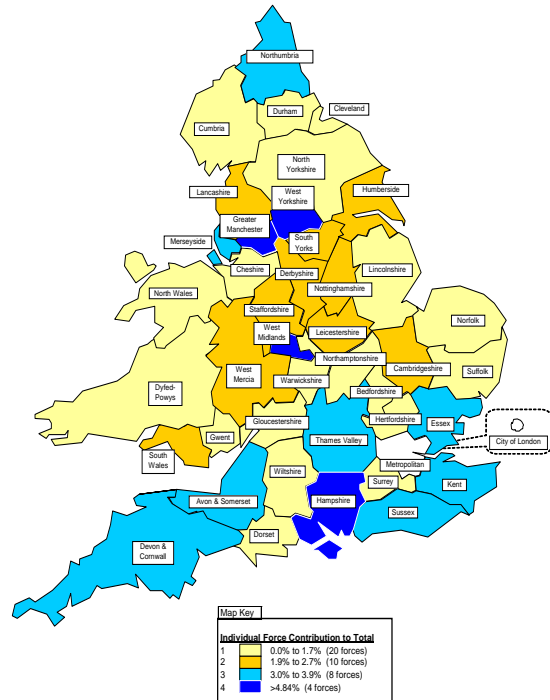
July 2008

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool, revealed that Essex faces a high level of demand in respect of the policing response to rape offences, although they have fallen significantly and are now below the average for MSF peer forces.

While the three-year trend is upward including a 2005/6 peak, a recent downturn in offending has brought the force below the MSF average.



Rape (2001/02 to 2006/07), Contribution to Total, Excl. MPS

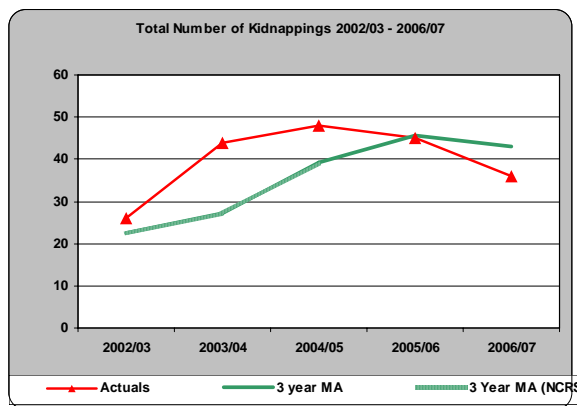


Essex is bordered by two other forces which also indicate raised demand for this crime type. (Excluding MPS).

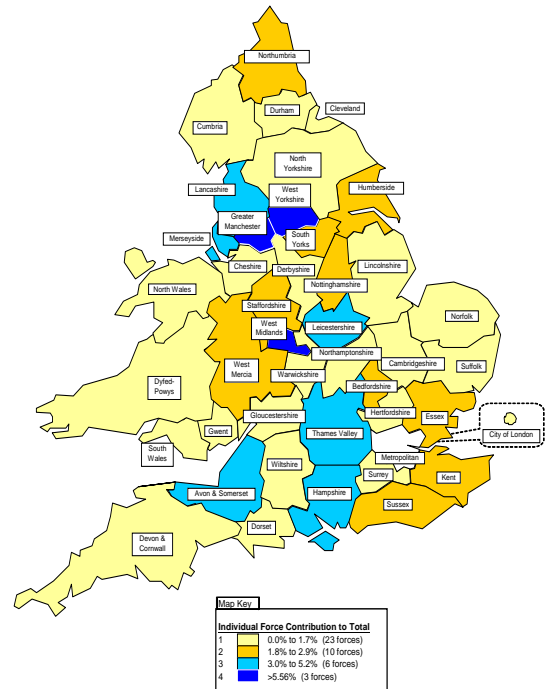
July 2008

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool, revealed that Essex faces a medium level of demand in respect of the policing response to kidnapping offences, although they have risen they remain below the average for MSF peer forces.

While the three-year trend is downward following a 2004/5 peak, a recent upturn in offending has brought the force towards the MSF average.



Kidnap (2001/02 to 2006/07), Contribution to Total, Excl. MPS



Essex is bordered by one other force which also indicate raised demand for this crime type. (Excluding MPS).

While organised crime group (OCG) mapping is in its infancy as a technique nationally, Essex has sought to make progress by ensuring that major crime types are mapped. It is currently estimated that 14 OCGs impact the force area, across 4 major crime types

The force strategic assessment demonstrates a clear understanding of the historical, current, predicted and emerging trends in major crime and the interventions required to tackle these.

The force has identified its priorities within the force control strategy as domestic and distraction burglaries, possession and supply of drugs, robbery, vehicle crime, threat of terrorism and youth offending.

Within the documentation overall, the issues have been broadly identified and addressed.

The force has invested suitable resources to allow for intervention activity to maximise harm reduction, to minimise risks to the public and to inhibit major crime. In particular, Essex's role in the provision of support to regional partners (Suffolk Operation Sumac) is noteworthy.

This inspection assessment reveals that the force demonstrates a maturing process in its approach to tackling major crime. In making this judgement, collaborative agreements with Kent are recognised.

Intelligence

Summary – The force has sufficient dedicated analytical resources to meet the identified demands from major crime, to supply dynamic intelligence products that drive the energies of the force. The force has fully committed to major crime investigation with the requisite staff, accommodation, equipment and funding.

Strengths

- The force has an establishment of 38.5 analysts. A team leader and 4.5 analysts are dedicated to and fully trained for providing analytical support to major crime. The team leader is also a practitioner and supplies resilience to the team as well as professional support and guidance.
- The structure of analytical support within the force is considered to be effective for the current demand of homicides and other major crime (see Area(s) for improvement).
- Analytical products are assessed for compliance against National Intelligence Model (NIM) Analytical Products and Techniques Version 2, NIM Intelligence Products Version 2, National Occupational Standards (in line with section 6 NIM code of practice), and following publication of advice from the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA).
- Customer contact interviews are conducted on 10% of all completed analytical products to elicit direct comment on the quality of product/support provided.
- The analysts' development programme, designed by the principal analyst, has been introduced to ensure all analysts in the force can create NIM intelligence packages to the required standard and disseminate them quickly and effectively.
- The force won external recognition by achieving the East of England Training Award for the programme.
- The major crime memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Kent allows for aid to be provided around specialist resources; this includes analytical and research resources should demand be within this field.

