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POLICE

OPEN ALL HOURS

A thematic inspection report on the role of police visibility
and accessibility in public reassurance

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Sir Keith Povey QPM BA(Law)

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Preface

In line with the priorities set by Government, police activity over recent years has focused on bringing down crime and putting offenders before the courts. Working closely with partners, commendable successes have been achieved and recorded crime has fallen in seven out of the last eight years. However, much remains to be done, not only to maintain this downward pressure but to secure corresponding reductions in the type of non-criminal behaviour that does so much to degrade people's quality of life. Evidence suggests that levels of public reassurance, and confidence in policing and the criminal justice system, have not risen in the way that might be expected. Indeed, the British Crime Survey suggests that, counter-intuitively, confidence in policing and the courts has been falling as forces have turned the tide on crime. This is a matter of concern, given the essential contribution of the public to the effective working of the criminal justice system as witnesses, victims, jurors and informants.

It was against this backdrop of declining confidence that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary undertook this inspection. Its examination of mechanisms to enhance reassurance is a key plank of the Government's programme to reform and modernise policing, initiated by the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw and continued by the present Home Secretary. It is a goal shared by all of the principal stakeholders – Association of Chief Police Officers, police authorities and staff associations – all of whom have made valuable inputs to this thematic.

Public reassurance is a complex and multi-faceted concept that extends well beyond the boundaries of police influence. It can rise or fall on the basis of many factors, not simply objective data about crime levels but people's experiences of disorder such as graffiti, vandalism and noise nuisance. The police response has to reflect this complexity, continuing the focus on reducing crime and disorder – using techniques that are necessarily covert at times – while engaging openly with local people and local problems. In short, police forces need to demonstrate visibility, accessibility and familiarity and these are the main elements of this report.

Although much of the effort will occur at the community and partnership level, action is needed at the national level to create the strategic framework for enhanced reassurance. This report identifies the component parts of the framework before outlining a number of tactical options for use at the local level. Clearly, forces and their partners will need to customise their approaches to reflect the local nature of policing – not all of the tactics will work equally well in varying policing environments. Throughout the report, a wealth of good practice is highlighted to show what can be achieved. The breadth and nature of these examples are a credit to the police forces visited during the inspection, and I am indebted to all of those who participated so fully in the process.

Reassurance is now firmly established as an issue for the police service and this report
should be read as a contribution to the reform work being taken forward collaboratively by
the Service and the Home Office.

I commend the report to you.

Sir David O'Dowd CBE, QPM, BA, MSc, CIMgt
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Executive Summary

Reassurance in a Policing Context

The reduction of high volume crimes such as burglary and car theft has been a principal target of both Conservative and Labour governments in recent years. Working with its partners, the police service has achieved considerable success - notifiable crime has fallen in seven of the last eight years. The reduction in burglary has been particularly dramatic, with a fall of 43% since 1993/94, almost matched by the 35% reduction in motor vehicle crime. Yet, despite the welter of publicity that always attaches to crime and policing, this success has not reached public notice. Surveys reveal that, when asked about crime levels, the majority of respondents believe that they are rising. Even more worrying is the fact that falling crime levels have not been accompanied by increases in public perceptions of safety, or confidence in the police. They remain stubbornly unaffected by the success story of crime reduction partnership work. High levels of confidence in the police are critical in encouraging the public to provide intelligence and act as witnesses, both vital components in the fight against crime. The goal is a 'virtuous circle', whereby a reassured and confident citizenry actively support the police, leading to crime and disorder reduction and even greater reassurance. This thematic inspection sought to identify ways in which the police service could help to bridge this reassurance gap.

A key first step was to establish what is meant by 'reassurance' in the context of police work. Research and fieldwork highlighted two vital factors influencing an individual's sense of reassurance – the levels of *security* (personal and property) and *order* (behavioural and physical) that exist within the local environment. The importance of order is confirmed by Surrey University research, commissioned by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which points to maintaining order as a key component of any reassurance strategy. An individual's perception of the extent to which order and security are present in their community is influenced not just by what they see around them but by the press and media, and by factors such as age, race and gender which affect the degree of vulnerability. If we define reassurance as *the extent to which individuals perceive that order and security exist within their local environment*, we begin to see why impressive falls in crime are not automatically followed by rising public confidence. The British Crime Survey (BCS) paints a disturbing picture of the public's experience of behavioural and physical disorder. Fortunately, few people are direct victims of crime but almost everyone's life is touched by problems such as graffiti, vandalism, noise and anti-social behaviour. Where these are not tackled effectively, the impact on perceptions of safety and security will be profound, whatever is happening to crime levels. This is not to argue that forces and their partners should relegate crime reduction in their priorities, but rather that they apply the lessons learned – about which techniques work best, and why – to the reassurance agenda.

The Visible Police Presence

A major contributor to a feeling that order prevails is the presence on the street of
uniformed police officers. Currently, a gulf exists between the level of patrol which the
public wants and what can realistically be delivered. The public does recognise that
policing is about far more than patrol – they rank responding to emergencies and
investigating crime as higher priorities – but it is the activity with the biggest mismatch
between delivery and expectation. This is borne out by survey evidence; in 1999/2000, only
17% of respondents were satisfied with levels of foot patrol and 39% with levels of vehicle
patrol. By contrast, 83% were satisfied with the response to 999 calls and 89% were positive
about the way their burglary had been investigated. But the cry for 'more bobbies on the
beat' needs careful handling. It would be naïve to focus simply on visibility – reassurance
flows as much from the *style* of policing as the visible presence. A police car speeding by
with lights flashing and sirens blaring signals trouble. The 'feel-good factor' comes instead
from officers who are known and accessible – preferably on foot patrol – and who are
skilled at engaging with local communities and their problems.

These three themes of visibility, accessibility and familiarity are the focus of this report.
While they do not represent a complete strategy for reassurance, it is argued that continued
success in reducing crime and disorder, within the context of a visible, accessible and
community-focused policing style, *will* deliver enhanced public reassurance.

A New Emphasis on Reassurance in the National Framework

Reassurance is not a new concept in policing. The architects of modern policing, Rowan
and Mayne[1], tasked their officers with the preservation of public tranquillity. However, it
has been viewed as a by-product of effective policing, rather than a legitimate objective
in its own right. Given the evidence presented above, this is no longer a safe assumption
to make – a new focus on reassurance is needed, woven into the core work of engaging
criminality. Achieving this will require concerted action at both national and local level.

Crime reduction and tackling criminality have been central planks of Government policy in
recent decades, and therefore the focus of police activity. Perhaps not surprisingly, a culture
has developed within policing that values hard-edged tactics against crime and criminals –
'real' policing – over community-based work aimed at reassuring vulnerable members of
the public. This has to change, with the promotion of reassurance and public confidence
integrated in mainstream operational strategies. Cultural attitudes are notoriously difficult
to alter but change can happen through a combination of national and local initiatives.

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[1] The first Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, appointed in 1829

A starting point in changing this mind-set about reassurance is to revisit the hierarchy of policing priorities promulgated by Government. The efforts of police forces and their partners need underpinning by a national framework of funding, performance measurement and, where appropriate, legislation. Reassurance should be seen as a legitimate objective, reflected in Ministerial Priorities and the suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). For example, consideration should be given to incorporating measures of activity against disorder and indicators of police visibility. Although much can be done to promote reassurance within existing priorities and resources, the creation of a Reassurance Challenge Fund – mirroring the current Crime Reduction Fund – would send a powerful message.

Enhanced public reassurance cannot be delivered by the police service alone. Local authorities, health authorities and other players in the criminal justice system (CJS) have key roles. For example, councils have far more influence than police forces over the state of the local environment – improving street lighting, enforcing regulations against excessive noise, removing graffiti etc. – with its contingent impact on people's quality of life. Prompt and effective management of cases and offenders through the courts system, together with appropriate safeguards for witnesses and victims, are vital contributions to raising confidence in criminal justice. Some crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) have addressed reassurance, with many successful initiatives around neighbourhood wardens, closed circuit television (CCTV), and 'one-stop shop' facilities for advice and information covering a range of services. The BVPI regime should reflect the role of statutory partners by making measures relating to reassurance applicable to all agencies, with a requirement to set objectives and targets.

Alongside a revamped framework of performance measurement and funding, this report advocates that national standards be agreed in key areas of public contact such as patrol, call handling and the services provided at police station front counters. These standards would relate to measures of attainment, such as telephone answering times, and compliance with recognised good practice. This will, of course, require effort to collate, analyse and evaluate good practice in areas such as community intelligence, 'hot-spotting' of disorder problems and targeted, high visibility patrol. The centres of excellence for training, crime and operations at Bramshill, Harrogate, Wyboston and elsewhere need to make reassurance issues explicit in their promulgation of good practice.

Initiatives at a national level could also help chief officers to redress the status imbalance, for example, by accrediting community beat work and paying a premium to officers who work shifts. Furthermore, public awareness of policing objectives and successes could be marketed more effectively by exploiting the branding potential of images such as the uniformed officer and the blue lamp.

Action at the Local Level to Promote Reassurance

A large measure of agreement already exists about the need to tackle reassurance issues
while continuing to bear down on crime. The means of achieving this end will vary from
force to force, and even within forces, depending upon the philosophy of policing adopted,
the nature of the reassurance demands presented and the progress that has been made in
modernising facilities such as control rooms and police stations.

Because there is no one blueprint for success, much of this report sets out a menu
of options that forces can employ to increase visibility, accessibility and familiarity. Many
of these are cost neutral, involving changes to the way that forces work and use their
resources rather than develop 'new business'. Where additional costs would arise from
implementing the inspection findings, these could be met at least in part from the proposed
Reassurance Fund on a business case basis.

Patrol Visibility and Deployment

The degree of visibility and accessibility of police officers within communities is partly
a function of the number of officers available for deployment. Between 1993 and 2000,
officer numbers fell each year but are predicted to return to 1993 figures and reach 130,000
by 2003. The percentage of officers undertaking patrol duties has remained fairly consistent
at about 56%, but this average masks a range from 38.8% to 68.3%. Clearly, chief constables
will want to examine how their disposition compares with similar forces, and ensure that it
reflects explicit policy decisions rather than an unintended 'drift' away from front-line
uniformed work.

Increasing visibility is not an optical illusion but a case of making better use of what
already exists. Firstly, the resources available for patrol work can be increased by
civilianisation, single-crewing, reduced bureaucracy, better demand management and
increasing the Special Constabulary strength. This extra presence can then be supplemented
by neighbourhood wardens, the use of volunteers and extended CCTV schemes. The final
strand is to maximise the impact of those staff and vehicles out on the streets, by applying
the force livery to more vehicles and requiring more staff – officers and civilians – to work
in uniform unless circumstances make this inappropriate.

Accessibility

Even if all the measures cited in the report to increase visibility are adopted, the police
cannot be everywhere. For a citizen in need, however, what matters is how easily the
police can be contacted and then how promptly and efficiently they respond. A substantial

part of this report is therefore devoted to analysing the current state of call handling, service at police stations and developments in 'e-policing' – access via the internet, e-mail, interactive video kiosks etc. Forces have made great efforts to update their communication systems, despite the enduring pressure to plough new resources into recruiting more police officers. An honest assessment, however, is that the service has not kept pace with the best practice in customer interfaces; callers wait too long for a reply and the service at too many police station counters leaves much to be desired. Although some of the improvements needed carry a price tag, others relate to working practices, supervision and attitudes that are cost neutral. An ethos of service to 'customers' needs to be imbued at all levels, from the newest probationers to chief officers, and continuously reinforced.

The police station, with its traditional blue lamp, is a resonant image of British policing with almost as much symbolic importance as the uniformed bobby. It is a gateway to police services and – in an emergency – a place of sanctuary. The police estate in 2001 is a mixed inheritance; a high proportion of buildings are outdated and poorly sited. However, this does not prohibit the delivery of a good service, and forces do need to review their front counter operations. Too many examples were seen of overworked support staff trying to manage queues of callers but not feeling empowered to ask officer colleagues for assistance. More can be done to manage demand and invest in support, training and better line management. In particular, the benefits of customer care awareness/training – perhaps with national accreditation for front counter competencies – should be recognised. Additionally, forces are increasingly seeking out alternatives to the traditional police station as the focus for engaging with members of the public – supermarkets, council offices, libraries etc. – and this is encouraged.

A final consideration is equity of access. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) prohibits discrimination in service provision on the grounds of disability; forces should incorporate the needs of people with visual and hearing impairment in their strategic plans, and increase the awareness of disability issues amongst staff. There is also scope for forces to make access points more user friendly for minority ethnic groups through the provision of literature in appropriate languages.

Call Handling

Most public contact with the police is through the telephone system and the quality of the initial contact can shape perceptions of police efficiency – you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Forces are aware of the importance of good quality call handling, but face some practical difficulties, notably a large rise in 999 calls that is almost certainly linked to increased mobile telephone usage. Often, a single incident will now generate a large number of calls, all of which have to be answered and screened. As an illustration, fewer than one in four 999 calls received by the Metropolitan Police Service

(MPS) in 2000/01 merited an immediate response – the remainder of calls were, in effect, blocking the emergency system.

That said, some obstacles to quality call handling are self-inflicted. Inconsistency in response standards and performance measures across the whole range of call-handling processes and procedures has made benchmarking difficult and impeded continuous improvement. There is thus a strong case for the introduction of national standards for call-handling performance. Control room staff express concern about a number of issues related to workload, career structure, training and supervision. While appreciating the difficult financial juggling acts that force budgeting entails, a failure to invest in high quality call-handling systems is a false economy, leading to poor deployment of those very expensive resources out on the streets. Some forces have introduced competency-based pay structures and nationally-recognised accreditation systems; this is commended. Finally, an idea whose time may have come is the introduction of a national non-emergency number, to ease pressure on the 999 system.

Although these improvements to conventional call handling are vital, access through the internet and other electronic media will become increasingly important. Web-based services are at an embryonic stage in many forces and the rate of progress needs to speed up if the Government's 2005 target for online services is to be achieved. The report identifies the challenges, as well as the opportunities, presented by e-policing and in particular the fragmentation of core systems and processes that should have been harmonised years ago. For example, the benefits of online crime reporting can be realised fully only when the Service has common crime recording approaches. Much is expected of the National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) programme but this has, so far, not delivered and it is important that lessons are learned. Programme Valiant will produce a new Information Systems Strategy by the end of 2001. This will be a platform for providing the essential infrastructure, capabilities and solutions necessary to exploit the potential of e-policing – a sense of urgency needs to attach to this project.

Familiarity – the Changing Face of Community Policing

An important message in this report is that increased visibility is a necessary but not sufficient condition for public reassurance – the style of local policing cannot be ignored. While they recognise the need for a fast response to an emergency, the public are critical of 'drive-by policing'. They want officers to get to know, and be known in, local communities. The report charts the move away from the traditional, avuncular community beat officer (CBO) to alternative forms of neighbourhood policing. Often, these are team-based and driven by intelligence, hot-spot analysis and sophisticated problem-solving techniques, with partnership working a key tactic. International examples from the USA and

the Netherlands illustrate potential solutions that can help forces resolve the age-old dilemma of balancing response and community policing demands.

The battle for 'hearts and minds' about the value of high visibility patrol as a tactic to reassure is still to be won. Sceptical officers point to research about the limited deterrent impact of patrol on crime levels, but this does not apply to proactive, intelligence-led patrol that targets disorder and is linked to anti-crime strategies. The pre-conditions in the shape of quality analysis, tasking and briefing are not always in place and the report gives numerous examples of good practice to encourage forces to raise their game.

Getting the Messages Across

To turn the tide of declining confidence and reassurance, the police service needs to be smarter in its interactions with the public and better informed about needs and expectations. People get most of their information about crime and community safety from TV, radio and newspapers; forces need to turn this high level of media interest to their advantage by using these channels to convey success stories, and raise awareness of what they are trying to achieve. Fieldwork visits encountered excellent examples of innovation but also found scope for improvement, notably the need to share expertise in marketing and communications around the force rather than concentrating it at HQ. Marketing techniques are even less common, but can help basic command units (BCUs) tailor policing styles and services to the varying needs of different groups.

Implementing Open All Hours

Policing is a 24-hour, 7 days a week service – one of the few that is genuinely 'open all hours'. The record in recent years on crime reduction has been commendable, but the complexity of society's needs for security and assurance, together with the ever-increasing opportunities for crime, throw up new challenges on a daily basis. Forces rely so heavily upon public support and co-operation that the reassurance issues covered in this report cannot be ignored. It represents a substantial agenda for action, and Her Majesty's Inspector recognises that change will not occur overnight. Although there are 'quick wins' available, a five-year programme of change is envisaged. A sea change in attitudes will have occurred if:

> *Enhancing public reassurance is central to what the police service and its partners are trying to achieve and all police officers and staff appreciate the role of visibility, accessibility and familiarity in an overall strategy for achieving this. Forces will therefore be pursuing the core objectives of reducing crime and disorder in a way that maximises those three elements.*

*There is a greater uniformed presence on the streets and the public have confidence
that, should a problem arise, they will have ready access to the appropriate
information and services, delivered by staff who take ownership of the problem.
Everybody will be receiving a service which meets a number of core quality standards.*

*Measures of public reassurance and confidence in policing will have improved, shown
by an increased willingness by the public to provide help and assistance to the police.*

Introduction

1.1 Between April and August 2001, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a thematic inspection on enhancing public reassurance through the provision of a police service that is visible and accessible and where officers and support staff delivering the service are familiar to their local communities. The inspection team was led by Sir Keith Povey QPM, BA (Law), Her Majesty's Inspector with responsibility for community safety. The full inspection methodology is at Appendix A.

