

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Follow up/Monitoring visit to Northumberland BCU
Northumbria Police**

BCU Inspection conducted – February 2005

Follow-up visit conducted – January 2006

Reinspection of Northumberland BCU
Northumbria Police

Northumberland BCU – Northumbria Police

Date of Inspection	HMIC Inspectors	BCU Commander	Date of Final Report	Date of monitoring
February 2005	Chief Superintendent Kevin Mayhew Chief Inspector Jo Rogerson	Chief Superintendent Graham Pears	April 2005	January 2006

1. Significant developments since the original inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength)

- **Senior Management Team**

Within the seven members of the original senior management team (SMT) there have been four changes, including a new superintendent and three chief inspectors.

- **Total Policing**

In supporting the Force aim and philosophy of ‘total policing’, the BCU has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure all staff are fully aware and are able to contribute and embrace the six main areas of:

- Leadership;
- performance management;
- marketing;
- partnership;
- training; and
- strategic resource management.

Initiatives including programmed discussions at both inspector and sergeant training days, comprehensive and regular updates within the SMT ‘key messages briefings’ as well as full integration of the aims into the area command plan, have been achieved.

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2. Performance Summary

Crime Data - Crime Performance Table

The table below shows the crime performance data for the latest 12-month period (December 2004 to November 2005) for Northumberland BCU:

Performance Indicator	Performance Dec 03 to Nov 04	Performance Dec 04 to Nov 05	% Change	MSBCU Group mean	The BCUs ranked position
Recorded crime per 1,000 pop.	72.32	62.62	-13.41%	79.96	1
Recorded crime detection rate	29.14%	38.29%	9.15 p.p.	30.70%	1
Domestic burglary per 1,000 households	7.76	5.42	-30.12%	7.04	4
Domestic burglary detection rate	18.71%	22.04%	3.32 p.p.	20.08%	5
Robberies per 1,000 population	0.21	0.20	-6.15%	0.35	4
Robbery detection rate	24.62%	36.07%	11.45 p.p.	29.28%	7
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 pop	6.92	5.98	-13.71%	8.70	3
Vehicle crime detection rate	13.20%	17.93%	4.74 p.p.	12.57%	3
Violent crimes per 1,000 population	13.52	12.51	-7.52%	17.43	1
Violent crime detection rate	60.46%	68.97%	8.52 p.p.	57.96%	2

Below is a Boston Box showing a performance summary for Northumberland BCU over the same time period as in the above table and showing performance against the MSBCU group:

<p>Good – Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Crime per 1,000 population • % Total Crime detected • Domestic Burglary per 1,000 households • % Domesitic Burglary detected • Robbery per 1,000 population • % Robbery detected • Vehicle Crime per 1,000 population • % Vehicle Crime detected • Violent Crime per 1,000 population • % Violent Crime detected 	<p>Good – Getting Worse</p> 
<p>Poor – Getting Better</p> 	<p>Poor – Getting Worse</p> 

It is evident that the BCU is now showing excellent performance at reducing crime and also improving detection rates.

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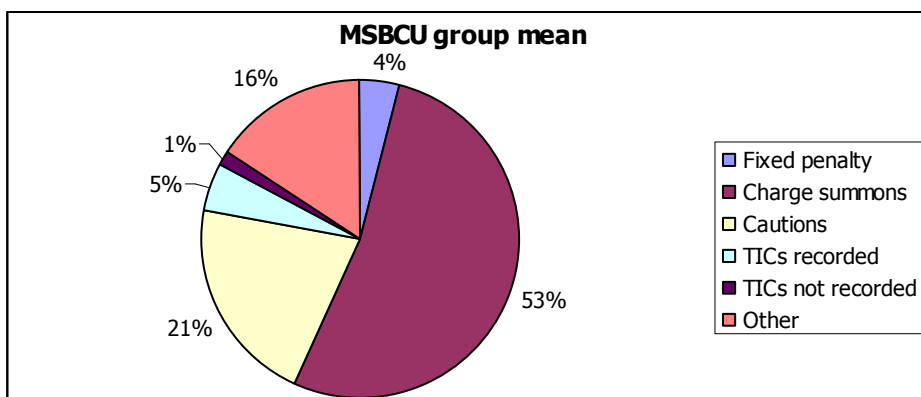
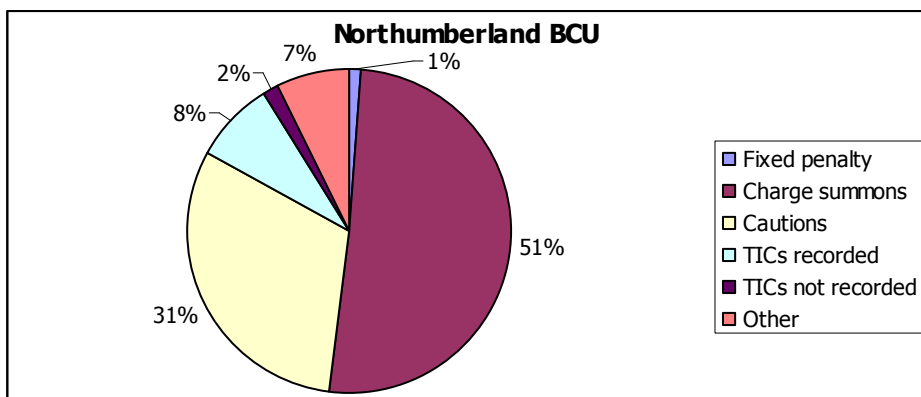
Type of Detection method