Work in progress

- Funding has been approved for the conversion of eight detective constable (DC) roles into police staff. This includes one intelligence cell supervisor and four intelligence support officers who will be responsible for researching intelligence within a dedicated major investigation team (MIT) intelligence unit.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force does not have in place researchers to provide support to analysts.
- Although analysts are able to manage current workload, should the level of homicides increase to a level normally experienced by the force then the lack of research capability will impact on their ability to provide pure analytical support to senior investigating officers (SIOs) (as well as on preventative products).

Summary – The force seeks (and shares) intelligence about level 2 and 3 major crime types through partnerships. This work is assessed to be effective. The force’s community impact assessments (CIAs) to evaluate risk following major crime are extensive.

Strengths

- Intelligence specialists are utilised during the course of major investigations and include covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) as well as products obtained through the technical support unit (TSU) officers. Intelligence from automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) is fully exploited.
- There has been a generic protocol in existence for information sharing with victim support services (VSS) since 2002.
- There is consistent consideration of CIAs following major crime. Many good examples exist, but a recent one is Operation Jabot, the death of a 14-year-old boy by two other youths at Lime Farm estate near to the border with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). This incident attracted national media attention not least because of the different ethnic backgrounds of victim and offenders.
- A comprehensive CIA was conducted following the force template. This included a consultation grid detailing persons consulted and by what means, risk assessment, action plan and a rolling log containing developments. Close liaison took place with the adjoining MPS district commander who arranged completion of a CIA for his area.
- The force introduced a major crime suppression strategy in October 2007. The strategy sets out a framework for the force to minimise the risk of major crime, which is defined in the document as: murder/manslaughter, abduction, rape and extortion. Roles and responsibilities of divisions and departments are clarified, as well as processes necessary to ensure the effective gathering of intelligence leading to prevention. This relatively new piece of work requires robust follow-through for it to have the desired effect.

Detailed problem profiles exist for:

- criminal use of firearms (prepared annually every April);
- distraction burglary;
- cash-in-transit robberies (also involving partners such as the MPS and the British Transport Police (BTP));
- immigration crime; and
- serious sexual offences (in particular examining the drop-out rate on convictions).

Work in progress

- An MOU has recently been agreed with partners on domestic violence (DV) referrals and MOUs are in development for homicide and sex offences. The DV MOU is a multi-agency risk-based protocol, and is included within the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC). It will be introduced county wide by June 2008.
- Formal protocols exist with social services for child protection cases. These were launched in 2007.

July 2008

- A vulnerable adult abuse information-sharing protocol is being developed with a launch in April 2008.
- The volume crime element of the VSS MOU is currently being reviewed by officers within territorial policing command.

Area(s) for improvement

- Although SIOs are trained on the relevance of CIAs there is no specific training on how to complete CIAs, although guidance is provided on the force diversity website.
- All CIAs with independent advisory group (IAG) involvement are filed within the headquarters (HQ) diversity unit. Major crimes regularly involve a gold group in which case copies of CIAs are stored within executive support. Historic CIAs are not readily available out of normal office hours consequently valuable community information is not accessible.
- Although CIAs examined were considered to be comprehensive, not all entries were timed or attributed to the author.

Summary – The force SA has analysed the trends in relation to major crime sufficiently. Consequently, the force control strategy is found to be similarly adequate. There is sufficient evidence the force understands the threat posed by other life-threatening issues.

Strengths

- Major crime features within the force strategic assessment (FSA) under the heading of violent crime. It does not feature within BCU activity other than preventative, eg policing of the night-time economy, or proactive, eg dealing with DV.

The current FSA (see Area(s) for improvement) details a number of crime types under the key heading of violent crime:

- homicide (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) and attempted murder;
- gun crime; and
- domestic violence.

Outline analysis is provided for all the above.

Work in progress

- A draft FSA has been written and is awaiting endorsement from the strategy and performance group. It provides analysis for murder, attempted murder, DV and gun crime, but does not provide recommendations or identify intelligence gaps/requirements for these issues.
- Essex completes a firearms strategic assessment each year in line with national guidance.
- The criminal possession and use of firearms has been considered within the current FSA but was excluded and not placed on the force control strategy owing to the low number of 'serious' offences recorded.

July 2008

- Major crime features on level 2 tactical assessments, particularly around the area of resourcing. Crime pattern analysis (CPA) has been conducted in relation to homicide, and is under development in the area of kidnap and extortion.
- The force is currently writing a strategic intelligence requirement around vulnerable and emerging communities.
- Funding has recently been agreed to introduce a NIM compliance officer post for the force.

Area(s) for improvement

- The current FSA was written in September 2006 and although it includes crime types as listed above, the information and analysis (especially predictive) has not formally been reviewed by chief officers and is dated. The cycle of writing the FSA has been adjusted to fall in line with recommendations of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) NIM working group (see Work in progress above).
- The force does not have a strategic intelligence requirement; this is of concern given the nature of crime types requiring specific intelligence (see Work in progress above).

Summary – Trend analysis and problem profiles are shared with partners and BCUs. There is a trigger plan for ‘hot briefing’ whenever a significant change in either the major crime threat, or where the nature of the analysis, demands a fast time response. Information-sharing protocols with key partners exist and are under review . The force can demonstrate that it is on track to reach full management of police information (MoPI) compliance by 2010.

Strengths

Operation Merlot and Operation Shire Horse were both connected with the successful prevention of homicide through suppression activity. Outcomes were a conviction in one case and disruption in the other.

- **Catchem**

The Catchem database was recently used to assist in informing the search strategy for a missing woman.

- **Kidnap and extortion database**

The kidnap database is used by all trained SIOs via the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) in kidnap investigations.

- **Injuries database**

During a high-profile investigation the force had to consider differing evidence from a number of pathologists concerning injuries received by the victim. The force used the injuries database and considered a similar case from the Midlands. Information gained assisted with suspect interview plans.

- **Skills and diversity web (eg MPS community and cultural resources unit (CCRU) using the life skills and languages of police officers and staff).**

July 2008

The skills and diversity web is frequently used. An example of use is during the investigation into the death of Vi-Pong-To to provide advice on circulating information into the Cantonese media.

- **National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) databases and specialist advisers.**

The force sought best practice regarding the interviewing of a suspect who had an unusual profile. Guidance was provided by an expert in the field who assisted the force in developing an effective interview strategy.