Scope

1.2 The key objectives of the inspection were to:

- Assess the current levels of public reassurance and police visibility and accessibility, considering performance against current indicators, trends and public expectations.

- Evaluate the extent to which the national policing framework (including regulations, BVPIs, Ministerial Priorities) and national bodies (such as the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and ACPO) support the promotion of visibility and accessibility.

- Identify the critical success factors to maximise forces' contribution to public reassurance through police visibility and accessibility in the face of conflicting demands.

- Identify areas of good practice where innovative techniques have been used to enhance both the quantity and quality of the policing presence which have resulted in fully evaluated successful outcomes.

- Identify areas of good practice where innovative information and communication technology has been used to enhance public accessibility to police information, services and staff and fully evaluated successful outcomes have been achieved.

- Propose a strategic framework, and associated menu of options, within which forces can operate and thus maximise their contribution to public reassurance through police visibility and accessibility.

Strategic Framework and Tactical Options

1.3 Each section of the report indicates a number of strategic actions that should be taken in pursuit of the three pillars of visibility, accessibility and familiarity. Taken together, they create a strategic framework that will create the conditions for change.

1.4 The report also presents a number of tactical options that may be adopted by forces dependent on local need. These are usually illustrated by examples of where these options have been employed by forces, in the form of case studies. Where evaluation has been undertaken, the results are presented but a number of case studies are included where the initiative, in the judgement of the inspection team, has the *potential* to become good practice. Some of these have been accepted as Home Office pilot studies and may subsequently, following evaluation, be included in the reassurance good practice guide under development as part of the reform agenda.

Vision

1.5 Each section commences with a vision statement detailing what forces will have achieved in five years time if the thematic inspection is to be considered successful:

> *Enhancing public reassurance is central to what the police service and partners are trying to achieve and all police officers and staff appreciate the role of visibility, accessibility and familiarity in an overall strategy for achieving this. Forces will therefore be pursuing the core objectives of reducing crime and disorder in a way that maximises those three elements.*

> *There is a greater uniformed presence on the streets and the public have confidence that, should a problem arise, they will have ready access to the appropriate information and services, delivered by staff who take ownership of the problem. Everybody will be receiving a service that meets a number of core quality standards.*

> *Measures of public reassurance and confidence in policing will have improved, shown by an increased willingness by the public to provide help and assistance to the police.*

Report Structure

1.6 The inspection team considered what could be done at a national level to promote public reassurance as a key issue for forces, focusing on a number of police activities and resources relevant to visibility, accessibility and familiarity. This provided the structure for the report, namely:

Section II – National Framework. This section considers how the national legislative, performance and funding framework can be developed to give greater impetus to activity that enhances public reassurance, particularly, for the purposes of this inspection, visibility, accessibility and familiarity.

Sections III and IV – Visible Street Presence and Deployment. This is examined from two perspectives: firstly, how the Service can maximise productive capacity – for example, through reducing bureaucracy and better managing demand, as well as supplementing patrol effort through the Special Constabulary and neighbourhood wardens. The second element considers the strategies and tactics that might be employed to maximise police patrol effectiveness in enhancing reassurance.

Section V – Public Interface Points. The inspection considers the strategic management of what the Audit Commission report *Action Stations*[1] described as public interface points – police station counters, police surgeries, mobile police stations etc. The key areas of resources, leadership and partnership are reviewed to determine how they support and enhance delivery; central to this is a consideration of how forces are preparing for the DDA deadline of 2004.

Section VI – Media, PR and Marketing. The inspection considers how forces publicise their achievements, and how the 'market' for policing might be segmented so that messages are customised for particular audiences. Additionally, how can forces better inform the public about policing issues and help manage expectations?

Section VII – Call Handling. A holistic approach is taken to call handling, going beyond the initial response to consider all elements of the call-handling process.

Section VIII – 'E'-Policing. How well are forces responding to the opportunities presented by technological advances such as 'e-commerce'?

Section IX – The Way Forward. This section concludes the report and presents, in tabular form, a composite of the strategic framework and tactical options identifying the key players for each.

Background

1.7 Reassurance as an objective is not isolated from the need to engage criminality and continue to tackle disorder. Increased confidence in the police and the wider CJS is critical in encouraging the public to provide intelligence, act as witnesses and seek redress through the courts. The goal is a virtuous circle where high levels of reassurance and confidence result in increased co-operation, which in turn brings about crime and disorder reduction that then further enhances reassurance.

[1] *Actions Stations,* Audit Commission, 1999

1.8 The scope of this report did not extend to looking at the effect that failings
elsewhere in the CJS might have on public reassurance, but the inspection team was
regularly reminded that this was an issue. The remainder of this section provides
evidence that the police service has not yet entered the virtuous circle. It identifies
the role that a visible, accessible and familiar police service, working with partners,
can play in enhancing levels of reassurance and provides working definitions for
appropriate terms.

Trends in Crime and Reassurance

1.9 Increasing anxiety about the impact of crime on society has made its reduction a
central plank of Government policy in recent decades, whichever party is in power.
The objective is two-fold – to reduce the social and economic damage inflicted upon
communities and to ensure that individuals feel confident and safe as they go about
their daily business. Capturing the changes in crime levels is achieved through a
range of surveys and measurement – tracking the impact in terms of reassurance is
more difficult.

1.10 In seven of the last eight years, recorded crime levels have fallen in the UK, reversing
a seemingly inexorable pattern of year-on-year rises. The evidence of the BCS
discounts suggestions that this positive trend is simply a manipulation of police
statistics.[2] (See also Appendix B)

1.11 The figures reflect the significant effort made by the police service and its partners to
reduce crime and emphasise prevention but unfortunately this 'good news' message
is not reaching the public. When asked whether they thought the recorded crime rate
for the country as a whole had changed over the previous two years, 67% of the
2000 BCS respondents felt that crime had risen; this is similar to the 1998 BCS
findings. In all these years, crime reported to the BCS actually fell. The recently
published 2001 BCS found that 26% believed that crime had risen 'a lot' and 32% felt
it had risen 'a little', despite the total number of crimes reported to the BCS falling by
12% between 1999 and 2000. (Appendix B)

1.12 If this disparity simply reflected a poor understanding of statistics, or a disinclination
to believe official figures, it might not be of concern. Increasingly, however, policy
makers and police service managers recognise that public confidence and reassurance
are highly complex, intangible factors, that cannot be influenced by crime rates
alone. The drive to enhance reassurance is now a principal objective for the
Government's policing and criminal justice agenda, and there is thus a need to
understand what underpins it and, in the context of this report, to identify the
specific contributions that police forces can make.

[2] *The British Crime Survey Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00,* Kershaw, Budd, Kinshott, Mattinson, Mayhew and Myhill,
The British Crime Survey

What do we Mean by Reassurance?

1.13 The term 'reassurance' is often used interchangeably with other linked concepts such as 'fear of crime'. A key task for this inspection was to establish a working definition that clarified the meaning of reassurance within a policing context. A starting point is the dictionary definition[3], which states that to reassure is 'the action of removing someone's doubts and fears'. This definition extends public reassurance well beyond the remit of policing; in order to narrow it down, the inspection team constructed a model, using academic literature and the results of early fieldwork, that identified the factors impacting on an individual's feeling of reassurance. The model and definition was then tested as the fieldwork progressed. This model is shown at Appendix C.

1.14 The literature review and fieldwork confirmed that two tangible factors impact upon an individual's sense of reassurance – the levels of *security* (personal and property) and *order* (behavioural and physical) that exist within their local environment. Other factors such as diversity, vulnerability and the effect of the media serve to influence perceptions of the extent to which order and security exist. This led to a working definition adopted for the inspection:

> *Reassurance is the extent to which individuals perceive that order and security exist within their local environment.*

Perception of Disorder

1.15 This definition provides an indication as to why the general public have not reacted positively to the impressive reductions in crime. The BCS points to the fact that the public's experience of behavioural and physical disorder has moved in the opposite direction from crime levels (Appendix B). Fortunately, few people are direct victims of crime but almost everyone's life is touched by graffiti, vandalism, noise and anti-social behaviour. The percentage of people troubled by various disorders – excepting noisy neighbours and litter – increased between 1992 and 2000. As with crime, increased concern about disorder does not necessarily mean that the actual level of disorder has risen, and ACPO's work on developing a 'visual disorder' audit will be valuable in proving or disproving a link between perception and reality.

Confidence in Policing

1.16 Not surprisingly, a public perception that both crime and disorder problems are mounting translates into diminishing levels of confidence in policing. The percentage of BCS[4] respondents who believe that their local police did a 'very' or 'fairly good' job fell between 1982 and 1992, stabilised during the 1990s but then fell again

3 *New Oxford Dictionary of English*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998
4 *Research Findings 136*, Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, Sims and Myhill, 2001

in 2000. A similar question elicited public perceptions of the performance of the different agencies within the CJS (paragraph 1.17). Although the police service still receives by far the highest ratings, with over half of the respondents believing they do a good or excellent job, there has been a marked decrease since 1996.

1.17 Of particular concern are the views expressed by respondents from minority ethnic groups. They reported being less confident than white respondents in the way the police and CJS respect their rights or treat them fairly when they are accused of committing crime. This was particularly true for black respondents; 40% and 42% respectively of black and Asian respondents view the police as doing a good job, compared with 54% of white respondents.[5] Black and Asian respondents tended to rate the work of magistrates, probation, the CPS, judges and youth courts more favourably than white respondents but were more negative about police performance. This 'distrust and loss of confidence' was further evidenced by the findings of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry[6].

1.18 Reductions in levels of confidence in policing should be seen against a backdrop of a gradual decline in trust in many public sector institutions, and an increased unwillingness by individuals to participate in local community activities. Partial explanations may lie in rising education levels and a related culture of heightened expectations but this should not deflect the Service from doing what it can to stop, and then reverse, this trend.

1.19 If increased confidence in the police and enhanced levels of public reassurance are not natural outcomes of successful efforts to reduce crime levels, action to reduce levels of disorder may assume greater importance than previously. The HMIC thematic report, *Calling Time on Crime* reviewed the arrangements in place to reduce crime and disorder in the wake of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and suggested an agenda for action. This inspection report has sought to avoid duplicating these earlier findings but there are obvious overlaps. Without diverting attention away from crime and disorder reduction, police forces and their partners can take steps to impact on reassurance and confidence.

Police Visibility – the 'Bobby on the Beat'

1.20 Research evidence and fieldwork undertaken for this inspection indicate that a uniformed presence on the street has a direct impact on an individual's perception of the level of social order that prevails, confirming ACPO's identification of a visible presence as a 'comfort factor' (paragraph 4.24). To cite just one example, Balkin and Holden's[7] work in 1983 revealed that the presence of a public sector worker, in uniform and committed to the local environment, significantly increased feelings of

5 *Research Findings No 137*, Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate,: C. Mirrlees-Black 2001
6 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny 1999
7 Balkin and Holden *Criminal Justice and Behaviour Vol. 10*, 1983
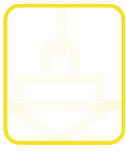
safety. The evidence of a public demand for an increased level of police presence is overwhelming – the Audit Commission's 1996 report, *Streetwise*,[8] stated:

> *"Surveys consistently show that the public attaches great value to police patrol. It provides a sense of security and symbolises lawful authority at a time when there is increasing concern about the erosion of authority."*

1.21 One theme from the various surveys undertaken is dissatisfaction with levels of patrol, which seems to have worsened over the last five years. Between 1995/96 and 1999/2000,[9] satisfaction with foot patrol dropped from 27% to 17% and satisfaction with vehicle patrol fell from 52% to 39%. This contrasts with other measures of service quality where there has been no obvious trend and levels of satisfaction have been much higher. Satisfaction with response to 999 calls ranged between 84.5% and 87% and similarly there have been high levels of satisfaction amongst victims of burglary (90.9% and 92.2%) and victims of road traffic accidents (91.3% to 93.6%). A feeling that police are 'disengaging' from their local communities may be contributing to the general reductions in levels of confidence recorded by the BCS.

1.22 A clear gulf exists between the level of patrol the public want and what is being delivered. One research methodology has quantified the extent to which policing is failing to match public expectations.[10] Used in the 1999 Public Attitude Survey in the Metropolitan Police area, it identified that visible patrol is not the highest priority for the public (afforded lower priority than responding to emergencies and investigating crime, for instance), but it is the activity where there is the biggest gap between levels of expectation and levels of perceived service (service gap).

1.23 Clearly, the results presented above need careful interpretation rather than rushing to a judgement that the service is poor. The public's awareness about police performance in some areas may be low, or public expectations may be unrealistic. In both cases a marketing, as distinct from operational, response approach may be appropriate.

1.24 Work by Russell Bradley[11] explored the nature of the insatiable demand for 'bobbies on the beat'. His work showed that various segments of the population, linked to socio-economic groups, had different expectations. Those groups predisposed towards visible patrol saw it as evidence that something was being done and one group (older women, pensioners and retired men and women) saw it as a vital means of reassurance and thus an integral part of the service. This conflicted with the received wisdom expressed during the inspection that the demand for visibility was only a surrogate for more effective policing. The respondents from minority ethnic groups emphasised the need for police to get back into the community and re-establish good relationships. Some presence on the street (particularly at key places such as

8   *Streetwise, Effective Police Patrol*: Audit Commission, HMSO, 1996
9   Annual Statistical Review Data provided to HMIC by Forces
10 Nick Bland: *Measuring Public Expectations of Policing: an evaluation of gap analysis.* Police Research Series Paper 24, 1997
11 Russell Bradley: *Home Office Research Paper 96*, 1998

schools) was an important part of this process, although the point was regularly made during the inspection that the influx of a number of officers into an area might be seen by some communities to be oppressive. A key implication of this work is that the tactics that will prove effective in increasing reassurance will differ depending on local circumstances.

1.25 Consequently it would be naïve to focus simply on visibility *per se* – the nature and quality of the presence matters. One ACC succinctly expressed it thus:

> *"A police officer in uniform on an unhurried foot patrol suggests "all is well with the world". However, a marked police vehicle with blue light and sirens activated sends a different message. This is currently visible policing but we would suggest it is far from reassuring."*

1.26 The demand is for more foot and cycle patrol rather than vehicle patrol. Work undertaken by Surrey University on behalf of ACPO highlighted the importance of the visible presence being locally identifiable and, in the case of patrolling officers, having an awareness of local communities. In looking at a number of fear reduction strategies in New Jersey and Houston, Brown and Wycott[12] found that citizen contact patrols and police community stations both reduced perceptions of crime and disorder and enhanced the perceptions of the police. This effect has been replicated in other studies (eg, Pate et al[13]), suggesting that visibility is a necessary but not sufficient condition for enhanced levels of reassurance.

An Integrated Approach – Visibility, Accessibility and Familiarity

1.27 The importance of visibility and accessibility was underlined in the Government's strategy document, *Criminal Justice – the Way Ahead*[14]:

> *"The Service can and should do more to increase public reassurance by the visibility of uniformed officers, by making access to the police easier and by ensuring other sectors which can contribute to feelings of public safety do so in a way which is properly co-ordinated with police activity."*

1.28 This is echoed throughout this report; police visibility encompasses more than simply uniformed patrol – other aspects of policing can make significant contributions to visibility, accessibility and familiarity, which we define as follows:

Visibility: the level, profile and impact of police resources deployed within local communities.

[12] *Policing Houston: Reducing Fear and Improving Service*, Crime and Delinquency 33, Brown and Wycott: 1987
[13] *Reducing fear of crime in Houston and Newark* Washington Police Foundation, Pate, A Wycott, M Skogan W and Shoman L 1986
[14] *Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead*, CM 5074, HMSO, 2001

Accessibility: the ease with which the public can obtain appropriate police information, access services or make contact with staff.

Familiarity: the extent to which police personnel both know and are known by the local community.

1.29   Although these interrelated themes are the subject of this report, this does not imply that they should take primacy over activity against crime and disorder. Rather, a major inspection finding was that crime and disorder reduction, pursued through a policing style which is visible, accessible and familiar, will have the best chance of delivering reassurance. Section II considers how the national performance and funding framework can be structured to support the proposed new reassurance focus.

National Framework

Vision

> "The national funding, legislative and performance framework will promote activity which reduces crime and disorder and supports the provision of a visible, accessible and familiar police presence."

Introduction

2.1   The former Home Secretary's Foreword to the Government's Crime Reduction Strategy declares that *"The Government is embarked on a crusade against crime"*. From April 2000, police and local authorities have been required to set five-year targets (and annual milestones) for the reduction of volume crimes such as burglary, vehicle theft and robbery in major cities. Funding is increasingly targeted at combating these crimes. The message from Government since 1997 has been consistent and clear – to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime.

2.2   The police service and its partners have shared this emphasis in recent years and, as demonstrated in Section I, have achieved considerable success. The Service has delivered in line with priorities but, disappointingly, public reassurance and confidence in policing have not been strengthened as a consequence. Forces are well aware of this problem and are increasingly directing efforts towards the reassurance agenda, which at a national level includes:

- The Government's strategy *Criminal Justice: The Way Ahead*, which urges forces "to increase public reassurance…" (Paragraph 1.27).

- The inclusion of public reassurance as one of the goals for a programme of police reform and modernisation.

- A requirement that, from 2001, chief constables' annual reports must specify, on a ward by ward basis, what is being done to increase visibility, effectiveness and reassurance.