The below table shows the type of detection methods in Northumberland BCU for the latest 12-month period (December 2004 to November 2005) compared to the MSBCU group:

	No of Detects	No of Fixed Penalties	No of Charged/ Summons	No of Cautions	No of TIC (recorded)	No of TIC (not recorded)	No of other detects	% of Other Detects
Total Crime - NORTHUMBERLAND	7452	83	3791	2311	601	130	536	7.19%
Total Crime - MSBCU Ave	4850.4	199.27	2544.2	1024.93	240.6	70.67	770.73	15.89%
Domestic Burglary - NORTHUMBERLAND	158	0	95	9	21	2	31	19.62%
Domestic Burg - MSBCU Ave	118.13	0	79.73	7.73	18.93	2.13	9.60	8.13%
Robbery- NORTHUMBERLAND	22	0	19	3	0	0	0	0.00%
Robbery - MSBCU Ave	20.07	0	16.567	1.27	0.47	0	1.67	8.31%
Vehicle Crime - NORTHUMBERLAND	333	0	146	78	87	9	13	3.90%
Vehicle Crime - MSBCU Ave	216.07	0.13	102.6	24.27	72.2	2.33	14.53	6.73%
Violent Crime - NORTHUMBERLAND	2681	41	1421	934	2	2	281	10.48%
Violent Crime - MSBCU Ave	1996.53	94.87	1025	425.33	1.8	0.73	448.8	22.48%

Please note: The MSBCU group is out of 15 BCUs

Pie charts showing the percentage of the types of detection method used for total crime can be seen below for the time period used above:



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From the table and the pie charts, it is apparent that Northumberland BCU has a lower proportion of other detections for total crime, robbery, vehicle crime and violent crime than the MSBCU group mean. However, the BCU does have a higher proportion of other detections for domestic burglary.

Northumberland BCU does have a high proportion of cautions and a lower than average proportion of charge/summons when compared to the MSBCU group.

Northumberland had approximately 2,500 more detections during this period than the MSBCU mean and charged/summoned 1,250 more offenders. This is a very creditable performance and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary congratulates the BCU for the professional approach, hard work and commitment involved.

3. Inspection Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
<i>That the BCU command team review the management arrangements in respect of rural officers particularly at times of demanding or critical incident handling.</i>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve the visibility and accessibility of response inspectors to rural sectors, the BCU command team has introduced a policy whereby:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- on duty inspectors liaise with the 'back-up' inspector to better co-ordinate activity;- response duty inspectors commence duty in rural sectors when possible;- 'back-up' inspectors are better engaged in BCU-wide operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was acknowledgement by those interviewed that there was now much better access to inspectors at time of need.• There was an acknowledgement by inspectors that there was now much improved liaison between themselves and support for rural officers.

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Recommendation 2	
<p><i>That the BCU command team review all aspects of custody in the rural areas, to ensure that they are fit for purpose.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a comprehensive review of custody provision in rural areas and an action plan produced, progressed and categorised as short, medium and long-term improvements. <p>Short-term improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amble sector prisoners being dealt with at Bedlington custody facilities with remaining rural sectors conducting a risk assessment to determine whether they should be transported to Bedlington or dealt with locally; - a pilot transport initiative of prisoners during December which saw the use of management of offender team personnel operating at peak times; and - a three month pilot to increase dedicated custody provision at key times to accommodate planned arrests. - training has been provided for sergeants in rural areas to reduce the likelihood of untrained officers performing such duty. <p>Medium term improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector inspectors have identified, and continue to identify, peak times of demand for custody facilities to inform the business planning process and identify how resources can be best utilised; - to continue liaison with criminal justice, to maintain the most appropriate procedures to best progress the findings of the three month pilot of dedicated custody staff at peak times i.e. for longer term provision; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was recognition by officers in rural areas that the initiatives had made a positive impact on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sergeant availability/reduction in abstractions; - officer visibility; and - proactive arrests, particularly in respect of specific operations when dedicated facilities were provided. • Arrests increased by 31% during the Christmas/New Year “<i>Don’t Spoil The Party</i>” initiative compared to the same period the previous year and custody provision within the BCU was planned and effective. • The inspection team was able to identify considerable work undertaken in respect of custody provision and that significant improvement was apparent. This clearly underpins the success of the DVD (drunkenness, violence and disorder) initiative.