Work in progress

- The force is on target to achieve MoPI compliance by the national target date of 2010 and has a full-time project manager and two development and support officers dedicated to this work, which is carried out under the strategic lead of the assistant chief constable (protective services) (ACC (PS)).
- A peer review was conducted on the MoPI project in November 2007; the review acknowledged the experience of the team and that Essex was the first force in the region to undertake data profiling.
- One of the work streams within the MoPI project is to identify current information-sharing agreements such as those with local authorities, social services and law enforcement agencies and to review in line with guidance.
- The project team has devised a standardised template for data-sharing protocols.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force has well-established support groups for under-represented groups including NEXUS (LGBT) and the Black Police Association (BPA). Although evidence was provided of where they had been consulted, eg Joe Shipton murder, the force could benefit by engaging members of these groups to assist in providing expert knowledge during major crime investigations.

Summary – The force’s profiling of vulnerable locations and communities is developing, and the impact of OCG activity is partially understood. As a result, future risks and threats are identified are not identified sufficiently early.

Strengths

The major crime suppression strategy examines threat to vulnerable sections of the community and requires problem profiles for the following:

- gun/knife crime;
- domestic violence;
- sex offenders/potentially dangerous persons;
- night-time economy;
- child abuse;
- mental health;

July 2008

- counter-terrorism;
- missing persons; and
- drugs.

There are effective public protection working arrangements with partners, mainly probation, to identify risks posed by multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) offenders and potentially dangerous people. Regular meetings are held and referrals minuted at MAPPA meetings and entered onto the Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR).

Work in progress

- All neighbourhoods were profiled during the neighbourhood policing project and are currently being reassessed and brought up to date (see Area(s) for improvement). The force has introduced a more formal process into the timing of regular profiling aided by a calendar outlining a new annual cycle of information collection/collation and report production.
- Neighbourhood profiles will be reviewed every July/August and February/March and vulnerable localities every July and January. Updated information will inform district strategic assessments and ultimately the FSA.
- The identification of vulnerable locations and communities is now set out in the minimum guidance to neighbourhood specialist officers for neighbourhood profiles.

Area(s) for improvement

- Vulnerable communities and locations are not profiled within the FSA and the force has more to do around these areas to proactively identify future risks and threats (see Work in progress above).

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should develop corporate systems and processes which effectively measure and assess harm and threat to local communities.

Summary – The force strategic risk register should be reviewed regularly however this has not been the case. Risks have been identified and the force is now accelerating work to introduce a robust process to ensure effective management.

Strengths

- The force has a corporate risk register that is owned by the director of finance and administration; the register has historically been reviewed by the chief officer group (see Area(s) for improvement)
- Risk management assessment training was provided to chief officers and chief superintendents in June 2007.

July 2008

Work in progress

- A risk management strategy was approved in July 2007 with the audit panel of the police authority (PA) providing oversight on its implementation.
- Recognising the current skills shortfall within the field of risk management, the force has sought assistance from Kent Police who is providing support to the force in carrying out a gap analysis on current activity against the new strategy.
- Kent is also acting as a professional adviser on the recruiting and selection to the new post of risk management adviser.

Area(s) for improvement

- The current risk register (written in September 2006) was last formally reviewed at chief officer group in January 2007. The force does not have an in-house group to monitor and manage risks at the appropriate frequency, and there is no effective follow-through. Force auditors as well as HMIC have previously identified weaknesses in risk management processes; as a result a risk management strategy has been written (see Work in progress above). The pace of change to introduce more adequate systems has been particularly slow.

Risks around major crime have been recorded as:

- failing to deliver/implement the protective services project.
- potential risk of failing to recruit and retain sufficiently experienced specialist officers; and
- failing to train and develop staff in critical roles.
- Identified force risks are maintained on an Excel spreadsheet within the finance department, therefore access is restricted.
- The force has not reached the necessary state of maturity in risk management to introduce risk registers on territorial or HQ-based divisions.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should accelerate the introduction of the new risk assessment monitoring process and review after six months to ensure new arrangements are working with risks identified, assessed and managed appropriately.

Summary – The force is creating ways of collaborating with all the others within its region to provide the same level of access and interrogation of IT systems. None of the force's operational databases are immediately searchable from outside the region. The force can demonstrate that its intelligence products are informed from a range of sources, including partners (eg multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)) and other law enforcement agencies.

July 2008

Strengths

The force recognises the importance of being able to provide real-time access to intelligence out of hours and has taken the prudent decision to invest resources in an intelligence support bureau (ISB).

The ISB provides 24/7 support for the following:

- intelligence provision for the management of critical or serious incidents;
- qualification (QA) force-wide of intelligence reports onto the intelligence system; and
- verification of stops forms.

This set-up is regarded as best practice by HMIC.

- The force was an original pilot site for ANPR and continues to fully exploit this technology. The force has three full-time intercept teams comprising one sergeant and six constables. It uses 130 static cameras along with mobile covert or overt cameras.
- National and regional ANPR searches and intelligence-led research are used as a matter of routine during major crime investigations. An example is where ANPR was used to establish the movements of a witness in a murder investigation. ANPR provided intelligence that led to the conversion of the witness to a suspect, and he was subsequently charged and convicted for murdering a close relative.
- The force has the facility to link the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) 2 with other forces during any connected investigations.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

- Similar to other forces, Essex is unable to service all 'hits' registered on ANPR. It has, however, invested heavily in allocating resources to fully use this technology, and has seen a threefold increase in dedicated ANPR teams.
- There is no technical process to transfer intelligence from HOLMES onto the force intelligence system. Any intelligence has to be raised on intelligence form CID 61 from an officer within the investigation team intelligence cell and submitted manually.

Developing practice

Full details shown in Appendix 2.

Summary – The force has a case review policy that is always applied, ensuring that current major crime cases are reviewed in accordance with ACPO guidance, the policy is highly effective.

Strengths

The force review policy and process is comprehensive. Policy details the types of reviews required, this includes:

July 2008

- initial reviews, ie 72 hour;
 - 28 day;
 - 26 week;
 - concluding review;
 - undetected major crime;
 - other commissioned reviews; and
 - thematic reviews.
- The policy also stipulates the overall review mechanism including the roles and responsibilities of the review commission and the review team.
 - Any force issues are managed by the crime operations meeting. A review matrix is held by the review team to manage ongoing recommendations.
 - The review commission is chaired by the ACC (PS) and includes detective chief superintendent head of crime, director of specialist investigation, BCU commander, corporate development rep, HO crime training and a review manager. The review commission is held monthly and provides scrutiny against all live investigations. Reviews are assessed, with any recommendations held on a force matrix.
 - The review process has been expanded to include deceased missing person reviews.
 - The Essex crime statistics department within corporate development sends monthly National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) figures to the Home Office using form CRIMESEC 3.
 - Sexual offence-related information is provided to the serious crime analysis system (SCAS) via the NPIA through a dedicated force single point of contact (SPOC).
 - The force regularly examines other force's investigations to identify good practice. This is usually done via the NPIA and through regional representatives.