2.3   APA also regards *'reassuring communities, reducing fear of crime and tackling criminality'* as central tasks for all police forces. As conduits to local communities, authority members are acutely aware of the gap that exists between the public demand for patrol and current levels of deployment, although they also recognise that for some minority ethnic communities, approachability and accessibility matter more than simple visibility.

2.4   The priority given to reassurance by the Government and APA is vital – the efforts of police forces and their partners need to be underpinned by a national framework of funding, performance measurement and, where appropriate, legislation. This section outlines the elements of such a framework.

Funding Regime

2.5 New money has recently come on stream to allow forces to commit more resources to issues of visibility and accessibility, while continuing to bear down on crime.

- Some £15m was allocated in 2000/01 and £30m in each of the next two years for rural policing; in many forces this will impact directly to raise numbers of patrol officers, and indirectly will assist through initiatives designed to reduce the time officers spend inside the station.

- There are 9,000 additional officers to be recruited by 2003 under the Crime Fighting Fund (CFF) banner, many of whom will be deployed directly on the 'front line'. It is the Government's declared intention to have 130,000 police officers by 2003.

2.6 Increasingly, Government funding for new public services is disbursed through a bidding process known as challenge funding, an approach that sends clear statements about Government priorities. Police authorities and their partners can bid for funds under a range of budget heads within a programme that is predominantly focused on crime reduction – scope exists to broaden this programme and encourage initiatives that enhance visibility and accessibility and thus reduce the fear of crime. An example of this is the Targeted Policing Initiative; its five categories for bids includes fear of crime and a number of forces have already secured funding for mobile police stations to be used in rural areas. Other funding has been made available through the programme for neighbourhood wardens and CCTV, both of which are proving to be valuable contributors to public reassurance. In addition, good examples exist of police forces using the Invest to Save Budget to develop initiatives that improve accessibility – for example, developing internet access.

2.7 Nonetheless, challenge funding remains heavily oriented towards crime reduction. In 2001/02, £1 million is available to promote initiatives that directly enhance public reassurance, but this is a small 'one-off' sum that can do little more than pump prime. The inspection team believes that consideration should be given to further challenge funding, along the lines of the Crime Reduction Programme, to encourage forces to undertake more work on public reassurance with rather more certainty about long term revenue funding.

Strategic Framework

The Home Office should align challenge funding to the complementary goals of tackling criminality and enhancing public reassurance.

Overarching Aims and Objectives

2.8 Funding for reassurance is a vital incentive to innovation and initiative, but the channelling of additional public money to this area of work must be accompanied by measures of impact. Public reassurance and confidence in the police service are core issues but they are not reflected fully in the Overarching Aims and Objectives for policing, first published in 1998. Here, the purpose of policing is described as:

> *"To help secure a safe and just society in which the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and communities are properly balanced".*

2.9 One of the eleven stated objectives is to *"improve safety and reassurance of the public, especially those at risk of harm"*, and there are public reassurance elements to the three aims (for example, to reduce fear of crime) but the statement of purpose could be revised to make public reassurance and confidence in policing a central tenet. In addition, no mention is made within the Overarching Aims and Objectives of an obligation to pursue high visibility policing. This represents a move away from the position in 1994, when one of the first Ministerial Priorities was *"to provide high visibility policing so as to reassure the public"* – this was removed in 1998, to rationalise the number of priorities, and has not been replaced.

2.10 The Home Secretary's current Ministerial Priorities, which direct authorities and forces as to where they should concentrate their efforts, are:

- To reduce local problems of crime and disorder in partnership with local authorities, other local agencies and the public.

- To increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities.

2.11 Given the proposed new focus on public reassurance, there is scope to reword the second priority to encompass all communities, perhaps with particular emphasis on minority ethnic communities. The provision of visible patrol should also become a stated objective of the police service.

Strategic Framework

The Home Office should work with APA, ACPO and other interested parties to ensure that the Overarching Aims and Objectives, together with Ministerial Priorities, give appropriate emphasis to public reassurance and police visibility.

Performance Measurement

2.12 A guiding principle of performance management is that managers have confidence in the quality of the data used. A common concern, expressed throughout the inspection, is the lack of consistency in data-gathering methods. Later in the report we highlight the difficulties experienced by Manchester Business School when trying to benchmark call-handling arrangements. Similarly, the Audit Commission's Police Service Performance Indicator compendium for 1999/2000 points to the variety of methods currently used to capture public satisfaction data, with large differences in sample sizes between similar forces.

2.13 One way of overcoming this is to gather data centrally, thus ensuring consistency of approach and promoting comparability. An example is the 2001 BCS that will, for the first time, collect data that can be reliably broken down at force level. It will cover BVPIs 120 to122, which measure experience of crime, fear of crime and feelings of public safety, the latter two being proxy measures of public reassurance. However, central data collection is not feasible across the full range of BVPIs. Through its thematic report *On the Record* and follow-up crime audits, HMIC has done much to standardise crime recording practices. However, doubts remain about the validity of benchmarking forces against BVPIs. The establishment of the Standards Unit within the Home Office is therefore timely – standardising data gathering systems, in conjunction with APA and ACPO, could be a useful long-term goal.

Strategic Framework

The Home Office Standards Unit should work with APA and ACPO to introduce standardised recording practices across the range of BVPIs and develop systems for quality control.

BVPIs

2.14 BVPIs are the centrepiece of the current performance regime and it is therefore vital that they are balanced and coherent in respect of policing activities and outcomes. Currently, the emphasis is heavily biased towards crime outcomes and outputs – measures of visibility, familiarity and disorder are under-represented. For example, of the 21 Service Delivery BVPIs, only two relate to public order (BVPIs 122 and 130) and none to visibility and familiarity. BVPIs 121 and 122 are proxy measures for reassurance and they could be developed as cross-cutting indicators, applied equally to police and local authorities. This would reflect the importance of partnership in tackling reassurance, but at the current time the sample size is such that it would not be possible to breakdown results to local authority level. A hierarchy of reassurance BVPIs as at 2001/02 is shown below (Figure 2.1):

Figure 2.1 Hierarchy of Reassurance BVPIs 2001/02

Reassurance
BVPI 121 Fear of Crime
BVPI 122 Feelings of Public Safety
(Both using BCS)

Crime levels
BVPI 120 Level of Crime
 (Using BCS)
BVPI 125 Total Recorded Crime
 per 1000 Pop and % Detected
BVPI 126 Domestic Burglaries
 per 1000 Pop and % Detected
BVPI 127 Violent Crimes per
 1000 Pop and % Detected
BVPI 128 Vehicle Crime per
 1000 Pop and % Detected

**Levels
of disorder**
BVPI 130 Public
Disorder Incidents
per 1000 pop

Familiarity

Visibility

Accessibility
BVPI 133 Response to Urgent
 Incidents within Local Targets
BVPI 134 999 Calls Answered
 within Target

2.15 The inspection team was aware of changes proposed to the suite of BVPIs for 2002/03 which included:

- The rationalisation of the BVPI suite.

- The grouping of the BVPIs to construct simple measures for key generic activities such as crime reduction, tackling criminality and public safety.

2.16 The absence of visibility and familiarity BVPIs, and the under representation of accessibility, is directly relevant to this inspection but the inspection team does not ignore the concurrent need to give greater weight to measures of civil order if the BVPI groups are to strike a balance between tackling crime and other elements of reassurance. ACPO's work in developing a cross-cutting indicator of the behavioural and physical environment has the potential to fill this vacuum.

2.17 It is proposed (paragraphs 4.32 and 7.60) that the provision of performance measures related to familiarity and accessibility could be dealt with through a national standards framework, but if visibility is to become accepted as a policing objective then the lack of a BVPI in this area needs to be addressed. Satisfaction with levels of patrol, a previous Audit Commission indicator, was dropped from the BVPI suite because of the unreliability of survey methodologies; the percentage of time that constables spend in public – a proxy for police visibility – is excluded on similar grounds. The adoption of the new policing Activity-Based Costing Model may, if quality control issues are addressed, allow the resurrection of this performance

indicator. In addition, or as an alternative, BVPI 28[15] could include (as a sub-set of the percentage of police officers in operational posts) a figure for officers who work predominantly in uniform in public.

2.18 Whichever, if any, of these options are considered appropriate, some measure of police visibility needs to be included within the suite of BVPIs.

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA, the Audit Commission and the Home Office Standards Unit should:
- Develop a BVPI that is a proxy measure for levels of police visibility.
- Include within the BVPI suite a cross-cutting indicator based on the ACPO visual audit proposals.
- Make BVPIs 121 and 122 applicable to all statutory partners.

2.19 Having established the appropriate BVPI framework it is essential that arrangements are in place to drive up performance standards. The Home Office Standards Unit could play an important role by incorporating wider reassurance issues, alongside crime and disorder reduction, in its work programme.

The Legislative Framework

2.20 The appointment of a new Home Office Ministerial team in June 2001 has not slowed the pace of police reform and modernisation, including efforts to streamline the framework of statutory regulations governing police pay and conditions. The Home Secretary has also signalled that he wishes to reserve powers to direct forces to adopt particular practices where they have been proven to be effective. Inflexibility in, for example, shift patterns was cited in some fieldwork visits as an obstacle to increased visibility and accessibility, and legislative change is advisable in a number of areas if public reassurance is to be strengthened. Examples of potentially beneficial changes include:

- A more flexible reward system that will allow chief constables to reward officers performing specific roles.

- New rewards system for the Special Constabulary.

- New powers for police support staff engaged in police-related duties such as uniformed patrol or custody support staff.

- Part-time regular officers to be allowed to work fewer than 16 hours per week.

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[15] Currently records the percentage of police officers in operational, operational support and organisational support posts

2.21 These proposals may help address some of the issues discussed later in the report, such as the retention and recruitment of special constables (paragraph 3.12) and the status of beat officers (paragraph 4.46 – 4.50). With regard to proposals for new powers for employees performing 'para-policing' roles, this report identifies the need for a clear statement of the boundaries of policing, and the extent to which traditional police roles can be civilianised. The proposals for new powers are useful as they stand but further developments will need to be informed by an understanding of the longer term vision.

ACPO's Committee Structure

2.22 The nature of ACPO's committee structure can be construed to reflect the status given to key functions. Where does patrol – an important contributor to police visibility, accessibility and familiarity – sit within this hierarchy? Until very recently the responsibility for patrol issues lay within the General Policing Committee, although it was not afforded sub-committee status alongside functions such as air support, police dogs and public order.

2.23 The General Policing Business Area has now been sub-divided into four portfolios and patrol is one of nine working groups within the operational and local policing portfolio, alongside the Special Constabulary, neighbourhood wardens and missing persons. With an average of 56% of police officers engaged in patrol duties, ACPO may wish to consider whether patrol warrants the status of a business area in its own right.

Strategic Framework

ACPO should enhance the status of patrol by affording it a higher status than that currently experienced within its business area model.

Centres of Excellence

2.24 A major recommendation of this report is that the Service should professionalise the patrol function (paragraph 4.63 – 4.68). One contribution to this could be to establish a centre of patrol excellence, to gather good practice and provide consultancy and expert advice. Given the proposal to merge the existing crime and operations faculties of National Police Training[16] (NPT), it may well be more appropriate to incorporate the work on good practice in patrol in the new merged centre. An associated point is that the work of crime and operations centres of excellence should have an explicit reassurance dimension.

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[16] As from April 2002 to be known as the Central Police Training and Development Authority

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and NPT should work with interested parties to ensure the concept of a 'centre of patrol excellence' is included within the proposal to merge the national crime and operations faculties of NPT, and also ensure that the work of the merged centre has an explicit reassurance dimension.

Force and BCU Frameworks

2.25 This section has promoted the need for a national framework to support reassurance through visibility and accessibility. This will naturally cascade down to force and BCU level and it is thus important that local strategies and performance measures reflect these new priorities.

2.26 However, a problem will emerge in 2001/02 as BCS data becomes the prime source for a number of BVPIs, in that the sample size is insufficient to provide data at BCU or local partnership level. Consequently, forces will be presented with data on fear of crime and perception of disorder (paragraph 2.14) without being able to apportion it to smaller geographic units. Some work has been undertaken on behalf of the Home Office's Research, Development and Statistics Directorate to devise a local crime survey methodology that will allow comparability between forces; this should be an appropriate vehicle for local data collection.

Strategic Framework

Police authorities, forces and partners should develop systems for gathering data at BCU and/or CDRP level, which is comparable with force-wide data, gathered by the BCS for BVPIs 121 (Fear of Crime) and 122 (Feelings of Public Safety).

Vision Statements

2.27 An examination of the annual and corporate strategies of the forces and authorities visited during the fieldwork revealed that many already have aspirational aims and vision statements concerning public reassurance, confidence in policing or addressing the fear of crime.

Examples of Vision Statements

1. "Lancashire Constabulary's aim is to make the community of Lancashire feel safe, involved and reassured."

2. "Our purpose is to make Humberside safer. In response to public concern we are committed to highly visible street patrol."

3. "We want South Wales to be a safer and more peaceful place, where the public, especially those who are young, vulnerable and from minority ethnic communities, have a high degree of confidence in their police…"

2.28 In addition to the BVPIs linked to reassurance, accessibility and visibility, some authorities have introduced local objectives and associated indicators that support some of their aspirations. Examples are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1			
Authority	**Objective**	**Performance Indicator**	**Means of Measurement**
Humberside	To provide highly visible patrols	Number of hours spent on high visibility foot patrol 75% of neighbourhood beat officers' time to be spent on beat duties	Activity analysis Monitoring of duty management system
Kent	To address the fear of crime in public places	Number of public order incidents in town centres	Information from command and control computer
Northamptonshire	To ensure that CBOs spend a minimum of 80% of their time on work related to their beat	Number of hours CBOs spend on work related to their beat	CBOs submit a monthly return outlining their activity
Leicestershire	To improve the presence and continuity of beat officers	Number of additional officers recruited under the CFF and the subsequent deployment of these officers to beat teams	Officer numbers
Merseyside	To provide public satisfaction in service delivery and enhance public confidence in the Force	The level of public confidence in Merseyside Police	Public survey to be developed

2.29 Some of the measures and methods of data collection at force and BCU level are either very crude or are still being developed. For example:

- Techniques to measures the time that officers spend on patrol are often simply 'best guesses', using historical activity analysis data and then extrapolating the results.

- Few of the forces inspected have any accurate methods of measuring beat officer abstractions; some use duty forecast data, but this does not take account of short notice abstractions such as gaoler duties. Other forces simply ask beat officers to estimate the time spent on beat duties; while this method gives broadly accurate data, the definition of beat-related duties was so wide as to include almost everything, even giving evidence at court.

2.30 In all but a few cases, the performance indicators were measures of inputs or outputs, with little consideration of the impact on the community. This is understandable, as the efficacy of beat officers is notoriously difficult to measure. One way in which forces are trying to overcome this is through the use of public surveys. Northamptonshire is attempting to overcome the problems inherent with random surveys, namely doubts about the extent to which the public notice the presence of patrolling officers, by focusing the questionnaire on prominent people in the community who would be expected to *know* their local beat officer.

Case Study

Public Survey – Questionnaire

Northamptonshire Police has a force objective *"That CBOs be known by name to 'key stakeholders' on their beats"*. In order to measure this, key stakeholders such as headteachers, local councillors, residents associations, community groups and Neighbourhood Watch schemes were surveyed to assess how well they knew their local officer.

2.31 It is important that the indicators adopted at force, BCU and partnership level reflect local need as well as the national framework. Fieldwork suggests that local indicators in the area of visibility and reassurance are in need of further refinement. An interesting development is the library of local indicators being developed by the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency, which will provide a repository of good practice. Currently, indicators are being collated under the headings of: safer leisure time; reducing accidents and injuries; improving safety for vulnerable people; reducing fear of crime; and designing for safety. It is anticipated that

indicators under the headings of crime reduction, reducing disorder and safer
environments will follow. Details can be found on www.local-pi-library.gov.uk.

CDRPs

2.32 At the time of the inspection, CDRPs were commencing crime audits to improve
strategies for 2002/05. It is a theme throughout this report that reassurance is not
a matter for police alone – improvements can only be secured in conjunction
with partners.

2.33 A review carried out in November 2000 of crime and disorder strategies[17] found that
48% had been informed by fear of crime questionnaires. However, fear of crime was
not directly featured in the list of the top 14 issues to be addressed by strategies,
albeit issues that contribute to fear of crime were prevalent (eg, disorder/anti-social
behaviour (72%) and criminal damage/graffiti (42%)). CDRPs are encouraged to take
account of Government priorities and targets when preparing strategies, and it is
therefore logical that the new reassurance agenda should be reflected. It is also worth
noting that a number of partnerships visited during the fieldwork shared the
frustration of police that their achievements had not been recognised in the wider
community; this point is developed in Section VI.

Strategic Framework

Forces should encourage CDRPs to set objectives related to public reassurance within
crime and disorder strategies.

Summary

2.34 The current legislative, performance and funding framework reflects the
Government's focus on crime reduction. If police forces and partners are to be
encouraged to commit more resources to other elements of reassurance, such as
reducing the signs of local disorder and increasing visibility, these need to feature in
the national framework, through:

- Changes to the funding regime.

- Changes in the Overarching Aims and Ministerial Priorities.

- Standardised recording practices across the range of BVPIs.

- A better balanced suite of BVPIs that promote increased visibility and
reduced disorder.

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[17] *Home Office Briefing Note 8/00*: Coretta Phillips, Mary Considine and Rachel Lewis, 2000

- Changes to the ACPO committee structure to enhance the status of patrol.