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Long term improvements include:

- it is intended to continually review rural custody suites to determine whether there are opportunities for de-designation;
- in respect of medical provision, the Force continues to negotiate the most appropriate contract for existing and future Force Medical Examiners (FMEs); and
- a six-weekly, rural custody working group has been established on the area command with attendees including rural sector inspectors, criminal justice inspector and chief inspector and HQ criminal justice personnel. The remit being to continue to identify and seek improvements.

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Recommendation 3	
<p><i>That the BCU command team review the BCU communication strategy to ensure that all staff, in particular police staff members, are informed of impending changes, including anticipated benefits as a consequence of these developments.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SMT undertakes a programme of planned sector visits and working days. Each member of the SMT works for one day per month in a sector and the programme is published in advance on the Intranet. Key messages are identified for communication by SMT members during such days and a feedback process is in place to ensure the BCU Commander is aware and concerns are addressed. SMT members also attend briefings during these days. • The operations superintendent has undertaken a comprehensive programme of visits, attending briefings across all sectors of the BCU. • The BCU newsletter has been reinstated and produced quarterly. All areas of the BCU are encouraged to contribute, including staff associations. • Police staff workstream focus groups have been organised (six to date). At these meetings there is an input of key messages to keep staff informed and a discussion regarding specific issues affecting their areas of work. • There is use of the area command Intranet site and staff have been surveyed regarding the information they would wish to have included. • An area command conference has been organised including awarding of commendation awards. Representatives from each sector and section attend. • A federated members meeting has been introduced, chaired by the area commander. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU command team has comprehensively reviewed its communications strategy and as a consequence there was an acknowledgement of staff that communications have significantly improved. • In particular, the SMT visits were well received and valued. The inspection team saw evidence of comprehensive feedback taking place following these visits. • Police staff acknowledged that the focus groups and newsletter had improved their understanding of developments and the progress of the BCU.

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Recommendation 4	
<p><i>That the BCU command team review its application of absence management policies and procedures to ensure that police staff absence is subject to the same degree of supervisory attention, welfare support and information analysis as that of police officer sickness. In addition, the SMT should undertake a full review of sickness to establish whether there are underlying causes to such a large increase in police staff sickness and identify appropriate remedial action.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU command team has reviewed absence management policies and procedures in relation to police staff. As a result, a number of changes have been implemented and this better aligns to the police officer process. • Best practice has been issued regarding home visits and a tiered approach to back to work interviews. Guidance has been introduced to sergeants' training days. • The local health management group attendees and chair has been reviewed and supplemented by a working group at the sector level • Processes have been introduced to ensure timely contacts and welfare visits to all those absent due to sickness. • Some statistical analysis has been undertaken regarding trends and causation factors managed through the local health management group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was an acknowledgement by staff that they had received support during periods of sickness absence and had been subject to structured processes (back to work interviews etc). • It was evident to the inspection team that improvements had been made in absence management and that there was better alignment of policies/procedures between police officers and police staff. The new policies were, in the main, recently introduced (October onward) and that since this time, sickness appears to be improving. Prior to October, sickness had increased by some 25% on the previous year. The BCU acknowledges that further research is needed to identify the underlying trends in sickness and this is to be progressed.

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Recommendation 5

That the BCU command team review the intelligence-led policing arrangements, to ensure clear, inclusive and accountable process for all sectors against the control strategy, that operations are properly co-ordinated, that the tasking and co-ordinating process is effective and that the target offender unit has the necessary capacity to properly support this important element of policing.

Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU command team has undertaken a comprehensive review of intelligence-led policing arrangements including key areas of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tasking and co-ordinating; - intelligence unit roles and responsibilities; - source development unit roles and responsibilities; and - Force intelligence officers' (FIOs') alignment to intelligence unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clearly a better match between demand and capacity reducing backlogs and delays in intelligence handling. • FIOs reported a better focus on intelligence development issues. • Potential integrity issues between the intelligence unit and source development unit have been addressed. • There is an improved interaction and meeting structure between all sectors and units. • The inspection team is of the opinion that these improvements will have significantly contributed to the BCU's creditable performance in crime reduction and detection.

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4. Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	Yes
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	Yes
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?	Yes
Have any problems arisen since the inspections that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	No
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?	No

5. Conclusions

- The reinspection team considers all the recommendations made following the BCU Inspection in February 2005 to have been addressed. The performance of the BCU is outstanding in most areas of crime reduction and detection and is placed very highly in the most similar BCU (MSBCU) group in all areas.
- A number of suggestions were also made during the initial Inspection report. The reinspection team has examined the BCU response to these suggestions and is highly satisfied that action has been taken to address them
- Overall, it was apparent to the reinspection team that the BCU has made significant efforts to fully embrace and progress the recommendations and suggestions made within the initial Inspection report. Without exception all staff consulted were extremely positive and supportive of the BCU. The reinspection team would like to thank the BCU Commander and his team for their warm welcome and assistance provided throughout the reinspection visit.

Kevin Mayhew/Jo Rogerson
HMIC Staff Officers