Work in progress

- Policy covering the review of major investigations was refreshed in October 2007 to include post-charge debriefing. The force recognises that to aid future investigations, fully structured debriefs should take place to ensure best practice is identified and lessons learnt are fully captured. This type of review is in addition to reviews already carried out by the force, ie concluding or closing review. Consideration is being given to utilising Kent to carry out reviews on major investigations as part of developing collaborative arrangements.
- Essex will be attending and contributing to major crime best practice seminars held by other forces in the region; the first such meeting takes place in March 2008.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force has rarely requested external reviews during major crime investigations, preferring to use its own resources. While this is entirely in accordance with policy, it would perhaps be beneficial for the force to enlist another force on an ad hoc basis to provide some form of external scrutiny and validation of force systems and processes. This could easily be a reciprocal arrangement (see Work in progress).

Summary – The force tasking and co-ordination process functions operates satisfactorily to deliver suitable responses to manage major crime threats. Documentation examined reveals a sound understanding of historical, current and predicted demand.

Strengths

- Analytical work has been carried out to predict demand; consequently the last 12 months has seen growth within the four Major Investigation Teams (MITs). As a result of the increase in staff, divisions are now rarely requested to release staff on long-term loan to major enquiry teams.
- Also taken into account is the level of work the review team provides. During times of low demand the team concentrates on historic cases. Consequently the focus of MIT teams is balanced between cold case and current investigations.
- Cold cases are assessed as to the risk and likelihood of a positive outcome and with agreed timescales recorded in review commission minutes. Progress is closely monitored: should live investigations increase, activity on historic cases is adjusted (reduced) accordingly.
- The review commission provides validation for use of force resources, predominantly MITs, to investigate major crime. Chair of the review commission, the ACC (PS) is also chair of the force tactical tasking and co-ordination group (TTCG) so full continuity and oversight of force resources is maintained.
- Decisions not to progress a potential investigation are recorded in decision logs and examined by the review commission and minuted.

Work in progress

- Although the force has had a long-running NIM team in place (Essex intelligence model) it has only just decided on funding for a compliance officer to be recruited. This should ensure regular checks on NIM products.

Area(s) for improvement

- As has already been identified in this assessment, the force does not have robust or regular processes in place to monitor activity against the FSA and control strategy, and a gap exists by there not being in place a strategic intelligence requirement. That said the force does have in place particularly robust daily management and tasking meetings (24/7) with intrusive senior management direction and control. Daily meetings have a particularly strong focus on critical incidents. Fortnightly divisional and force-level TTCGs are held and follow NIM principles.

Summary – Due to inadequate training, the force’s awareness of diverse community needs during major crime investigations is limited.

Strengths

- There is no specific diversity training for MIT staff, though all police officers and staff have attended equality and diversity workshops. A significant number of MIT detectives are family liaison officers (FLOs). Initial and refresher training additionally addresses the issues of diverse communities.
- There are examples of how the force has actively engaged in seeking advice for dealing with major crime involving minority groups or foreign nationals, such as how to manage the handling of bodies during post-mortems with due regard to religious practice and custom.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is no bespoke training for MIT investigators and staff. Staff support groups from within the force could be engaged to assist with identifying appropriate training.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty’s Inspector recommends the force introduces bespoke diversity training for officers and staff working within MITs.

Prevention

Summary – The force has an independent advisory group and this is regularly used to maximise the contribution of partners in the management of major crime investigations.

Strengths

- A strategic IAG was formed in October 2004. In addition to this, each BCU has at least one local IAG, most of which have been established since 2006.
- There are a number of examples of consultation with IAGs during the last 12 months, these are usually documented as part of gold group minutes/strategies, CIAs, etc.
- Examples include Operation ICELAND (terrorism in London and Glasgow June 2007), Operation Jabot (murder at Limes Farm November 2007) and Operation SUMAC (Essex response to Suffolk murders).
- Other examples have included Operation Heriot (illegal immigrant facilitation and associated deaths) and Operation Parasol (domestic murder involving Iraqi Kurd community).

July 2008

- Another is Operation Jensen, which was a series of fires in mosques/Islamic centres during October 2006. IAGs also provide joint press releases with the force for critical incidents.
- IAGs receive approximately £10,000 in funding from the force.

Work in progress

- There are no formal timescales for when IAGs meet. A review of strategic IAG terms of reference is to be progressed in coming months.
- A successful bid was made during 2007 to secure funding for critical incident training for members, a course previously run by Centrex. There has been an input regarding the role of Special Branch and further inputs from SB are planned in the next few months regarding community tensions/community intelligence.

Area(s) for improvement

- IAGs have not received any training on major crime; however, post incident debrief and presentations to the IAG provide insight and learning to group members.

Summary – Effective contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of any escalation of a major crime incident. The inspection teams found that ‘golden hour’ principles were familiar to senior managers and patrol supervisors but not well understood by call management staff.

Strengths

Supervisors and above are provided with access to operational and force policies in relation to critical incidents. Force policy details the organisational response to critical incidents and the support that staff can expect.

Silver commanders are trained and regularly assessed in relation to handling firearms incidents. In addition, the force has a cadre of specialist silvers who are trained to deal with kidnap, siege, armed surveillance and specialist firearms incidents.

Every territorial division provides a night detective constable (DC). Their responsibility is to be the initial response to major crime issues and to determine the appropriate call out, whether it is divisional or MIT.

A written criterion exists for when a major incident room (MIR) will be established.

Force information room (FIR) call taking, dispatch staff and supervisors have ready access to standing operating procedures on drop-down menus from the Storm command and control system. Staff were fully familiar with force policy on the response to DV and cognisant of the links between DV and homicide and the importance of an effective police response.

Work in progress

- Crime division is currently delivering a presentation to all front-line inspectors and acting inspectors in dealing with suspicious deaths.

Area(s) for improvement

- Force policy on the operational deployment and response to critical incidents was written in 2004 and has not been reviewed to ensure compliance with current service-wide guidance and practice. The same applies to staffing of MIRs (2005) and the force policy on homicides and other serious crime investigations (2004).
- FIR staff (call takers) have not received critical incident training, although the basic response for kidnap is covered during initial five-week training.

Summary – The threats from precursors to major crime offending are analysed adequately.