- The establishment of a centre for patrol excellence.

- New arrangements made for collecting BVPI data at BCU/CDRP level.

- Recognition that reassurance is a key issue for CDRPs.

2.35 The next section considers how forces, together with partners, can raise their visibility within communities, and thus contribute to enhanced reassurance, without adversely affecting the fight against crime.

Visible Street Presence

Vision

"Police forces will be taking all possible steps to maximise the visible street presence of uniformed officers and support staff while maintaining performance in other key areas; partners will also contribute to visibility through wardens, CCTV etc. Members of the public will notice the difference in the level of visible patrol activity."

Introduction

3.1 Section I highlighted the value attached by the public to a uniformed presence but noted that the police service is unable to match levels of expectation. This is explained in part by recent trends in the number of police officers employed in England and Wales, but also requires a consideration of how they are being deployed. What are forces doing to clarify the role of patrol in the 21st century and, in conjunction with their partners, maximise patrol visibility?

Trends in Police Numbers

3.2 The degree of visibility and accessibility of police officers within communities is partly a function of the number of officers available to deploy. Since 1993, officer numbers fell year on year until 2000, from 128,290 to a total of 124,170 (Figure 3.1). The following year saw an upturn, with the number rising to 125,519, and the Government intention is that the total will continue to rise towards a target of 130,000 by 2003. This increase is being funded by the CFF, which aims to recruit 9,000 officers over three years above forces' own budgeted projections. Given the lead time required before an officer is capable of independent patrol, the benefits of these increased numbers will take time to realise.

Figure 3.1 Changes in number of police officers
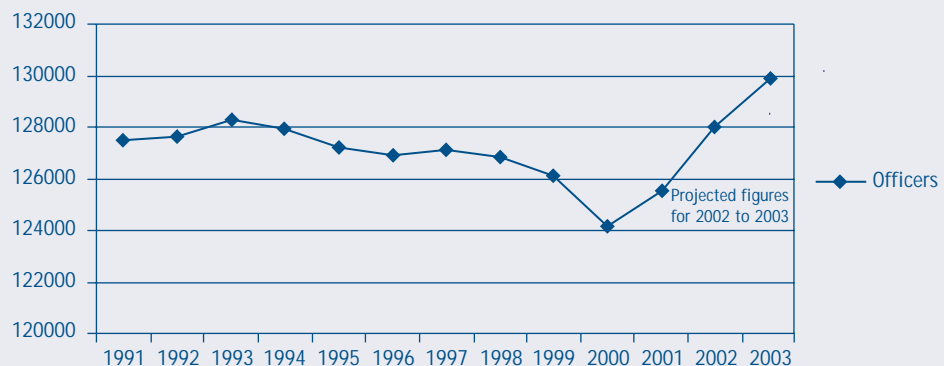
3.3 Over this period, some of the key measures of demand have fluctuated. The number of 999 calls per 100 officers (Table 3.1) has significantly increased (almost certainly attributable to the increased use of mobile phones), while the number of incidents per 100 officers recently dropped below 14,000 (Figure 3.2). These figures need interpretation – the absolute number of incidents needs to be set alongside more detailed analysis of the nature of the incidents, and the nature of the police response, to understand how demands upon officers are changing.

Table 3.1 – Demand per 100 Officers

Year	999	Incidents
1994/95	4,786	15,127
1995/96	5,422	15,023
1996/97	5,743	14,671
1997/98	6,049	14,180
1998/99	6,333	15,100
1999/2000	7,495	14,921
2000/01	7,647	13,933

Figure 3.2 Demand per 100 officers
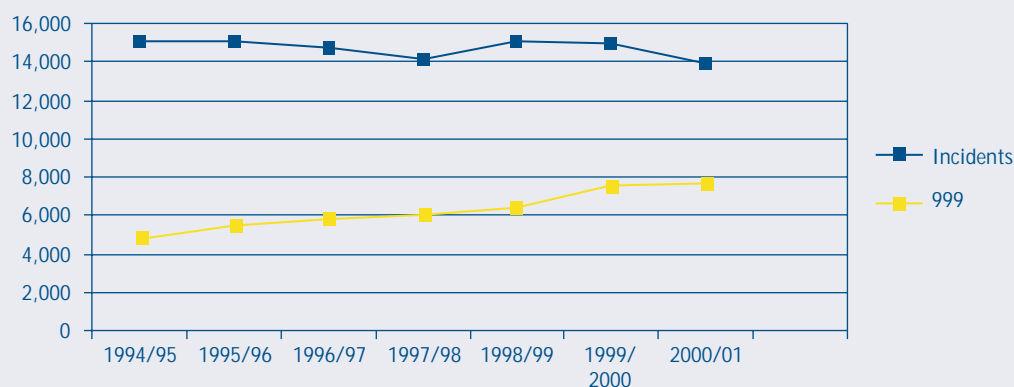
How Patrol Officers are Deployed

3.4 Alongside the number of officers available, an assessment of visibility needs to take account of how officers are deployed, and specifically, how many officers carry out uniformed patrol duties.[1] HMIC's analysis[2] suggests that about two-thirds (76,920 or 62.3%) of the total police strength in England and Wales perform uniformed duty. The high proportion of officers in non-uniformed roles reflects the fact that modern day policing requires 'behind the scenes' activities, notably investigation, intelligence and covert activities. What is less explicable is that this average of one-third of

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[1] Defined by ACPO in 1995 as: 'The overt presence, whether on foot or mobile, of a locally accountable uniformed police constable who provides public reassurance and who is approachable and available to ensure an appropriate response from all the resources of the police service, to the needs and demands of the general public'

[2] From statistics supplied annually by police forces in an Annual Statistical Review (ASR). Relation to regular police staff only and does not include the Special Constabulary

officers working out of uniform masks significant variation between forces – in one force, 74% of available staff are assigned to uniformed duties compared with only 48% in another force. While this may reflect a deliberate policy decision about deployment to tackle current performance priorities and discharge the full range of policing tasks, a relatively low number of officers working in uniform has implications for reassurance, and merits further analysis.

3.5   The 'uniformed officer' category includes some officers – for example, in training or firearms sections – who do not normally undertake patrol duties. The vast majority of visible patrol is contained within the following four ASR functions:

- Foot/car/beat patrol.

- Dog handlers.

- Mounted officers.

- Traffic officers.

Figure 3.3 Police Officer main functions – England and Wales 2000/01

"On patrol" includes "Car/foot/beat patrol-operational", "Dogs", "Mounted" and "Traffic"
The designation 'on patrol' relates to a generic category of officer and does not reflect the activities of these officers once on duty. (Paragraph 3.7)
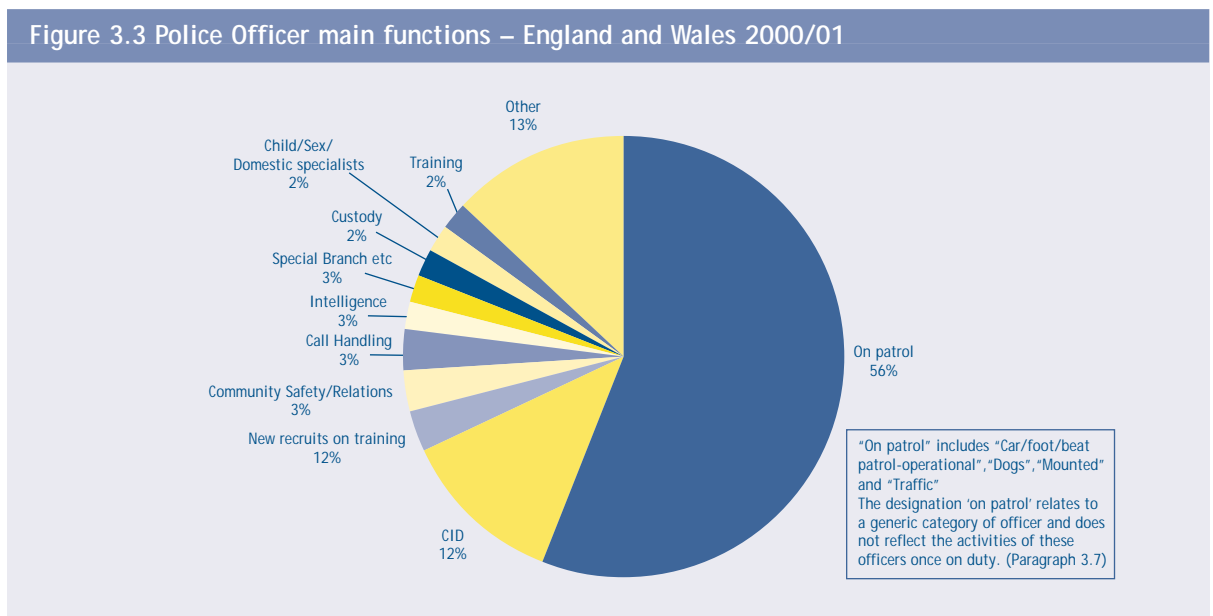
3.6   The average percentage of officers deployed on patrol duties – 56% in 2000/01 (Figure 3.3) – has remained remarkably consistent over the last five years, but between forces the range is 39% to 68%. At a national level, it would be unwise to suggest a benchmark figure, because the disposition of resources should reflect local policing circumstances. However, such a disparity in the percentage of officers deployed on patrol work needs further examination by chief officers to ensure that:

- They are aware of how their disposition compares with similar forces.

- It reflects explicit policy decisions and is not attributed to a 'historical drift' out of uniform and away from patrol.

- Proper account has been taken of the Government's stated commitment to reassurance and associated issues of visibility and accessibility. This may require a review and in some cases an increase in officers performing the patrol function.

3.7 A recent Home Office study[3] found that uniformed officers working a 24-hour shift pattern – generally response officers – spent 43% of their time in the police station. The majority of this time was spent doing paperwork and other administrative tasks. Most of the time out of the station was spent dealing with incidents and making enquiries; only 17% of officer time was spent on any sort of reassurance patrol.

3.8 Some senior police officers argue that the enhanced focus on reassurance represents 'new business' and needs to be matched by an increase in resources if other priorities are to be delivered. Although no central records are kept of where CFF posts are being assigned, the inspection evidence is that patrol is the principal beneficiary, and thus the proportion of officers in this category can be expected to rise over the next three years. The projected increase in the Special Constabulary, if achieved, will also boost the street presence, as will developments around the extended police family (paragraph 3.55 – 3.67). The analysis above, however, points to a pressing need for forces to review how their existing resources are being allocated and deployed in support of new reassurance objectives.

Tactical Option

Forces should review the resources allocated to patrol, in the light of the new commitment to reassurance and associated issues of visibility and accessibility, and where appropriate they should increase the number of officers performing this function.

Maximising the Visible Street Presence to Enhance Reassurance

3.9 The policing presence on the streets is provided by four categories of officer, although the roles they perform have a degree of interchangeability:

- **Response officers** – who attend 'immediate/emergency' calls for assistance. In larger BCUs, response teams may operate within sectors of the BCU; dependent on the local policing style, response officers may also deal with 'slow time' incidents.

- **Community officers** – who deal with slow time incidents and problem-solving within local communities, usually in a defined geographic area to which they are dedicated for a period of time. Currently, these officers often spend a significant proportion of their time dealing with calls for service as a back up for hard-pressed response teams.

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[3] *Diary of a Police Officer*, PA Consulting, Police Research Series Paper 149, Home Office, 2001

- **Specialist uniformed officers** – predominantly HQ-based, but sometimes devolved to divisional/area level, these officers include traffic officers, dog handlers, mounted officers and public order/operational support teams[4].

- **Special Constabulary** – volunteer police officers who are attached to BCUs. Their powers are the same as regular officers but can only exercise them in their own force and neighbouring force areas.

3.10 Some patrol work is highly reactive, being driven by incidents and calls for service, while other elements seek to reduce or eliminate problems by intelligence-gathering, developing community networks and working with partners to solve long-term problems. Generally speaking, the public are satisfied with the way that police forces respond to emergencies and non-urgent incidents but are disenchanted with their efforts at community engagement and reassurance through visible patrol. In some areas, there is a perception that the police have withdrawn from communities, and that officers do not identify with or are known within areas. The cries of 'we never see officers walking the beat' reflect a real concern that, while crime issues are treated as a priority and dealt with professionally, the many instances of anti-social behaviour that trouble communities and erode residents' quality of life are handled poorly, if at all. So how can forces get more officers into proactive, community-based work and drive up reassurance levels? Apart from deploying them more effectively, which is covered in Section IV, there is scope to enhance visibility by:

- Maximising the visible impact of existing police resources.

- Managing patrol officers better.

- Mobilising external resources to a greater degree.

Maximising the Visible Impact of Existing Police Resources

3.11 'Doing more with the same or less' is the ultimate prize of efficiency reviews, and the Service has done much over the years to improve productivity, but this inspection has identified further ways in which forces can heighten visible impact within existing resources by:

- Improving the recruitment and retention of special constables.

- Deploying response officers singly rather than in pairs.

- Civilianising some activities to release officers for street duties.

- Requiring some non-uniformed officers to undertake limited patrol work.

- Making uniform the default apparel unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

- Making support staff more recognisable as police personnel.

- Ensuring that the maximum number of vehicles are liveried.

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4   For the purpose of the ASR, public order/operational support teams are included within the foot/car/beat patrol factions (paragraph 3.5)

Improving the Recruitment and Retention of Special Constables

3.12 The presence of uniformed patrol officers is boosted by special constables, the vast majority of whose duty time is spent on patrol. However, recent years have witnessed a steady fall in the number of special constables nationally, with only one force bucking the trend and increasing its complement. Numbers have fallen by almost 8,847 (43%), from 20,786 in 1995/96 to 11,939 in 2000/01, with one force losing 55% of its Special Constabulary strength over this period. Appendix D shows the force-by-force ratio of specials per 100 officers; there is no correlation between the size of the regular force and that of its Special Constabulary, nor is there any evidence to differentiate rural or urban locations.

3.13 Challenging Government targets have been set to increase the number of specials through:

- A national recruitment campaign.

- Central support for on-costs.

- Significant improvements in their management by forces.

- A review of the rewards system.

3.14 These proposals have largely been welcomed by the Service but HMIC considers that there is also scope for greater support by employers for the Special Constabulary. The Employment Rights Act 1996 allows employees to take time off to undertake certain categories of public service, but does not make provision for the same right to be afforded to members of the Special Constabulary. Home Office research has found that employers expect specials' duties to be performed in the employee's own time (although they are more supportive when the individual is called to give evidence in court). The noteworthy exceptions to this trend illustrate the value of more widespread adoption.

Case Study

Employer Support for Special Constables

An employee of an insurance company in Avon and Somerset is given regular time off to perform his duties as a special constable. The arrangement has been in place for around two years, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the individual's line manager is a retired police officer. A number of other specials in Avon and Somerset are given two paid weeks a year to perform their duties with the police; this is equivalent to the Territorial Army provisions. The Force is looking to progress this further and is negotiating with a local manufacturer to include specials in its policy of giving reservists, Territorial Army officers and retained firefighters paid time off to perform their duties.

Such arrangements would undoubtedly help many specials to contribute longer hours or more concentrated periods of duty, with consequent benefits in terms of relations with their regular colleagues. Key success factors for this initiative include:

- Recognition by the force of the support provided by the company.

- Specials given specific tasks so that they can feed back results to their employer.

- Senior officers in the force using their links with private sector organisations – eg, Chambers of Commerce – to promote it.

- Police forces giving paid time off to their own support staff who are special constables.

3.15 The proposal for a national recruitment campaign should also encourage or incorporate provision for local recruiting initiatives such as those noted during the inspection. In each case, a key success factor was the initiative shown by a highly motivated individual.

Case Study

Successful Recruitment

Initiatives for Specials:
1. Avon and Somerset devolved the recruitment of specials to its BCUs in April 2000. Bath and North East Somerset run a campaign called 'Factory Call', where specials give a presentation to colleagues in their own workplace. This has proved to be very successful – one presentation resulted in 18 enquiries.

2. A local policing unit inspector in Leicestershire has undertaken a significant campaign to recruit specials, setting himself a target of 20 recruits; at the time of the inspection, he had received 51 expressions of interest. During the process, he identified a barrier presented by the need for potential recruits to attend Force HQ to collect an application form and attend a seminar, which meant taking half a day's leave from work. Consequently, he has arranged for the seminar to be held in a hotel on his own local policing unit.

3.16 HMIC recognises the important contribution to public reassurance made by highly motivated and well-trained special constables, and supports efforts to address the problems of recruitment and retention. It urges the Government to review the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996 and encourage employers to treat special constable employees as favourably as they do Territorial Army personnel and retained firefighters.

Deploying Response Officers Singly rather than in Pairs

3.17 The Home Office strategy document, *Criminal Justice – The Way Ahead*[5] argued that pairing officers to conduct foot or mobile patrol may occasionally be necessary for operational or safety reasons, but should not be the norm for the simple reason that two officers patrolling singly will cover twice the ground. This reflects a growing belief within policing circles. As part of this inspection, fieldwork BCUs were asked to provide data on deployment policy and practice. This shows that current practice departs significantly from the Home Office aspiration, as management data from duty rosters showed that at:

8am	46% of vehicles were double-crewed.
4pm	54% of vehicles were double-crewed.
midnight	68% of vehicles were double-crewed.

3.18 However, another source of evidence – questionnaires completed by a sample of officers in those BCUs – suggests that this management data does not match reality. Officers indicated that double-crewing was, in fact, a more frequent practice. For example, these officers reported that 75% of cars would be double-crewed at 4pm, rather than 47%, and that at midnight 89% of units would have two officers.

3.19 Among the fieldwork BCUs, 70% have a policy covering double-crewing; the content varied but two common findings were that:

- Many BCUs routinely claimed to apply a risk assessment approach to determine whether officers patrol in pairs.

- Most BCUs always double-crew during the hours of darkness.

3.20 Claims of a risk-assessed approach do not bear careful scrutiny; the inspection team found only one example where any science lay behind the risk assessment process. The majority of decisions reflect the judgement and preferences of first-line supervisors. When asked why they would be double-crewed for a particular shift, officers stated that:

- In 28% of cases the decision was based upon a risk assessment undertaken by a supervisor.

5   Criminal Justice – The Way Ahead, CM 5074, HMSO, 2001

- 28% always patrolled in pairs.

- 12% double-crewed in order to fulfil a specific task.

- On 12% of occasions, officers had double-crewed because there were too few
  vehicles to patrol singly.

3.21 Management information on double- versus single-crewing is not routinely available
to BCU managers and consequently there is little accountability for decisions. Of the
23 BCUs visited, only 13 could supply data on the extent of double-crewed vehicle
patrols, while only one BCU was able to confirm whether foot patrols were
performed singly or in pairs. Moreover, as noted above, the information drawn from
duty rosters often does not reflect what actually happened during the shift.

3.22 It is easy to criticise an approach to double-crewing which ignores that this is an
expensive and not always efficient use of resources, and reduces officers' accessibility
to the public. There are good operational reasons why officers may need to be
deployed in pairs, notably evidence corroboration, personal safety issues and tutoring
of probationary officers. Officer safety is a highly emotive issue that prompts many
supervisors to default to double-crewing, in the absence of definitive research as to
the circumstances in which officers face the greatest risk of assault. Nonetheless,
today's officers are better equipped than ever before to deal with confrontation,
through the provision of batons, CS spray and body armour. More use should be
made of single patrols, but practice is unlikely to change significantly unless forces
can support supervisors with well-founded policies based on risk assessment, such as
that developed by Essex. Although this approach is yet to be fully adopted in the
Force, it was the only attempt found by the inspection team to introduce a rational,
planned approach to double-crewing. Policy implementation should then be
monitored and officers held to account for key resourcing decisions.

Case Study

Risk Assessment for Double-Crewing in Essex

Essex Police has attempted to apply some science to risk assessment for patrol duties, utilising STORM (command and control) incident data, information about assaults on police and data relating to the use of personal protective equipment. A task group of one chief inspector (operations), an inspector, sergeant, constable and a Police Federation representative meet to interpret the data and identify periods of time/days of the week when double-crewing is recommended or when single-crewing should be the norm. Deployments outside these recommendations have then to be justified by the supervisors concerned.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should deploy officers as single vehicle and foot patrols as the norm unless there are sound operational or health and safety reasons to justify exceptions. Supervisors should have access to reliable management information and sound guidance to inform their decisions, for which they should be held to account.

Civilianising Activities to Release Officers for Street Duties

3.23 In 1981, the police service employed one support staff member for every 3.2 constables (37,795 support staff compared with 118,102 officers) and support staff represented 24% of the total workforce. This ratio remained relatively constant until the 1990s, at which point the pattern changed. Between 1991 and 1996, forces experienced rapid growth in support staff numbers against a backdrop of reducing police numbers (Figure 3.4). This reflected forces' reviews of the roles being performed by police officers and a programme of civilianisation on efficiency grounds. By 1996, the ratio was one support staff member to 2.4 constables, comprising 29% of the work force. Current figures are little different. (A comprehensive table showing staffing levels, police and support staff is contained in Appendix E)

Figure 3.4 Indexed Change in Number of Police Officer/Support Staff 1991-2001
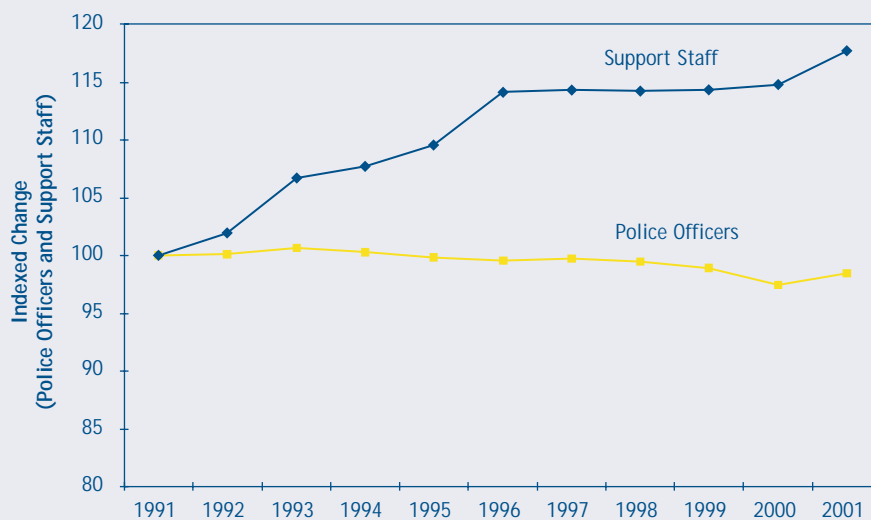
3.24 The ASR shows that over 1,000 police officers occupy posts that have long been earmarked as suitable for civilianisation (Table 3.2), a situation confirmed during the inspection.

Table 3.2 Posts that have been identified as suitable for civilianisation

Function	Police officers occupying posts
Enquiry/station clerk	300
Personnel, HR	279
Other admin/clerical	218
Court security	110
Driver	62
Coroners Officer	59
Total	1,028

3.25 A counter-pressure to civilianising these roles is the demand for a reduction in the number of early retirements on grounds of ill-health and thus the need to fill non-operational roles with officers on long-term recuperative duties. Where these roles are not filled by such officers, forces should review them urgently. However, it is accepted that forces have exploited most of the traditional civilianisation opportunities, and now may need to explore whether support staff could undertake roles that have previously been classed as operational. Civilianisation of posts is not a straightforward issue, and consideration should be given to the 'added value' that a police officer performing a particular role can bring in terms of reassuring contact with the community. Additionally, civilianisation closes down some development opportunities for police officers. Nonetheless, the following list (which is not intended to be exhaustive) reflects innovative approaches by some forces in using appropriately trained support staff:

- Limited interviewing of suspects.
- Foot surveillance.
- Static covert observations.
- Witness protection (chaperones).
- Statement-taking.
- Memorandum interviews (child witnesses).
- Crime recording.
- Crime scene searching.
- House-to-house enquiries.
- Intelligence analysis.
- Case management.
- Exhibits officer duties.

- Family liaison.

- Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) functions.

- Covert technical deployment.

- Video viewing.

- Financial investigations.

3.26 Work is under way within the police reform programme to review the powers which might be needed to increase the range of functions performed by support staff, for example in undertaking custody gaoler and case manager roles. That said, a number of other barriers exist that may prevent forces from pushing back the boundaries of civilianisation. Research conducted in 1998 identified a failure to take a holistic view of civilianisation within the context of changing police roles.[6] As a result, there has been a failure to define the core functions of public policing and the appropriate police officer/support staff division of labour. This suggests that the current reform programme should ideally be influenced by a guiding philosophy or vision about civilianisation; otherwise, it will continue on an ad hoc basis without strategic direction. This guiding philosophy or strategy needs to refute notions that the total number of officers outweighs any consideration of how they are used – there is little benefit to a local community if an officer is employed in a role that could be performed more cost-efficiently by a member of support staff, simply to keep up police numbers.

Case Study

Innovations in Civilianisation

1. Wiltshire Constabulary has established a prisoner handling team on one division, using Rural Fund money. It comprises six support staff and two constables on a rolling attachment, all of whom conduct interviews for lower category offences. It is estimated that the team now interviews the prisoners in about one-third of all arrests (including some for burglary dwellings). Legal advice was sought before the pilot was set up, and evaluation to date suggests that it has been particularly successful.

2. South Wales is one of a number of forces to recruit retired officers as investigators to reduce demand on front-line officers.

3. Hertfordshire Police introduced support staff operatives in 1995 to fill the void in surveillance skills caused by the restructuring of Regional Crime Squads to form the National Crime Squad. The force decided upon this route rather than remove police officers from other operational duties. Currently, it employs 12 operatives trained to level one surveillance standard, as well as in court presentation skills and aspects of law pertinent to their job.

[6] *The Past, Present and Future Role of Civilian Personnel in the Police Service in England and Wales,* PhD dissertation by Supt. L Parrett, Norfolk Constabulary

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and the Home Office, in consultation with relevant representative bodies, should develop strategic guidance on the process of civilianisation and avoid a simplistic focus on overall police numbers.

Patrolling by Non-Uniformed Officers

3.27 The renewed emphasis on visibility has prompted some forces to require officers whose normal role is 'behind the scenes' – for example, CID officers, supervisors and senior managers – to carry out some high visibility reassurance patrol. Such initiatives were observed in Avon and Somerset, Merseyside and the MPS, but perhaps the most established scheme is in Humberside. All CID officers on Humberside's 'A' Division complete at least four hours high visibility patrol per month, usually working in small teams and tasked by the divisional intelligence unit around crime problems and anti-social behaviour. Achievement of the commitment is monitored by the management services unit. Similar approaches are used in other Humberside divisions, and are appreciated by uniformed officers, but it is critical that the practice is consistently applied and intelligence-led, otherwise it will be perceived as a publicity stunt and have limited impact.

3.28 Provided there is no detrimental effect on the officer's main role, this approach has tangible impact. If each 'non-uniform' officer worked four hours per month on patrol, then they would complete six patrol days per year. Considering that some 46,000 officers are deployed in non-uniformed functions, this equates to 276,000 'extra' patrol days, or the equivalent of around 1,200 additional officers on patrol. Although this is a 'ball park' figure and excludes officers who are unfit for patrol duty, or for other reasons it would not be suitable for them to undertake patrol, it does give an indication of the scale of the potential benefit.

Making Uniform the Default Apparel

3.29 A number of roles, such as CID, have traditionally been performed exclusively in plain clothes on the grounds that:

• Uniform is inappropriate for covert activities such as surveillance operations.

• Victims and/or witnesses in sensitive enquiries (eg, sexual assaults and domestic violence), or where a risk of intimidation exists, may not want uniformed officers visiting their homes.

• A detective operating in plain clothes is perceived to have a higher status and thus makes victims feel that they are getting a high quality service.

• Officers might be stopped by members of the public and their attention diverted when carrying out enquiries.

3.30 These points all have some validity, especially the first two, but discussion with specialist officers revealed some acceptance that, at times, a form of police identification would not be detrimental when, for example, conducting door-to-door enquiries or executing warrants. It would clearly not be feasible for officers to change in and out of uniform throughout a shift, but Merseyside offers examples of using other means of identification to increase the visibility of non-uniformed staff:

- CID officers in Sefton use marked armbands in certain circumstances.

- CID officers in Knowsley wear fluorescent yellow jackets for door-to-door enquiries, and use high visibility jackets marked 'Drug Enforcement Team' during drugs raids.

3.31 Similar considerations about wearing police identification apply to officers who perform uniformed operational but non-patrol roles, who often work out of uniform. A Best Value Review (BVR) carried out by Dorset uncovered a gradual move away from wearing uniform for a number of posts such as crime reduction officers, burglary liaison officers and crime desk staff. This is also the situation in a number of forces visited, and Her Majesty's Inspector believes that working in uniform should be the default position for all police officers unless there are sound operational reasons for plain clothes. Middle-ranking and senior officers should set an example by wearing uniform as a matter of routine.

Making Support Staff more Recognisable as Police Personnel

3.32 Similar arguments can be applied to the extent of identification of support staff as police personnel. Most, if not all, front counter clerks already wear a uniform, as do many control room staff. Successful initiatives exist that exploit the visible presence of support staff who are identifiable as police staff, including Wiltshire's 'bobby van'. The scheme is run by a charitable trust at a total cost of £50,000 per year, to which the Force contributes a small proportion. An employee of the trust wears uniform and attends victims in their homes to provide reassurance, give crime prevention advice and make minor repairs to doors and windows. The vehicle is marked with police signs and the logos of sponsoring companies. The benefits are both practical and symbolic in terms of a visible, reassuring presence.

3.33 Generally, though, support staff appear reluctant to be recognisable in public. For example, scenes of crime officers (SOCOs) who were interviewed on this point objected that:

- Their safety would be compromised if they were known to be police employees.

- They may be called upon to react to an incident if approached by the public.

The concerns are genuinely expressed but are not necessarily rational. Traffic wardens, for example, have always operated in uniform while in a number of forces SOCOs already drive marked vehicles. The provision of a radio, with rudimentary training in its use, should ensure that support staff are not unduly compromised. Given the research evidence that the sight of an individual in uniform is reassuring to the public, there is scope to enhance the contribution that support staff make to visibility and reassurance in the community.

Tactical Option

Forces should consider increasing the visibility of police personel by:
- Introducing a structured programme of 'patrol days' for non-patrol officers.
- Reviewing the role performed by plain-clothed officers to assess whether this is operationally necessary; *wearing uniform should be the default position*.
- Ensuring that, unless good operational reasons apply, plain-clothed staff wear some form of identification when performing duties in public.
- Consulting with relevant representative bodies, to review the greater contribution support staff could make in raising the visibility of police activity in local communities.

Ensuring that the Maximum Number of Vehicles are Liveried

3.34 In the same way that opportunities exist to make some police officers and support staff more obviously identifiable as police personnel, greater impact can be secured by maximising the scope for marking police vehicles with the force livery. Research undertaken in the 23 fieldwork BCUs found that, on average, 63% of cars and 89% of vans were marked as police vehicles. The figure for cars varied between forces from 39% to almost 86% – the latter figure being in Humberside. Interestingly, Humberside's commitment to vehicle marking met with some disfavour among plain-clothed officers, who argue that it causes them problems in sensitive enquiries.

3.35 There was a reluctance among plain-clothed officers and support staff to drive marked vehicles for the same reasons raised about uniforms, but the argument is undermined when officers admitted that most of their 'regular customers' know the unmarked vehicles in the police fleet. Such vehicles are rarely used in covert operations, for this reason. Even where vehicles are marked, far from all have maximum impact markings such as the chequered or 'battenberg' design – this has been proven scientifically to have a very high visibility score.

Tactical Option

Forces should review vehicle fleets to ensure that all vehicles are marked unless there are sound operational grounds not to do so, and should exploit the available research on high visibility design.

Better Management of Patrol Officers

3.36 The impact of freeing up officers from 'back-room' roles that could be civilianised will be undermined if their time on the streets is unnecessarily curtailed. A major concern throughout the Service is the high level of abstraction from core duties, especially the patrol function. This concern is shared by Ministers, who recently asked HMIC to examine the reasons why operational officers are absent from patrol (defined as the time uniformed police officers spend out of the station in direct contact with the general public), and identify how such abstractions could be avoided or reduced. The internal report (titled *A Diary of Two Constables*)[7] highlights the complexities of the issues – there are few 'quick wins' available here. Reducing bureaucracy and abstractions is a war of attrition – as savings are made, new legislation is introduced or proposed which necessitates further training and a commitment of resources. Table 3.3 identifies legislation and procedures that have, over the last 12 months, impacted on training and development, and thus abstractions from duty. Column A topics have major implications for training the majority of force employees; Column B entails more limited impact, while Column C affects only the force which conducted the research, namely West Mercia.

Table 3.3 Legislation and procedures that have impacted on training and development		
A	**B**	**C**
Major Training Implications (all forces)	Limited Training Needs (all forces)	Force-specific implications
• Human Rights • Diversity • Victim Personal Statement • Vulnerable Witness • Airwave • Unarmed Defensive Training • First Aid Training • Video Interviewing (Pilot Force) • Criminal Justice & Police Bill • Probationer recruitment • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)	• Regional Collaboration (PSU, Firearms, Probationer Training, Tutor Constables, any new legislation) • Revised Code of Practice for PACE • Race Relations Amendment Act • Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2002 • Mental Health Reform • National Investigators Course • Youth Offending Teams • Family Liaison Officer Course • PNC upgrades • Data Protection	• Disclosure • Custody training (outsourcing of Custody Assistants) • Fully Integrated Communications Control System • Witness training for major enquiries

7 *A Diary of Two Constables*: HMIC unpublished 2001

3.37 Further insight into the problem is provided by activity analysis undertaken in five of the eight forces visited for this inspection. Forces were asked to identify the top five activities that abstract community and response officers from their patrol duties. For both categories of officer, paperwork (incident and non-incident related) was the most significant abstraction. Some of the issues raised by this analysis merit further consideration (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Causes of abstraction of community and response officers		
	Average % of the total hours recorded*	
Home Office Definition[8]	**Community**	**Response**
Paperwork/Case File Preparation Time spent preparing and updating reports, files, tape summaries, etc, in connection with a specific incident.	9	12
Non-incident-linked Paperwork All general paperwork and correspondence not linked to a specific incident.	9	7
Briefings and Meetings All general briefings/meetings not related to a specific incident, including self-briefing.	7	8
Dealing with Detainees/Suspects Includes returning persons to the station, presenting cases to custody officers, searching prisoners, fingerprinting and photographing.	Not included in top 5	5
Special Operations/Events Any special operations, VIP visits, sporting events, protection duties in connection with special events.	9	Not included in top 5
*(As an average % across the forces supplying data)		

Prisoner Processing and Case Preparation

3.38 Prisoner processing and case preparation are major causes of abstraction, taking as an example 17% of the time of response officers. Appendix F presents a case study illustrating the time taken to follow through even a simple arrest. A number of steps have been taken to reduce the burden on officers, including:

- The use of support staff to prepare summaries of taped interviews.