Strengths

- Standard level 1 analytical products include linked offence analysis to identify trends developing from series crime and anti-social behaviour. During major crime investigation, comparative case analysis is conducted routinely to identify offences with similar Modus Operandi, victims, crime type and location.
- An example of this is Operation Paris, where a single rape investigation led to several other offences of robbery, rape and sexual assault being identified as linked to the suspect.
- Analytical subject profiles for high-risk offenders are used regularly by the force public protection unit (PPU). If a subject is identified with an escalating risk, a profile is drawn up to inform the risk management process. If appropriate the subject will be referred to MAPPAs, and if the subject does not fit MAPPAs they will be designated as potentially dangerous person and a bespoke risk assessment process will be initiated, involving divisions and partner agencies.
- The force fully contributes to the MAPPAs process, which deals with intervention in respect of registered sex offenders, violent offenders and other high-risk offenders. The MAPPAs team at HQ sits within the PPU. The team is responsible for risk managing offenders along with partner agencies to minimise risk to communities.
- The force has been trialling a MARAC system at Thurrock and Basildon over the past 12 months and intends to introduce it county-wide in April 2008. This is another partnership approach along similar lines to MAPPAs, but is victim-focused rather than offender-focused, specifically aimed at DV.
- The dedicated distraction burglary team within the serious and organised crime directorate (SOCD) works in conjunction with HQ Territorial Policing to ensure preventative measures are taken with regard to victims.

Work in progress

- Work is being carried out on a force strategy to prevent repeat victimisation across all crime types; this should be in draft form by 1 April 2008.
- No evidence was provided of analytical work carried out around 'near misses'.

July 2008

Area(s) for improvement

- The force was graded Poor for DV during HMIC inspection Protecting Vulnerable People 2007. Progress has been made in a number of areas, but more needs to be done in ensuring DV1 risk assessment booklets are entered onto the force database promptly. Backlogs still exist in South West and Western division; this requires effective senior management intervention to resolve.

Summary – The force’s policy covering threat to life is fully accessible to staff but only partially understood by uniformed resources.

Strengths

- The force threat to life policy is readily accessible via the force intranet. All SIOs have completed national courses on kidnap, and staff are trained to operate in specialist support roles
- In April 2007 Essex officers tested their own response to kidnap during a joint exercise with SOCA, NSLEC and the NPIA.
- The force has acknowledged NPSAT data and is fully aware of the higher risk owing to its close proximity to the MPS. Examples have been provided of where MPS resident criminals have carried out offences in Essex with effective action taken by the force to tackle them.
- A number of examples were provided to the inspection team of the considered and effective use of OSMAN warnings.
- When a threat to life scenario is identified, the witness protection unit is consulted.

Work in progress

- The force is establishing a firearms steering group incorporating disciplines impacted by the criminal use of firearms (major crime, SOC, firearms licensing, mobile support division (firearms) and territorial policing). It is anticipated that this will expand to include partner agencies.
- Targets were set in 2006/07 within the SOC arena for seizure of weapons. Operation Yam is a current example of the seizure of sub-machine-guns, shotguns, rifles, hand guns, silencers and ammunition.
- The force OSMAN policy is currently being rewritten to take account of legislative changes such as Van Colle. The system of recording is also changing to include a database of warnings and the rationale for issuing. This will be in place by April 2008.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force provides input on OSMAN to the majority of courses within the crime arena, eg Initial Crime Investigators’ Development Programme (ICIDP) and human rights. Training for non-detective BCU command team members has been minimal.

July 2008

- There is a general lack of awareness among uniform officers and FIR staff on the force threat to life policy.

Summary – The force has a well managed witness protection capability, supported by dedicated and covert resources. The force operates to a policy that is understood by dedicated officers only and is not promulgated nor well understood by uniform staff. The force is wholly collaborating with other forces and partners.

Strengths

- The force has a well-resourced witness protection unit comprising one detective sergeant (DS) and three DCs. Immediate line management is provided by a detective inspector (DI) who also has other responsibilities: 50% of his time is devoted to witness protection issues.
- Witness protection staff have all undergone accredited witness protection training.
- The unit is located in secure non-police premises and the protection team have access to covert vehicles.
- Operational expenditure is obtained through the use of the force covert banking infrastructure.
- Currently the force has 10 clients within the system and 16 dormant clients.
- The unit rarely undertakes work for other forces, but has recently assisted Hertfordshire where seven clients were identified.
- The force has adopted and follows ACPO guidelines and the National Witness Protection Executive's good practice database.
- Briefings have been delivered to BCU detective chief inspectors (DCIs) and DIs on policy and procedures (see Area(s) for improvement).

Work in progress

- An MOU has recently been signed between Essex and Kent Police for witness protection: although both forces have witness protection units the MOU has been agreed to deal with exceptional demand on either organisation for these services.
- Essex is leading on a collaboration business case for a three-force witness protection unit with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. This work is particularly timely given the prediction that, as forces become more successful in tackling SOC, witness intimidation cases where there is a serious threat to life will increase.

Area(s) for improvement

- Among uniform officers there was a lack of general awareness of policy and procedure regarding the identification and risk assessment of vulnerable witnesses potentially suitable for the scheme. Equally, FIR staff were not familiar with the policy or procedures.

July 2008

- Witness protection cases are managed using only a paper-based system, an information technology (IT) solution would allow for more effective management of cases as well as provide a searchable source of intelligence.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force ensures the 'golden hour' principles as well as policies on witness protection and threat to life are better understood by non specialist staff.

Summary – The force has a limited systems to monitor the impact of preventative and enforcement activity. There is evidence that the broad range of community policing assets are partially used to help understand levels of harm in the community.

Strengths

- The force has a limited and basic range of measurements in place to record what effect the organisation is having on tackling major crime (see Work in progress).
- CIAs are regularly updated during the course of an investigation and in part record police activity and its impact on communities.

Work in progress

- High-level harm indicators are included within the 2008/09 FSA and include murder, rape, kidnap and blackmail as well as serious woundings, gun crime and the number of registered sex offenders and identified dangerous/potentially dangerous offenders in the community.
- The force has a draft strategic intelligence requirement around community intelligence. When systems and processes have been introduced the force will be much better informed on community activity including harm in its communities.

Area(s) for improvement

- Over time, neighbourhood policing teams are gaining more knowledge and understanding of the communities they serve, but the force still lacks a good overall understanding of what its vulnerable communities look like and where they are. This includes emerging communities.
- As highlighted earlier in this report, neighbourhood profiles have been written for every neighbourhood. The force recognises that the profiles require developing, eg the identification of vulnerable and emerging communities, and that processes are required to ensure the full integration of information from neighbourhood profiles into NIM products such as the FSA.
- The level of appreciation and awareness of BCU staff (other than divisional intelligence units (DIUs)) around major crime is low: focus is mainly on volume crime, ie arrests and detections.