- The introduction of case handling units to take over the paperwork following arrest.

- The Editorial Board for the *Manual of Guidance for the Preparation, Processing and Submission of Files* recently introduced changes that markedly reduced the number of forms that need to be submitted following a charge.

3.39 The delivery of the (much delayed) national case and custody preparation systems will represent potential savings in terms of reduced keying and integration of systems with other criminal justice agencies.

[8] Home Office categories of activity which have been introduced to ensure consistency of measurement across forces

Court Attendance

3.40 HMIC analysis found that 13% of a community officer's abstraction typically involves time spent at court waiting to give, and giving, evidence. Frustratingly, on some 46% of occasions that officers attend Magistrates Courts their evidence is not required; the comparable figure for Crown Court attendance is 59%[9]. Clearly, there are issues for the wider CJS in the way that court hearings are listed and witnesses warned, a subject for a forthcoming thematic report[10]. It would be useful to introduce performance indicators that balance the effective management of court time with minimising the time spent by witnesses waiting to give evidence. These matters go wider than policing, and it is hoped that the recent review of the criminal courts by Sir Robin Auld will produce the positive impact of reducing officer time dedicated to attending court[11]. In the meantime, a number of forces have taken relevant initiatives.

Case Study

Initiatives to Minimise Time Wasted through Inefficient Listing and Warning Procedures

1. The duties officer at Weston-Super-Mare (Avon and Somerset Constabulary) discovered that there was a service level agreement (SLA) between the Force and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), designed to minimise attendance of police officers at court when they are on rest day leave. The officer made it his business to robustly challenge breaches of the SLA, and this has considerably improved the situation. Comparison across districts shows that Weston's costs generated by court attendance on leave days have dropped significantly across a three-year period, and are now the lowest per officer in the Force.

2. There are six magistrates courts centres in Northamptonshire, at which the Force identified the high cost of unproductive 'waiting time'. With help from the clerk of the Magistrates Courts, standby arrangements for police officers have been put in place whereby an officer waiting to give evidence will be deployed at the local station on paperwork or other duties until called to give evidence. This scheme has potential benefits which have yet to be evaluated and quantified.

Public Order

3.41 Public order events account, on average, for 9% of community officers' abstracted time, covering football and sporting events, Royal/VIP visits, disputes (such as the fuel dispute), major conferences and protests. *A Diary of Two Constables* recommends that:

- Commercial concerns pay the full cost of policing events, including associated policing outside the venue.

- Greater use is made of stewards and private firms to carry out functions which do not require police powers.

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[9] Evidence collected by Kent Constabulary and reported in 'A Diary of Two Constables'

[10] A Joint Inspection Report from HMIC, the Magistrates Court and Crown Prosecution Services Inspectorates to be published in the summer of 2002

[11] A Review of the Criminal Courts of England and Wales by the Right Honourable Lord Justice Sir Robin Auld

Sickness Absence

3.42   The management of sickness was the subject of the HMIC thematic report *Lost Time* and a recent ACPO paper, *Guidance on the Management of Staff Attendance in the Police Service*. Consequently, sickness absence was excluded from the thematic's terms of reference. Despite this, forces highlighted a range of initiatives such as the provision of Occupational Health Services, days off as a reward for full attendance, schemes for making best use of staff on recuperative duties and other proactive health initiatives. Reducing sickness continues to be a potential source of efficiency savings. The Home Secretary's speech to the 2001 Superintendents' Association Conference highlighted that: *"if today, there was a one percentage point improvement in sickness absence (from 5% of all working days to 4%) for the uniformed staff, there would be 1,200 extra officers available for duty"*.

Non-Policing Tasks

3.43   The extent and nature of the policing role continues to be a matter for some debate. The police service very often fills a vacuum created by other agencies which lack a 24-hour capability, and officers express frustration about the time spent on tasks they have limited powers to impact unless other agencies are engaged or are considered ancillary to the core policing role, including:

- Abandoned vehicles.

- Problems linked to mental health.

- Guarding injured prisoners (hospital).

- Crime prevention surveys.

- Stray dogs/injured animals.

- Lost/found property.

3.44   The Home Office *Review of Police Core and Ancillary Tasks*[12] considered many of these issues and concluded that *"there was little scope for the police service, broadly defined, to completely withdraw from large areas of current police work"*. The review did identify areas where police effort could be streamlined or reduced, but these remain a drain on police resources today. A number of ancillary tasks could be considered a shared responsibility (eg, abandoned vehicles and mental health issues), and others where a business case could be made for outsourcing (eg, guarding injured prisoners). Alternatively, a number of these tasks could be undertaken by a second tier of auxiliary officer (discussed further in Section IV).

Managing Bureaucracy

3.45   There is considerable scope for forces, working with partners, to be innovative in reducing bureaucracy and the demands on patrol staff. Efficiency Plans are one

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[12]   *Review of Police Core and Ancillary Tasks*, Home Office, 1993

vehicle for focusing managers' minds on the issues and reduced bureaucracy is a common source of efficiency gains. The greatest gains will be achieved by forces that take a strategic approach to demand management, as is the case in West Midlands Police and the MPS.

Beating Bureaucracy

1. West Midlands staff are encouraged to question existing systems and propose new initiatives to reduce the paperwork burden on patrol officers, thus allowing more time for local problem-solving. The 'Beating Bureaucracy User Group' works on the principle of rapidly trialling new ideas, overcoming the reluctance to introduce change that often arises from time-consuming consultation within support departments. This approach has achieved several notable successes:

- An officer combined the numerous forms required when premises were searched (eg, authority to search, persons present, exhibit lists, exhibit labels) into a single 'contemporaneous search of premises' booklet.

- When a member of the public attends a police station to report a traffic collision that is limited to slight injury or damage only fail to stop, an incident log reference number is recorded on a reporting form which is then given to the person to complete. This self-reporting system is intended to reduce queues at enquiry desks and release more time for street patrol. Completed forms are returned to the police station together with any vehicle documentation for inspection and recording within seven days. No further enquiries or action is taken when forms are not returned. A detailed audit of the impact of this approach in Solihull revealed that no

further police action was required in 100% of the 67 reported incidents, with 65% of the reports being filed immediately. Overall the savings were calculated as the equivalent to 35 working days per year for that particular BCU. Applied across the whole of the West Midlands, this would be equivalent to approximately 500 additional working days being made available for police patrol every year.

- Over 3,000 bicycles a year come into the possession of West Midlands Police, and a descriptive form was used for all stolen and found bicycles so that matches would identify owners. When an officer suggested that these forms merely duplicated the details entered onto computerised crime reports, the cycle descriptive form was promptly scrapped.

2. The MPS, after a staff survey in which 70% of respondents stated there was too much bureaucracy, established a task force-driven programme known as Clearing the Decks to look at reducing reactive demand. The potential savings could exceed £10m, with notable savings in:

- Abandoned vehicles – £2.4m by directing calls to local authorities.

- Shoplifters – £1.06m through a policy of not processing all shoplifters through custody.

Tactical Option

Forces should proactively manage the demand on patrol officers by exploring
options for:

• Reducing time spent on processing prisoners and case preparation.

• Reducing time spent unproductively at court.

• Ways to reduce the demands on the Service imposed by pre-planned public
order events.

• Reducing levels of sickness.

• Outsourcing, or working with partners on non-core policing tasks.

Shift System Management

3.46 The *Streetwise* report made the point that force shift patterns should bring the right
number of officers on duty at the right time, so as to provide both flexible
deployment and minimum cover. At the time of that report (1995), a barrier to
achieving this was the statutory framework of regulations governing shift working
and the Commission recommended that Police Regulations be amended.

3.47 In order to consider whether this position still applied, the 23 BCUs visited were
asked to provide a 'snapshot' of demand over a 24-hour period, in terms of
immediate and non-emergency calls, together with the availability of both response
officers and community officers. This data was averaged to produce the chart below
(Figure 3.5). Further calculation indicates that the demand varies from 12 officers
available per call at 5am to 2 officers available per call at 8pm. Clearly, forces have
still not fully aligned staff availability with demand, but the problem may not only
be the result of poor management and planning but also the inflexibility of current
regulations. Although some BCUs still work the traditional eight-hour shift pattern,
a number of other BCUs had moved to 10 or 12 hour shifts with local agreement
but still not secured the best fit of demand and resource.

Figure 3.5 Alignment of Resources to Demand for an Average BCU
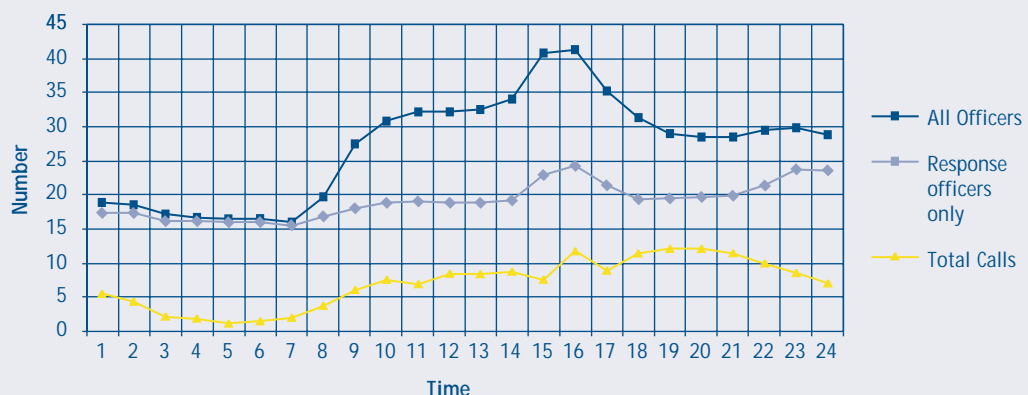
3.48 However, this local agreement was not always forthcoming; in two fieldwork BCUs, officers raised concerns about the problems this had caused. On this basis the inspection team agreed with the *Streetwise* view that greater flexibility is needed in the framework of national regulations.

Strategic Framework

The Home Office should work together with ACPO, APA and staff associations to amend national regulations to permit more local flexibility in shift systems.

3.49 One force adopting an innovative approach to matching resource deployment with demand is Staffordshire.

Case Study

Matching Resource Deployment with Demand

Staffordshire Police has four territorial divisions. Response cover is provided by two sections of dedicated officers, north and south of the Force area, each having responsibility for two territorial divisions. Officers are expected to deal with incidents they attend. Officers work a 2 x 2 x 2 shift pattern adjusted to maximise potential to match demand – ie, 5pm to 2am Sunday to Thursday, and 5pm to 3am Friday and Saturday. Each response section consists of 5 inspectors, 5 sergeants and 46 constables. The response teams are supplemented by an additional 66 constables, who make up the Force armed response teams. Their own sergeants and inspectors provide supervision of immediate response incidents. However, day-to-day line management and development reviews are the responsibility of supervisors assigned from one of the divisions, thus ensuring divisional priorities and objectives are addressed.

Response officers are deployed according to predicted demand as determined by analysis of previous incidents and the use of dedicated computer software called Analyser. Each divisional commander must produce deployment plans showing hot-spots for immediate assistance by location and time, and response officers are deployed according to the plan. During the first six months of operation:

- 82% of incidents were correctly predicted within the divisional development plans.

- Response officers had to travel shorter distances to incidents and fewer required high speed travel.

- Police vehicle collisions had reduced by 42%; January to July 2000 saw 191 collisions compared with 110 for the same period in 2001.

- The average mileage per police vehicle was reduced by 21.5% between January and July 2000, with a figure of 12,793 miles compared with 10,044 miles for the same period in 2001.

The initiative will be further evaluated in the near future. The long-term intention is for the principles to be extended to section officers.

3.50 Another commendable initiative is Merseyside's use of innovative shift patterns to fit staff levels with demand and the use of part-time staff.

Use of Part-Time Staff to Smooth out Peaks of Demand

Liverpool North BCU identified problem times in the city centre relating to clubgoers on Friday and Saturday evenings. It has established a fixed shift team working 6pm to 4am on these days, using part-time officers who volunteered to work these two shifts as it suits their personal circumstances. In total, five out of eleven constables so deployed are part-time officers. The team has been in place for 12 months with an objective of providing a high profile police presence in hot-spot areas to prevent crime and disorder. They work predominantly on foot and in high visibility jackets.

Internal Resource Allocation

3.51 Better management of demand can also flow from improving the initial process of resource allocation. This is typically a three-stage process, starting with a 'top-slicing' of resources to HQ departments, using as a baseline the previous year's allocation as modified by emerging priorities and professional judgement. (Few forces, if any, conduct regular 'zero base' reviews of HQ functions)

3.52 The remaining resources are then apportioned between the BCUs, often using an objective workload-based formula. As forces are increasingly realising, a distribution of resources based upon workload – mostly crime and incidents – offers perverse incentives for BCUs to maintain high levels of recorded work, and fails to reward those whose efforts result in fewer crimes and calls for service. Consequently, there is a move towards the use of formulae that reflect the risk of crime by including, for example, socio-economic and deprivation factors. One example is the work undertaken in 2001 by the MPS, which combines an assessment of the minimum resources needed for BCUs to operate around the clock with demand and need components.

3.53 The third stage of resource allocation is internal to the BCU, whereby commanders assign resources to the various functions of patrol (further split between officers who respond to calls for service and geographically-based community officers), investigation, support and specialist activities. Again, this often has a historical component and there was little science evident in the approaches used in fieldwork forces. Most BCUs had set a 'minimum strength' of officers needed to answer calls at various times during the day but this was often based on the number of vehicles that needed to be crewed, and the achievement of minimum strengths was rarely

consistently measured. One commendably rational approach to workforce allocation is that developed by Merseyside Police to identify the best fit between resources and demand.

Workforce Allocation Methodology

Merseyside uses a software program called *Staff Wizard* that operates on a standard personal computer and is compatible with the MS Windows operating system. Using data supplied by the user, the software calculates the most appropriate staffing levels for each period of shift work according to factors such as:

- Average daily demand (ie, calls for service).

- Size of the patrolled area.

- Average patrol speeds.

- Average response times.

- Miles of road.

- Non-calls for service work (usually about 20 minutes per incident).

- Percentage of emergency calls and subsequent types of call.

Staff Wizard establishes either the optimum number of staff needed (in terms of working hours) to cover the known demand, or the optimum positioning of existing staff numbers, provided those staff numbers are sufficient to meet the demand under the parameters noted.

Finally, Staff Wizard Scheduler uses the data to establish staffing levels on each shift and identify the best fit between supply and demand. Merseyside has claimed £3 million worth of savings in respect of response officers, by ensuring that duty times reflect more closely the peaks and troughs of demand. The system has an interrogation capacity that shows whether or not planned staffing levels will meet demand.

3.54 There are signs that more forces are adopting a scientific approach to resource allocation, informing professional judgement with objective analysis, and the MPS and Merseyside initiatives have potential for wider application.

Tactical Option

Forces should adopt a rational approach to workforce planning that allocates staff according to need rather than historic demand.

Mobilise External Resources

Use of Volunteers

3.55 Traditionally, special constables have been the main – or only – supplement to regular officers, but the rising demand on police forces, combined with a large unmet need for a street presence of 'authority' figures, has put a spotlight on other external resources. These include volunteers, in various capacities such as Neighbourhood Watch and cadet officers, and in recent years a burgeoning of warden schemes. Providing that these external resources are linked into a force's patrol and reassurance strategy, they can make a valuable contribution. Inspection visits encountered a number of examples where unpaid volunteers have undertaken roles traditionally performed by police staff – for example, keeping police station front counters open that would otherwise have to be closed.

Case Study

Mobilising Volunteer Effort to Support Policing Objectives

1. Avon and Somerset Constabulary has purchased hand-held equipment which is used by local Neighbourhood Watch groups to monitor the speed of vehicles through villages. Members are issued with high visibility tabards (purchased through sponsorship) and operate the speed monitors as part of a programme to educate local residents to reduce their speed. There is no enforcement, although from time to time road policing unit officers attend resident group meetings to report offenders.

2. Havering BCU in the MPS has a voluntary cadet corps, with a current membership of 44 young people, aged 13 to 17, and more on a waiting list. The cadets are split evenly between male and female volunteers, which is particularly encouraging for future recruiting. One constable manages the scheme, with responsibility for selecting, kitting out, training, travel and deployment. Training is in first aid, drill and gym; deployment varies from helping with clerical and administrative tasks (eg, computer input of Neighbourhood Watch), handing out leaflets at a car park which had been plagued by thefts (no incidents reported while cadets were present) and helping to police a local fair.

Tactical Option

Forces should consider the option of mobilising volunteers to support policing objectives.

Neighbourhood Wardens

3.56 The Audit Commission report, *Streetwise*, drew attention to the potential role of police and local authorities as informed purchasers of community safety provision, from a spectrum of possibilities ranging from unpaid volunteers through paid wardens and security guards to the most expert and expensive providers, police officers. There is clear evidence of this 'mixed market' of reassurance patrol being developed, albeit in a rather ad hoc manner to date. Particularly notable is the proliferation of neighbourhood warden schemes, and these were examined closely during the inspection, although not to the exclusion of private security, parks police and CCTV.