July 2008

Summary – The inspection found evidence the force normally considers relevant professional standards issues in the operational planning for major crime work but that this could be formalised. There is a comprehensive policy in use to ensure staff are appropriately vetted commensurate with exposure to risk.

Strengths

- The force corporate vetting manager has a team of four police staff responsible for the vetting of 6,500 police officers and staff within the force as well as external contractors. The unit exists to ensure the security and protection of force operational, financial and intelligence assets.
- The unit deals with 700 case files per month, many of which have up to four/five persons on each file requiring checks. Despite such a high workload the unit is fully up to date with checks.
- Up to 25 police officers and staff are cleared at developed vetting level; this includes the PA chair, chief executive and treasurer. This number is high compared with other forces as Essex undertakes security checks for regional intelligence unit (RIU) staff on behalf of the region.
- Around 350 officers and staff are security cleared and 500 management vetted.
- All SIOs, police officers, police staff and analysts within MITs have been security cleared.

Work in progress

- The force security board, chaired by the deputy chief constable (DCC), recognises that there are too many security policies in place. A piece of work has been commissioned to bring all of these policies together.
- A post of operational security officer within the professional standards department (PSD) has been approved and will be filled during summer 2008.

Area(s) for improvement

- The PSD does not attend any major crime tasking or operational briefings unless there is a specific request. Given the high risk nature of many major crime investigations the force should consider a more formal arrangement to secure an appropriate level of attendance.
- Proactive anti-corruption activity is limited within the force and extends mainly to marketing and publicity as opposed to pure proactive operations. This leaves the force exposed to a level of risk as the true extent of corruption is unknown.
- Not all nominals identified in emerging or declared OCGs are checked against the PSD database.

Enforcement

Summary – Governance arrangements for major crime investigations are effective, with appropriate use made of IAGs and community membership of gold command support groups.

Strengths

- The ACC (PS) is an experienced detective who maintains intrusive but supportive oversight on major crime and SOC investigations. Performance is monitored through the review commission (as mentioned earlier in this report) and through regular performance meetings with D/C/Supt head of crime. Significant evidence was found of an appropriate level of detail being applied by the ACC (PS) to various high-risk aspects of his portfolio, eg review commission/disclosure within the context of public protection.
- A link member from the PA provides a regular conduit into the authority and supplements formal briefings provided to authority meetings on major crime. In addition to operational progress reports the PA are advised on investigations accruing or anticipated to accrue significant cost. The PA was not only kept updated on the force contribution to Operation Sumac (Suffolk) but was fully supportive. The PA link member is vetted to SC level and the chair, treasurer and chief executive have been developed vetted.
- Gold support groups are introduced at appropriate times. An example of a particularly effective gold group with broad operational attendance including support staff managers was Operation Sumac.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

- IAG members are kept informed of major incidents, but there was limited evidence of where members of the community had participated regularly in gold groups. One example provided was Operation Jabot, the murder of a juvenile in Chigwell in 2007.

Summary – The ACPO lead and the head of crime are fully trained and competent in the management of linked and series crime. These officers are supported by staff who have undergone comprehensive training and testing in critical incident command, CIAs and policing in partnership.

Strengths

- A strength of the force is the level of experience in dealing with serious crime among the chief officer team.
- The ACPO lead for major crime is the ACC (PS). He is an experienced detective and SIO and trained to professionalising the investigative process (PIP) level 4. He is also trained in the management of linked and series crime. The ACC (PS) chairs the force TTCG and the review commission.
- The DCC is also PIP level 4 and has experience as an SIO.

July 2008

- All four MIT teams are capable of amalgamating to respond to significantly large serial and series crimes.
- The ACC (PS) was described as intrusive but supportive by senior managers within major crime. Performance is monitored closely through the review commission as well as less formal 1:1 meetings with the head of the crime division.
- The crime division divisional commander is a D/C/Superintendent who is an experienced detective.
- The director of specialist investigations (major crime) is an experienced detective superintendent and SIO who has taken an active role in the investigation of around 20 murders (categories B and C) and other serious crimes such as rapes. He is currently undergoing PIP level 3 training and has successfully completed linked series crime and kidnap and hijack courses (Stansted airport being a designated hijack landing site).
- Collaboration work around protective services as well as internal progress is proactively and energetically led by the ACC (PS).
- In June 2007 PA members adopted a link member system. One member, who is vetted to SC level, was assigned for major crime. The PA has received briefings on the RIU and the force contribution to Operation SUMAC and is fully supportive of SOCD collaborative opportunities with Kent and kept up to date with developments.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

None.

Summary – The force’s performance in the investigation of major crime is monitored through a regime that reviews each operation in terms of outcomes, cost, inputs and outputs.

Strengths

- The force has an adequate review capability. The review manager is a retired experienced SIO, awarded ACPO Homicide Working Group Lifetime Achievement in 2007. He leads a team of four review staff all of whom are experienced in major crime investigation.
- The review team follows a review policy that is compliant with ACPO guidelines.
- Recommendations of reviews are tracked by the review commission, chaired by the ACC (PS). The recommendations matrix is a live document, and recommendations are only agreed as completed with the ACC (PS) approval.
- Part 8 reviews are also subject to review by the head of child abuse investigation and the head of crime, with any significant issues being raised to the review commission. Recommendations are also overseen by the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) monitoring subgroup.

July 2008

- The head of crime training is a member of the review commission; organisational learning is fed back through that post as well as the line management.
- Essex conducts reviews around current cases, closing reviews, cold case reviews, thematic reviews, missing person reviews, CCRC referrals and any other review determined by the chair.
- Other major incidents are debriefed and minuted. All kidnap and extortions are debriefed by the kidnap lead SIO and a matrix of findings is maintained.
- Other critical incidents are reviewed at their conclusion and are documented and minuted. (See Area(s) for improvement).
- Each SIO is requested to submit an application at the commencement of each investigation for the financial requirements for operations. There is a mean cost for A, B and C investigations: this cost, along with any unique characteristic of the investigation will be considered by the head of specialist investigations when determining allocation.
- Chief officers hold a contingency fund of £500,000 for major incidents (including homicides). Costs are determined within a gold group structure whereby the ACC (PS) will determine what additional costs will be met from this fund.
- The contingency fund was last used during Operation JABOT, the murder of a juvenile by another juvenile on an estate in Chigwell in late 2007.

Work in progress

- The force has recently amended review policy to include the review of successfully prosecuted homicide investigations.

Area(s) for improvement

- Although there is evidence of the force fully debriefing incidents such as major crime, there is no single database where learning and best practice can be sought.

Performance management and resilience

Summary – The inspection teams found a sufficient investigative capability in force to meet predictable major crime investigation demands. Collaborative agreements with SOCA and adjoining forces exist and resources are deployed as appropriate. These are considered adequate to counter normal and extraordinary levels of need. Force procedures to manage human resources provide protection for the investigative capability.

Strengths

- The force has systems and processes in place to properly respond to unexplained deaths in communities and institutions. There are strong links with HM Coroner and her officers.
- The coroner holds data on the number of sudden deaths that occur in the county. The percentage investigated is not a recorded figure. Internal force processes identify any significant concerns. An example of this was five illegal drug-related

July 2008

deaths in Colchester (2007) that were identified as high quality heroin from a single source.

- The force has 50 scene examiners who are qualified to a national level. They are supported by seven scene of crime officer (SOCO) sergeants, three DIs and a DCI. Cover is provided by the scene examiners 24/7 (see also work in progress).
- All unexplained deaths are referred to an SIO and where appropriate are subject to the review policy.
- Role profiles indicate levels of management responsibility. This is further supported by the critical incident policy.
- Contingency plans are maintained and reviewed by the contingency planning department for a wide range of specific establishments. There are also generic plans in relation to other critical incidents.
- There are contractual arrangements with Adecco, which access a number of other organisations (including Dream Policing) who provide policing services.
- Essex Police is compliant with PIP. The ACC (operations support (OS)) is chair of the PIP project team. In late 2007 the force received a positive report from the NPIA peer review team.
- For major crime the force has two registered SIOs and two awaiting registration. The head of review is also registered.

Work in progress

- The force has now decided to address the high proportion of police officers assigned as SOCOs in line with workforce modernisation (identified as an area for improvement in the HMIC 2005/06 baseline assessment).

Area(s) for improvement

- Front-line uniform officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) had received no training in preservation and intelligence gathering at crime scenes.

Summary – Specialist and covert investigations are resourced through a robust infrastructure that is proven to be effective. Elements of major crime are delivered through written collaborative agreements, which are untested. The inspection found evidence of proactive and reactive use of these assets across a wide range of offences.

Strengths

Essex is investing £1.76 million into protective services during 2007/08. Of this, £1.16 million is allocated to improve services within specialist investigations (major crime) and the SOCDs. £680,000 was released in October 2007 to MITs to provide for additional detective and police staff posts.

A full range of specialist assets, police officers/staff and technical staff are deployed by the force to tackle major crime. They include:

- trained and experienced SIOs;
- four fully staffed MITs;
- MICAS team (including indexers and researchers);
- analytical support;
- dedicated source handling units;
- undercover officers;
- ANPR;
- scientific support staff;
- hi-tech crime unit;
- financial investigators; and
- TSU.

These assets are proactively used and all can be called upon to contribute to investigations.

There are signed MOUs between Essex and Kent for the following:

- major crime;
- critical incidents;
- specialist firearms;
- specialist vehicles and equipment; and
- unused capacity for courses.

- Both forces have already successfully tested out the MOU for major crime, with Essex officers and specialist support recently deployed to the Dinah Nichol investigation in Maidstone, Kent.

Work in progress

The following MOUs are under development with Kent:

- specialist search;
- witness protection;
- public order training;
- chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) training and operational support; and
- media and communications.

July 2008

The force is also developing MOUs for MICAS casualty bureau support with the City of London Police.

Less advanced work is under way with the Eastern Region and includes:

- covert technical;
- witness protection;
- regional asset recovery team;
- undercover and test purchase operations;
- computer forensic investigation; and
- kidnap and extortion operations.

Area(s) for improvement

- SIOs who lead MITs are all detective superintendents. The force does not have a documented succession plan to ensure a seamless transition of experienced detectives to fill these essential posts when they become vacant.
- Although the increase in resources to MITs has almost eliminated abstractions, BCUs do not have formalised trigger plans detailing where any requested resources will be sourced from. This in effect means that in a period of exceptional force-wide demand, BCUs are likely to be inconsistent in deciding on which teams will bear the greater abstraction, ie reactive or proactive resources.

Summary – The force has a full-time and dedicated case review team that is always deployed when current and historical major crime cases are reviewed, in accordance with ACPO guidance. Case review work is highly effective.

Strengths

- A dedicated major crime review team (MCRT) was established in 2003 to provide the capacity and capability to conduct reviews of current major crime cases and historic or cold cases.
- The MCRT also undertakes other work including a review of the police action in respect of every missing person found dead, and rape reviews.
- The review of cold cases commenced by establishing an index of all unresolved homicide cases on record, from crime reports, Home Office statistics and storage records, locating relevant material and assessing each case on an individual basis using a matrix to identify those representing the greatest opportunities to resolve.
- A similar process has been applied to rape and other sexual assaults originating from 1990 onwards in view of the opportunities provided by forensic science advances.
- The work of the review team is regularly publicised to provide public reassurance and an opportunity for appeals for information, an example being the 1978 murder of Nora Trott: the subsequent detection and conviction received national publicity.

July 2008

- Compliance with national and force policy in respect of current case reviews is monitored by the review commission comprising the ACC(PS), two divisional commanders and the head of the criminal investigation department (CID) together with the director of specialist investigations who manages the work of the four MITs and other specialist assets in force.
- Each review report is considered, a decision is made on implementation and a matrix is maintained to provide an audit trail of outcomes including dissemination of good practice or remedial action.
- The review of historic rape offences identified some common themes and has led to a process to improve supervision and decision making.

Specialist support is also provided by MITs (including FLOs) during road death investigations.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

- Consideration should be given to a quality assurance process for the work undertaken by the MCRT.

Summary – The inspection found evidence that the force is compliant with relevant ACPO standards of the Murder Investigation Manual and MIRSAP.

Strengths

- As highlighted earlier in this report, the chief officer lead, head of crime division and detective superintendent specialist investigations are experienced detectives who understand their respective roles in investigating major crime.
- The force follows doctrinal documents.
- There is evidence of the flexible application of MIRSAP. MITs have been deployed to a number of non-homicide investigations; examples include the suspected suicide of woman on A120; a joint investigation with roads policing of a road traffic collision (RTC) where it was believed an article had been thrown from a bridge; and the recent death of an eight-year-old girl in quad bike accident.
- MITs also assist in high-risk missing persons' incidents where their expertise is seen to bring value to investigations, for example the Natasha Coombes missing person enquiry.
- Policy files are maintained for all major crime enquiries, with separate decision logs kept for sensitive elements of decision making. Under these circumstances special arrangements are made for CPS reviewing. Decisions made not to pursue a line of enquiry are recorded in full. Police policy allows for any officer to maintain a policy file should they need to do so.