3.57 There are clear overlaps between the desired outcomes of a wide-ranging community safety strategy and policing objectives, arguing for some co-ordination of activity. One strand of current work to modernise aspects of policing is the concept of the 'extended police family', whereby police forces take on some directive/oversight or accreditation role in relation to organisations or bodies with similar aims and objectives, according to local needs perhaps with the assistance of CDRPs.

3.58 The involvement of the police in either an accreditation and/or a co-ordinating or directional role raises significant issues regarding the accountability of police authorities and chief officers for actions taken by non-police personnel working under force direction.

3.59 A number of neighbourhood warden schemes were established in the early 1990s, funded through a variety of sources and working in very disparate ways. The majority were located in deprived urban areas with a high level of social housing. More recently, warden schemes have moved up the Government's agenda. A neighbourhood and street wardens programme has been established in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, with a staff mix of civil servants, police and those from the voluntary or local government sectors; funding is available to pump prime specific schemes. The unit co-ordinates new schemes, drawing on the experience of existing ones, offering help and advice in establishing schemes and identifying funding, in addition to promulgating good practice and providing advice to Government.

3.60 The theory underpinning warden schemes is that an official or semi-official presence in residential areas will improve the quality of life and promote reassurance. No two schemes are the same but they fall broadly into four types: crime prevention, environmental improvements, housing management and community development. Over 100 schemes include a patrol function within their terms of reference. The roles performed by staff are wide-ranging and include uniformed foot and/or mobile patrols, CCTV, design improvements (lighting etc), concierge services (controlling

access to residential buildings), residential caretaker services (cleaning and repair), checking empty properties, rent collection, liaison with tenants, the organisation of events for residents, activities for young people, the provision of employment services and training and the provision of local information and newsletters. Evaluation is patchy but there is evidence to suggest that the concierge/caretaker type warden schemes do contribute to a feeling of safety and reassurance.

3.61   Many warden schemes have been loosely based on the Civic Warden Scheme established in The Netherlands to provide uniformed high visibility patrols for reassurance, assistance, advice and information to the public.

Case Study

Civic Warden Scheme – The Netherlands

The principal motivation behind setting up the Dutch Civic Warden scheme in the early 1990s was to address high unemployment numbers, by providing opportunities for individuals who had been unemployed for over a year. The scheme offered training and work experience, with a view to moving on to permanent employment. The first project was set up in Dordrecht in 1989, and in 1992 an umbrella organisation – the Dutch Civic Warden Foundation – was formed to oversee the development of these projects. The success of early schemes has seen their expansion into more than 150 municipalities.

There are currently 170 wardens employed in the district covering the towns of Utrecht, Amersfoort and Zeist; the local mayor, police chief and head of local justice department with the City Council share the cost of administration and training. The police provide 17 sergeants whose full-time role is the supervision of the wardens, in a ratio of 1 to 10. The Board of Management consists of ACC (Chair), and local area police commander, (Superintendent), Mayor, representatives of the local Justice Department and the local Department of Employment and Social Affairs. The Department of Employment pays the wardens' wages (set at 150% of the Dutch minimum wage). The Department also pays for childcare where this is needed. To become eligible for a post, a person must have been unemployed for a year, be over 23 years and speak Dutch (though is not required to be a Dutch citizen). While the wages are slightly higher than benefit, retention problems are emerging as employment rates have risen and better pay is obtainable elsewhere.

3.62   Some forces have been reluctant to engage with, or support, neighbourhood warden schemes at the strategic or operational level, while others have fully embraced the ACPO 'fundamental principles'[13] and undertaken training and vetting of personnel.

[13] ACPO's 'fundamental principles' set out guidelines to forces when setting up schemes, using the following headings: establishment of schemes, powers, intervention, Government, regulation, appearance, standard operating procedures and funding

The Sedgefield Community Force

In 1993, councillors campaigning in the local elections repeatedly heard residents express concern about anti-social behaviour, and Sedgefield Community Force was set up in response. It aims to provide a uniformed presence that will increase public safety and reassure the public. Funded by the local authority, the ten officers and one co-ordinator work closely with a SRB-funded officer in Shildon, and neighbourhood wardens in Newton Aycliffe. They also work closely with the local police crime manager, particularly with regard to identifying/targeting hot-spots; the police are also involved in initial and refresher training of patrol officers. Community Force officers often have a joint presence with the police at public events in the area.

The Community Force provides 24-hour patrol, structured around borough and town council property; swipe cards used at each location record that the site has been visited. In addition, each officer has responsibility for a geographic area, which is not limited to council property. The Community Force has a control room that also houses other elements in the Sedgefield Community Safety package – such as monitoring of CCTV cameras. Members of the public can call the control room directly, and the Community Force has a response capability; a radio link from the control room to the police is currently under consideration.

The University of Sheffield evaluated the Community Force soon after it was set up and identified high levels of public satisfaction but there has been little recent evaluation.

3.63 Many schemes have input measures such as number of incidents attended or number of hours spent patrolling in a particular area, and almost all use a questionnaire-type survey of local residents to gauge levels of satisfaction with the patrols. However, little evidence was discerned during the fieldwork of any recent evaluation of the schemes, using robust measures of public reassurance. Much of the evaluation that exists was undertaken in the early years of the schemes, and there is little ongoing work in this area. Moreover, many have only recently been set up and it is thus too early to evaluate their impact.

Hounslow Neighbourhood Warden Scheme

The Hounslow neighbourhood warden scheme became operational on 30 April 2001 and – subject to evaluation and funding – is due to end on 31 March 2003. Four neighbourhood wardens patrol five council estates and two housing association estates from 3pm to 11pm every day. They travel between estates in two marked high-profile vans. The emphasis is on walking around the estates, getting to know residents and gaining their confidence. There is also a hotline for residents to report incidents. During the first month of operation, the wardens dealt with a range of incidents including untaxed cars, abandoned cars, noise problems and youth nuisance.

3.64 All patrol wardens operate with only the powers of the ordinary citizen. The Home Office is currently undertaking some work to assess whether additional powers are both needed and viable. Clearly, further powers could fundamentally alter the relationships of wardens with their local communities, given their role to observe, record and request police assistance when appropriate.

3.65 The schemes visited and assessed by the inspection team were well run and the staff had received appropriate training. The neighbourhood wardens unit is currently developing an National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)) specifically designed for wardens, which Her Majesty's Inspector believes would be a positive move towards wider accreditation (paragraph 3.67).

3.66 Considering the potential overlap in patrol and reassurance roles, it is vital that police forces have a major input to co-ordinating patrol activity, using intelligence to inform deployment. Problems could emerge if the police role extends beyond co-ordination into direction and control, so that police officers directly manage warden schemes, including:

- The extent to which chief constables become accountable for the action of wardens.

- The risk of wardens being sidetracked from their core role into other police related tasks.

- The change of the relationship of wardens with their communities if they are seen to be 'police employees' with some enforcement powers.

3.67 However, if a warden scheme is to be considered part of an extended family, there needs to be a degree of quality control to provide reassurance about the training, recruitment and monitoring of members. This will apply to all family members as well as warden schemes. Accreditation is another option under active consideration.

Strategic Framework

Forces should seek to influence the development and deployment of neighbourhood warden schemes through:
- The introduction of an accreditation process to ensure there is consistency in the standards of recruitment, training and staff monitoring.
- The use of intelligence to co-ordinate wardens and police activity.

External Funding

3.68 Forces are making increased use of the Police Act 1996[14] to expand the provision of police services through external funding; examples can be seen on housing estates and in shopping complexes.

Using External Funding to Expand Patrol

In November 2000, Liverpool City Council and Merseyside Police entered in to an agreement whereby the council funded twelve extra constables, known as the 'Gold Zone' team, to patrol the city centre.

The objectives are to:

- Provide a high visibility, uniformed policing presence in a defined area.

- Enhance the safety of residents, businesses and visitors to the city centre.

- Carry out foot patrol with the aim of reducing crime and disorder and the fear of crime.

There are six zones, with two officers assigned to each. A survey was undertaken one month after the commencement, using the City Centre Management Database (covering businesses only). Analysis of 170 returned questionnaires showed that 43% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with visibility (compared with 7% for a similar question in the Merseyside Citizens' Panel survey in January 2000).

Other performance indicators for the team relate to the number of arrests, Fixed Penalty Notices, intelligence submissions, requests for assistance, time spent on high visibility patrol (from debrief sheets), visits to premises within the zone and traffic advice.

3.69 The inspection team also found good examples of local funding arrangements to provide enhanced levels of policing in institutions such as schools and hospitals.

[14] By virtue of Section 25 Police Act 1996 a chief officer may provide special police services for payment and Section 92 Police Act 1996 a police authority is permitted to provide goods and services as provided in the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1970

Case Study

Funding Additional Police Officers for Schools and Hospitals

All NHS trusts are required to have systems in place to deal with violence in the workplace, following the Department of Health's drive to reduce violence in the NHS. As part of this process, Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust has carried out a risk assessment of staff in the Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton (Avon and Somerset Constabulary). This identified a trend of an increasing number/severity of incidents at the hospital, particularly within the Accident and Emergency Department (A & E). As a result, staff were becoming increasingly frightened and defensive – they had started to lock wards in an effort to feel safer, even though in reality this represented an increased risk to personal safety.

The hospital did have its own private security arrangements, but they were designed to maintain the physical security of the site, rather than to protect the hospital staff. A review of the security arrangements was carried out when the security contract was due for renewal. This established that the needs of the hospital were no longer being met. Security arrangements now needed to address staff fears, and re-establish a working environment in which they felt safe. The Chief Executive agreed to use the resources that had paid for the security contract to fund a partnership project with the police.

Building on the existing strong relationship between the police and the hospital, negotiations secured an arrangement whereby a dedicated team of officers would maintain a presence at the hospital for 56 hours over a 7-day period. From Sunday through to Wednesday, an officer is present between 6pm and 2am, with coverage from 10pm to 6am on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Agreed costs are recovered from the hospital.

Officers patrol on foot around the hospital complex, focusing particularly on the A & E Department and Admissions, where most problems occur. Officers wear badges to identify them as a partnership police officer and signs around the building publicise the fact that officers are patrolling the hospital. A hospital representative was involved in the selection procedure for officers. The staff at the hospital are reassured by having a dedicated team, made up of officers they know and trust, on site. Often a police presence will defuse an incident before it becomes more serious. The first year of the partnership saw a 48% reduction in crime at the hospital. Officers are encouraged to go into the wards and talk to the staff and are thus well placed to give crime prevention advice to staff and patients alike. They are also more accessible to vulnerable members of the community such as victims of domestic violence. The partnership now plans to install a domestic violence phone in a separate room off the A & E Department that would provide a direct line to the police.

Tactical Option

Forces should explore the potential for expanding the provision of policing services through external funding.

Visibility Framework

3.70 Taking together all the elements of this section provides a framework with which forces can consider whether they are maximising available resources to impact on core business. (Figure 3.6)

Figure 3.6 Visibility Framework

Maximising visible impact of police resources	Better Management of Patrol Officers	Mobilise external resources	Core business
• Special Constabulary • Single-crewing • Civilianisation • Use of specialists • Uniform and livery	• Reduce bureaucracy and abstractions • Shift system management • Resource allocation	• Use of volunteers • Neighbourhood Wardens • External funding	• Response • Public order • Visible presence • Intelligence • Problem-solving

3.71 This section has put forward a menu of options for increasing visibility – it is unlikely that any individual force will find *every* option appropriate to its circumstances. Visibility alone may not always reassure – indeed, a sudden influx of highly visible patrolling officers may heighten anxiety about safety. However, if forces are to benefit at all from the structured approach suggested above, managers need to work from a starting point that police visibility is inherently positive. Years of focus on crime reduction and intelligence-led proactive solutions – conducted largely out of the view of the public – have inadvertently created a degree of scepticism about the value of patrol with no objective other than reassurance through visibility. In forces such as Humberside, positive leadership has begun to change that view.

3.72 The options provided in this section are not exhaustive; some ideas were raised which have not been included here in detail, such as encouraging officers to take their refreshments in local cafes and completing paperwork in public places such as libraries. The latter approach could be more viable once mobile data terminals are available to officers.

3.73 A number of forces and partners are approaching the reassurance agenda with creativity and innovation, seeking new ways to increase visibility, as the examples in this section illustrate. What is now required is a more strategic and coherent approach whereby all forces recognise the value of visibility and make full use of the range of options available to them.

3.74 In August 2001, the Home Office commissioned PA Consulting, in the wake of the internal HMIC report *A Diary of Two Constables*, to undertake a study to gain a "fuller understanding of what is involved in the typical shift of a police officer and to free up officers' time so that they can perform more reassurance policing." It is pleasing to find a high level of congruence between the PA findings and those set out in this section of the thematic report. The Home Office has constructed an action plan, and announced a dedicated taskforce, to address the issues raised by PA Consulting and drive forward measures which are designed to ensure the best use is made of trained police officers' time.

3.75 The next section will explore how BCU patrol staff are strategically deployed to address what are considered to be 'the core elements of patrol'.

Patrol Deployment

Vision

"Forces will view intelligence in a holistic way, incorporating quality of life and community intelligence alongside crime intelligence. This will determine the community policing style adopted and there will be consistent standards, in key areas, across all forces. Visible foot patrol for the purpose of reassurance will be valued and forces will have determined the most effective way of delivering this alongside other priorities.

Officers solving problems within local communities – the visible, accessible and familiar face of policing – will have a status within the police service commensurate with the value placed on them by the public. Partners will be working with forces to deliver reassurance at strategic and tactical levels.

National standards will be published against which community policing systems will be measured."

Introduction

4.1   Having considered how forces are maximising, with the assistance of partners, the input and impact of a uniformed street presence, this section examines how BCU patrol staff are strategically deployed to address the five core elements of patrol business:

- Response.

- Maintaining public order.

- Providing a visible response.

- Intelligence-gathering.

- Problem-solving.

4.2   Deployment is looked at separately for the three categories of BCU patrol staff – response officers, community officers and special constables – introduced in the last section. The role of specialist uniformed staff is recognised but is peripheral in terms of reassurance when compared with these other three categories. An intelligence-led model is put forward to help forces identify and employ appropriate community policing styles for BCUs. There is then a consideration of how BCU patrol staff are deployed at a tactical level in pursuit of reassurance, and the priority afforded to visibility, using examples of good practice. Finally, the section considers the support provided to patrol officers in order to maximise their effectiveness, looking specifically at supervision, training, status and communication issues.

Response Teams

4.3   Response to calls is typically a separate function, performed by a distinct group of
officers, although their remit varies between forces. In one fieldwork force, management
was attempting to move away from the term 'response', and consider all staff as
problem solvers. However, when this philosophy was tested in discussion with staff,
the demarcation between response and community work was still evident.

4.4   Within fieldwork BCUs, some 52% of available constables were allocated to response
activity but the range was significant – from 23% in the lowest recorded allocation
to a high of 82%. The 23% figure needs interpretation – the BCU in question has
a further 94 'community officers' who are expected to spend up to 50% of their time
responding to incidents. This highlights the difficulty of talking about these issues
in a national context.

4.5   Response teams provide cover across a BCU for 24 hours a day. They invariably
patrol in vehicles (96% of response officers who responded to the HMIC
questionnaire stated their last tour of duty had been vehicle patrol) and work a shift
rota of 8 to 12-hour stints, depending on local practice. Each shift may work as one
unit, operating out of one site on the BCU, or from a number of sites – local
circumstances dictate the pattern of deployment and there is no single best practice
model. The 'one site' model does facilitate effective briefing and provides economies
of scale, but may encounter problems with regard to ownership of specific local
issues and travelling time.

4.6   The role of response teams in providing reassurance through targeted patrol aimed
at reducing crime and disorder (driven by the co-ordinating and tasking process)
is recognised. For the purposes of this inspection, they provide a highly visible
policing service but the components of accessibility and familiarity are less obviously
associated with this type of patrol.

4.7   However, response officers have an important ambassadorial role. They are often the
first and only point of contact with members of the public, and the impression they
leave is crucial. It was therefore disappointing to find a degree of cynicism among
a number of response officers interviewed about the quality of the service they give.
A widely-held view was that workload is increasing, with a static or declining
resource base, and community focus groups gave examples of negative messages
being conveyed to the public to justify delay or inaction.

4.8   These views of response officers' workload are not borne out by statistics. Workload
per officer, in terms of incidents, appears to have decreased over recent years
(paragraph 3.3). It may be a perception of 'busyness' that dominates, reinforced by
media images of hard-pressed, under-resourced public services.

4.9   Work being undertaken by the Home Office on officer workloads should help separate the fact from fiction. It would be helpful if this research encompassed all aspects of work undertaken by this group of officers – ie, qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation. In the meantime, this report advocates better internal communication (paragraph 6.32) and customer care training (paragraph 4.69) to help soften the impact of poor quality contacts with the police's 'customers'.

Special Constables

4.10 In the BCUs visited, an average of 39 special constables were actively deployed, again with a significant range around this average from 13 up to 89. The average number of hours worked per special was 235 per year, ranging from 94 to 451. There is no consistent approach to deployment, and the inspection encountered:

- Attachment to sector teams to work alongside community officers.

- Working as a specials unit to tackle specific problems (eg, pickpockets at a local market).

- Deployment as parish constables in a lead community officer role.

- Attachment to shifts to work with response teams.

4.11 The Special Constabulary holds a unique place in policing, providing a bridge between local communities and the police service. They are highly valued by regular officer colleagues, but many managers struggle to provide meaningful deployments due to the specials' voluntary status and consequent lack of certainty about the hours to be worked. A revised rewards system, and a greater willingness on the part of employers to release officers for duty (paragraph 3.13 – 3.16) may provide the necessary certainty to enable forces to more fully integrate the Special Constabulary into the patrol structure.