Work in progress

None.

Area(s) for improvement

- Sensitive decision logs are stored with mainstream major crime documentation at an off-site location. A more secure means of storage needs to be found by the force for these documents.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should develop corporate systems and processes which effectively measure and assess harm and threat to local communities.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should accelerate the introduction of the new risk assessment monitoring process and review after six months to ensure new arrangements are working with risks identified, assessed and managed appropriately.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends the force introduces bespoke diversity training for officers and staff working within MITs.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force ensures the 'golden hour' principles as well as policies on witness protection and threat to life are better understood by non specialist staff.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC (OS)	assistant chief constable (operations support)
ACC (PS)	assistant chief constable (protective services)
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	automatic number plate recognition
APACS	assessment of policing and community safety

B

BCU	basic command unit
BIA	Border and Immigration Agency
BPA	Black Police Association
BTP	British Transport Police

C

CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCRU	community and cultural resources unit
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CHIS	covert human intelligence source
CIA	community impact assessment
CID	criminal investigation department
CPA	crime pattern analysis
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service

D

DAT	drug action team
DC	detective constable
DCC	deputy chief constable
DCI	detective chief inspector

DI	detective inspector
DIU	divisional intelligence unit
DS	detective sergeant
DSHU	dedicated source-handling unit
DV	domestic violence
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

E

ECIR	emerging communities intelligence requirement
ERIU	Eastern Region intelligence unit

F

FIB	force intelligence bureau
FIO	field intelligence officer
FIR	force information room
FLO	family liaison officer
FSA	force strategic assessment
FTTCG	force tactical tasking co-ordination group

H

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System
HQ	headquarters

I

IAG	independent advisory group
ICIDP	Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme
INI	IMPACT nominal index
ISB	intelligence support bureau

IT information technology

L

LSCB local safeguarding children board

LSP local strategic partnership

M

MAPPA multi-agency public protection arrangements

MARAC multi-agency risk assessment conference

MCRT major crime review team

MIR major incident room

MIRSAP major incident room standardised administrative procedures

MIT major investigation team

MoPI management of police information

MOU memorandum of understanding

MPS Metropolitan Police Service

MSF most similar force(s)

N

NCPE National Centre for Policing Excellence

NCIS National Criminal Intelligence Service

NCRS National Crime Recording Standards

NIM National Intelligence Model

NPIA National Policing Improvement Agency

NPSAT National Protective Services Analysis Tool

NPT neighbourhood policing team

O

OCG organised crime group

OPs observation posts

OSC Office of Surveillance Commissioners

P

PA police authority

PCSO police community support officer

PIP professionalising the investigative process

POCA Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

PPU public protection unit

PSD professional standards department

R

RIPA Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

RIU regional intelligence unit

RTC road traffic collision

S

SAR suspicious activity report

SB special branch

SC security cleared

SCAS serious crime analysis system

SGC specific grading criteria

SIO senior investigating officer

SOP standard operating procedure

SPI statutory performance indicator

SPOC single point of contact

SOC serious and organised crime

SOCA Serious Organised Crime Agency

SOCD serious organised crime directorate

SOCO scene of crime officer

T

TP test purchase

TPO test purchase operative

TSU technical support unit

TTCG tactical tasking and co-ordination group

V

ViSOR Violent and Sex Offenders Register

VSS victim support services

Appendix 2: Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA : Major Crime / Serious Organised Criminality
TITLE: Introduction of the Intelligence Support Bureau (ISB)
PROBLEM: <p>Although the force has established Divisional Intelligence Units these do not operate during evenings and weekends. As a result, harvesting information/intelligence from force IT systems out of hours is dependent on the capacity and knowledge of staff in Service Desks/Force Information Room. In addition, it was identified that there were delays in the system for processing intelligence reports and data from STOPs (Stop Check Forms).</p> <p>Specific areas of concern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The inability to readily and accurately access Intelligence/information held by the force 24 hours a day, particularly in fast time situations such as crimes in action. Such information can make a significant difference to the initial response to critical/serious incidents.2. Average delay of 120 hours between the submission and qualification of intelligence reports. As a result of which, Intelligence may be out of date before it has been processed and made accessible to front line staff.3. Growing backlog of STOPs forms awaiting processing.
SOLUTION. <p>The creation of a centralised 24 hour ISB with three main functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To provide out of hours Intelligence support to SIOs and Silver/Gold Commanders during the initial stages of serious incidents.2. To improve the process of qualifying intelligence reports by concentrating this activity in one central location, with the task performed by fewer, but better trained staff.3. To improve the process and delivery of qualifying intelligence reports by concentrating the activity in a central location where staff receive high quality, consistent training to deliver a similar product; and releasing divisional resources to focus on divisional priorities.
EVALUATION: <p>Prior to implementation, the force baselined current performance in respect of intelligence reports and STOPs data. Measures included time taken to qualify intelligence reports and data quality standards. The latter was measured by way of a dip sample of reports to calculate the percentage and type of errors.</p> <p>After implementation, similar dip samples were carried out to compare the pre and post go live performance.</p>

July 2008

In respect of the Intelligence support function, the Bureau has recorded details of every incident with which it has been involved, including outcomes where these have been reported back and staff hours spent on each incident. In addition, feedback has been sought from Silver/Gold commanders and SIOs who have used the service.

A post implementation review has recently been commissioned.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION:

None to date.

OUTCOME(S):

The work of the Bureau has been well received by front line staff responding to serious/critical incidents. The preparation of comprehensive intelligence packages in respect of individuals or locations has proved of immense benefit and on occasions the information provided has increased the range of options open when dealing with these incidents.

Prior to its inception the number of unqualified CID 61s in the county stood at over 600 and some divisions were taking over a week to qualify them.

Centralising the intelligence processing function has considerably reduced input delays and lead to a commensurate rise in data quality standards as the process is now carried out by a smaller group of staff, working to the same standards. Average input times currently stand at approximately 36 to 48hours, although this varies according to levels of demand on the ISB. Having been relieved of the qualification function, divisional intelligence unit staff have increased capacity to develop information into actionable intelligence in support of front line policing operations.

STOPs forms are now scanned onto the IT system by DIU staff and are available to the ISB almost immediately. Following verification, information is released onto the force intelligence system from where it can be searched. Divisional backlogs, of approximately 4000, have now been cleared and the verification times, which were often over a month, have been significantly reduced.

Examples of how the ISB has made operational contributions to the force can be provided.

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