Community Officers

4.12 A common approach to community policing is to subdivide a BCU into a number of sectors or areas, which are then further sub-divided into beats (typically aligned to ward boundaries). An officer of constable rank is designated as beat manager or community officer for that beat and tasked with forging links with the community and solving local problems. This is the visible/accessible/familiar face of policing so valued by the public, and the inspection noted some excellent examples of the beat system in practice.

Case Study

Community Beat System

A CBO in North Lincolnshire (Humberside Police) polices a multi-cultural community. The dwellings on his beat are mostly council-owned or privately rented accommodation and crime accounts for about 25% of the divisional total.

He has committed a significant amount of time to building partnerships. For example, he has organised three 'clean-ups' in his area involving North Lincolnshire Council, a group of army cadets with whom he regularly works and a number of local councillors. The object was to target areas of his beat which were the focal points for acts of vandalism. These initiatives received considerable support from local people, who joined in to help, and the result has been a marked reduction in vandalism. He also works in conjunction with housing officers and private landlords in dealing with issues of anti-social behaviour, taking early remedial action and thus preventing the need for legal proceedings.

The officer is a highly visible, accessible and familiar face in the local community who works well with partners but does not shy away from authoritative interventions when necessary, either to make arrests or report offenders. He was the Humberside Community Officer of the Year in 2000, a competition which attracts many commendable entries each year.

A typical comment epitomises the contribution that good community officer can make:

"… works effectively in partnership with the community to tackle crime, disorder and fear of crime and, through this, contributes to residents' quality of life".

4.13 Data collected and analysed by HMIC offers the following pen picture of the average BCU visited during the fieldwork:

Table 4.1	
Average number of beats per BCU	42
Average population per beat	4,981
Typical size	10 Km^2
Aligned to ward/political boundaries?	57%
Having a named community officer?	70%
% of BCU constables working as community officers	19%

50% of community beat officers who responded to the HMIC questionnaire stated that their last tour of duty was on foot/cycle.

4.14 In theory, the beat manager approach is well placed to enhance public reassurance because these officers can:

- Deliver intelligence-led and community-based policing to reduce crime and civil disorder.

- Raise levels of police visibility in the local community.

- Improve communication with local communities.

- Involve local communities in the task of solving neighbourhood problems.

- Target sources of fear directly (eg, youths 'hanging around').

- Co-ordinate the activity of partner agencies to address local problems.

4.15 However, the merits of the approach are difficult to prove due to a paucity of robust evaluation. In many of the forces visited, particular styles of community policing were relatively new and though evaluation was often scheduled, it had not been completed. Irrespective of the quantity and quality of evaluation, some practical problems with the beat management system are evident:

- The system lacks flexibility and may not be the appropriate response to the conditions that prevail on a particular beat. As one chief officer said, *"It's like choosing a solution before identifying the problem"*.

- Striking the right balance of staff numbers in relation to workload for community and response officers is difficult. Invariably, community officers express frustration at the high level of abstractions from their core responsibilities to supplement response teams. For community officers to be effective, abstraction needs to be kept to a minimum. Forces were asked for details of abstraction levels and causes (Table 4.2) but the figures reported are lower than those cited anecdotally. The data provided was derived from duty rosters rather than records of *actual* deployment, and this probably accounts for the discrepancies with anecdotal accounts. A point of particular concern is that the lack of accurate and reliable information inhibits effective planning of deployment and the management of abstraction, because the true scale of the problem is masked.

- Because only one officer is typically assigned to a beat, that beat does not have cover for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, although limited coverage is normally provided if the officer is away for long periods of leave or sickness.

Table 4.2

Cause of Abstraction from Beat	% of those CBOs available for work abstracted from their beat
Annual Leave	12.0
Other	7.8
Response	5.9
Sickness	5.4
Training	3.9
Public Order Duties	2.3

4.16 A number of approaches seen during the fieldwork were commendable attempts to overcome a 'one size fits all' approach. Of particular interest is the system adopted in Merseyside, which combines traditional elements of community policing with a more radical approach to resourcing and the assignment of response tasks. A different tack in Kent seeks to customise policing in each area according to the need, as identified through intelligence received.

Case Study

Neighbourhood Policing

Neighbourhood policing was introduced in Merseyside in April 2001 as a direct response to the issues prompting this report – the need to take more active steps on visibility, accessibility and public reassurance. The concept is being championed by the Chief Constable, with the full support of the ACPO team and the Police Authority. The Chief recognises that any radical change in policing style and culture cannot be delivered overnight, but he is confident that some of the projected benefits will be realised within the first year. The inspection team has visited the Force several times to review progress with neighbourhood policing and, with some caveats about the need for rigorous independent evaluation after the first year of operation, is able to endorse Merseyside's approach as one that carries lessons for the whole Service.

A team approach to community policing has been adopted, with a significant shift of resources away from the response function. Each BCU has been sub-divided into neighbourhoods, coterminous with the boundaries of council wards, which are policed by a team typically consisting of one inspector, two sergeants and 20 constables. The neighbourhood teams are responsible for dealing with the majority of 'slow time' incidents, leaving the (now much smaller) response teams to answer immediate/ emergency response calls. This promotes a sense of ownership for long-term problem solving and also provides a permanent presence within each neighbourhood. A balance is being struck between corporacy and local discretion – the essential features of neighbourhood policing apply Force-wide but BCU managers are expected to identify what customisation is needed to make the philosophy work best in their particular areas.

Inevitably, teething problems have had to be resolved, notably the demarcation between response and neighbourhood teams' workloads and who should attend which incident. Although there is a concern about whether adequate resources exist to deliver a high quality service for all incidents, staff are very supportive of the principles underpinning neighbourhood policing. The inspection team is aware that the Force is actively pursuing an effective resource allocation system dedicated to this new policing style, which once in place may alleviate the concerns surrounding adequate resourcing.

Merseyside is aware of the potential barriers to implementing this style of policing – for example, a tendency for officers to default to reactive incident response and the need for active support from multi-agency partnerships. Its unusually high number of serious crime incidents, many involving firearms, sit uneasily alongside an approach of community engagement. However, as a recognition that tackling criminality and enhancing reassurance are intrinsically linked aspects of policing, the Force's initiative is commendable.

Differing Approaches to Community Policing

Maidstone is county town of Kent, and has grown in size over recent years such that it now has a sizeable night-time economy. The area operates a town centre policing unit, comprising four uniformed officers, though it is planned to expand the team to eight officers; they operate on foot and respond to calls and incidents. When officers make arrests, they pass the prisoners over to a mobile unit so that they can remain on visible patrol in the town centre.

The town apart, a significant element of the Maidstone Police area is categorised as rural, and the area operates a rural task force, comprising a sergeant and 6 constables. This team responds to identified problems, after tasking through the co-ordinating and tasking process, and focuses on both crime and quality of life issues. The team works in uniform and is supported by a dedicated analyst. In addition, the area is divided into four sectors, each with a co-ordinator (uniformed constable). This role includes visible patrol in the rural community, problem-solving and liaison with parish councils. The co-ordinators can call on support from other resources (task force, crime reduction unit) following a successful bid at the tasking group.

There are also six locations in the area where project officers are deployed, specifically in high crime and disorder locations where a need for a full-time officer has been proven. These officers work in uniform and use a number of tactics to resolve identified problems. One project officer is financed by a partnership between a prominent private company and the relevant borough council.

Community Governance

4.17 Chicago Police Department has taken community policing one step further. The Chicago Alternative Policing Style (CAPS) is, in reality, a form of community governance – the police need the full and active support of key local authority departments to implement community problem-solving.

4.18 Chicago's style of community policing was introduced in 1993, in response to a crisis of public confidence in policing and a perception that the police had withdrawn from communities, being seen increasingly as an alien, oppressive force. The 'alternative' was to be a policing style that was rooted in community engagement and problem-solving in partnership with other city agencies. Although policing models rarely survive the journey across the Atlantic, Chicago's experience offers useful pointers for community policing in the UK.

Case Study

CAPS

Policing is organised around the city's 279 beats: boundaries are not coterminous with wards but instead reflect a workload allocation. Each beat has a team of approximately nine officers, with two on patrol at any one time. They take all of the calls for service on their beat, including 911, but there is a back-up if both units are busy. In very busy parts of the city, a beat may be only a few blocks.

- Neighbourhood residents help set policing priorities through monthly meetings. These are attended by beat team representatives and specialists such as youth crime officers. Attendance is stable at around 6,000 residents per month and participation has been highest in poorer, high crime areas. Social disorder problems feature as prominently as crime issues.

- The Department's emphasis is on dealing effectively with chronic concentrations of crime and disorder; officers are expected to work towards solving the problems identified at the beat meetings. They have all been trained in a SARA-type model

(Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) – as have many residents – and are supported by computerised mapping and analytical capabilities.

- The Department's planning process is a 'bubble-up' rather than top-down approach. Beat meeting outcomes are worked up into operational plans that inform the priorities of the 25 districts (BCU equivalents), which in turn are prioritised for the city's five areas and ultimately the Departmental strategy.

- Critical to the success of policing plans is the involvement of city service departments. The implementation of CAPS is monitored and supported by staff in the Mayor's office and the Mayor will take robust action to ensure effective co-operation. Typical initiatives against drug dealers and youth gangs may involve not just police raids and arrests but housing department evictions, tree-pruning, street lighting improvement, securing abandoned buildings and so on.

The Impact of CAPS

4.19 CAPS needs to be assessed from two perspectives: official statistics and citizen perceptions. Like many American cities, Chicago's crime rates fell during the 1990s: burglary by 31%, homicide by 24%, rape by 33%, robbery by 47% and auto-theft by 33%. Crime continues to fall in Chicago, whereas many other cities are now seeing upward movements. Perhaps more importantly, the decline in Chicago's crime was most dramatic in African-American and Latino communities, those most blighted by high volume crime and deprivation.

4.20 Annual surveys of Chicagoans assess police demeanour (fairness, courtesy etc), responsiveness to community concerns and effective performance. On all three counts there have been significant improvements over the lifetime of CAPS. Again,

African American and Latino citizens – the ones most dissatisfied with the police prior to 1993 – recorded the biggest percentage improvement. Penetration of the CAPS philosophy is staggeringly high – some 80% of residents are aware of its tenets.

4.21 A number of critical success factors for CAPS were identified:

• Political engagement and support – the Mayor is a main driver of CAPS and his 12-year tenure has offered vital stability.

• Leadership – the Mayor appoints the police chief and chooses people committed to the strategy; in turn, success in Chicago Police Department depends on demonstrable contribution to CAPS.

• Publicity and marketing – the city spends $2 million annually on promoting CAPS, including TV and radio ads.

• Training and IT support – including mobile data terminals and a citizen-accessed website to identify problems and solutions.

• Community engagement – outreach workers ensure a regular flow of volunteers to chair beat meetings and encourage citizens to participate.

• Accountability mechanisms – commanders and beat teams are held to account for delivering the neighbourhood priorities.

• The Mayor also has power and influence over other agencies with a major part to play, for example, housing and cleansing departments.

4.22 One factor that should not be underestimated is the amount of management effort needed to keep momentum behind a community policing philosophy and avoid 'defaulting' to reactive, crime-oriented approaches. CAPS is kept under constant review (including external evaluation) and senior staff attend beat meetings and planning sessions to maintain their links with activity on the ground.

The Role of Intelligence in Reassurance

4.23 The Merseyside and Kent models are singled out because of the way they have tackled the problems inherent with the beat manager system. Whichever approach or philosophy is adopted, community policing models must be intelligence-driven and customised according to need. This requires, in most cases, the force's intelligence capability to be enhanced. The inspection found that precious little 'quality of life' and community intelligence is being gathered, analysed and fed back to community officers. Typically, such intelligence is collected in ad hoc ways, poorly analysed and rarely features in co-ordinating and tasking processes. In many cases, the available IT was unsuitable for identifying quality of life hot-spots, such as repeat calls to youth nuisance. However, there are pockets of good practice.

Good Use of Intelligence

Since 1998, Leicestershire Constabulary has utilised a software package called Insight to interrogate its command and control system data. All staff have access to the package through the intranet system on terminals at each site.

Incidents that are entered on the command and control system can be broken down geographically to BCU, local policing unit and beat level, and/or into one of four Home Office closure code categories – crime, traffic, disorder/nuisance or miscellaneous/alarms. Incidents are stored for a period of up to 16 months.

The package is particularly 'user friendly', in that it can be customised to meet the needs of the individual; it allows staff to self-brief and analyse data for trends and hot – spot locations.

4.24 Forces will need to view intelligence in a more holistic way if quality of life and reassurance issues are to be given due weight in any patrol model. ACPO commissioned research which identified three categories of stimuli that exist within a local environment:

- *Comfort factors* – such as Neighbourhood Watch signs, presence of police or other authority figures, the level of lighting, obvious presence of CCTV, working telephones, and street maps/sign posts.

- *Background 'noise'* – such as the presence of homeless people sleeping rough, stray dogs, litter/rubbish, graffiti, empty/deserted buildings.

- *Triggers for fear* – such as police notices (eg, seeking information on a violent attack in the area), potential hiding places such as dark alleyways, vandalised telephones, isolated areas, broken street lamps, damaged bus shelters, broken/missing/vandalised street signs, abandoned or burnt out vehicles, evidence of drug/alcohol/solvent abuse, vandalism to buildings, boarded-up/broken windows, people under the influence of drink/drugs, drug dealing, groups of people (youths) hanging around, and aggressive begging.

  The positive effect of the 'comfort factors' present in an area can, to some extent, alleviate the negative impact that background noise and fear triggers.

4.25 The ACPO proposal for visual audits of neighbourhoods to begin mapping these stimuli will be a vital contribution to the intelligence mix that informs decisions on the precise community policing model to adopt (paragraph 4.26). Community intelligence extends beyond the results of quality of life audits to encompass information emanating from community consultation channels (which must include hard to reach groups), Crime and Disorder Act audits, surveys, partners and informal contacts.

Strategic Audit

4.26 Each BCU should collate management information which informs at a strategic level the policing style to be adopted. Each strategic audit should consist of:

- Crime data.

- Crime intelligence.

- Community intelligence.

- CDRP audits.

- Socio-economic data.

- Partner data.

- Results of consultation.

- Reassurance surveys (including the ACPO concept of a visual audit).

- Availability of police and partner resources.

4.27 The product of the analysis described above accords with the strategic assessment, one of the key intelligence products recommended as part of the National Intelligence Model. The recommended process for identifying the appropriate community policing system is shown schematically at Figure: 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Schematic For Developing A Community Policing Model

Drivers

Government and Local Objectives | Ministerial Priorities | Best Value

Patrol Business
- Response
- Maintain Public Order
- Visible Presence
- Intelligence Gathering
- Problem Solving

Policing Teams | Beat Managers

Intelligent deployment of patrol resources from range of options

Warden Schemes

Desired Outcome
- Reduce Crime
- Reduce Disorder
- Public Reassurance
- Confidence in Policing

Police Resources | Partner Resources

Inputs

4.28 Interestingly, partnership resources are included in the model as an input. Decisions regarding a BCU's community policing approach/model should take into account where and how partners are pursuing their commitment to reducing crime and disorder and the fear of crime. The appropriate response to an area's problems may be, for example, the employment of a neighbourhood warden scheme rather than the deployment of police resources. The final model should be the result of agreement between partners, perhaps through the CDRP groups, and take into account the need to reassure all sections of the public as well as reduce crime and respond to emergencies.

Tactical Option

Working with police authorities and CDRPs, forces should customise their policing style according to the needs of different communities, based on a combination of community, quality of life and crime intelligence.

4.29 Whatever patrol style is adopted, the developing ethos in the public sector is that citizens should receive a consistent and reasonable quality of service in key areas, on the basis of auditable standards and with managers accountable for delivery. This was the driving force behind the Charter Mark scheme launched by the then Government in 1991, following which a number of forces published policing charters.

Case Study

Policing Charter

The Kent Policing Charter sets standards of service under six headings:

- Communication.

- Victims of crime.

- Road users.

- Contributing to public safety.

- Combating criminal behaviour.

- Continuous improvement.

A number of quantifiable standards have been set, such as the time a person can expect to wait at front counters, and details are provided of the person to contact should a customer feel that levels of service have fallen below standard.

4.30 Despite the evidence that some forces are striving to set and deliver against comprehensive standards, fieldwork and research suggests that the concept of charters and standards has atrophied. There is a need for ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit to work with interested parties in identifying how a new national standard for community policing might be agreed, along similar lines to those proposed for public interface points (paragraph 5.34) and call handling (paragraph 7.59), although it is recognised that service standards are relevant for the full range of police services.
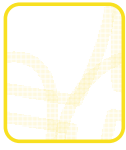
4.31 The inspection team envisages that agreed standards would be audited by local BCU management, making use of customer surveys and management observation. There should be a monitoring role for the chief officer team and the police authority, and one of inspection for HMIC.

4.32 Elements of a standard for community policing must reflect the public demand for a service that is accessible and is delivered by staff who both know, and are known by, the local community. For example:

- Each BCU has been subdivided into ward-based geographic areas and named person(s) assigned to deal in the first instance with problems in that area.

- A system is in place so that, when the named person(s) is not available, messages can be left (24 hours a day).

- The contact details for the named person are readily accessible (as a minimum, available on the web and in libraries).

- Officers who provide the initial response to incidents make the caller aware of the details of the person (above) responsible for problem-solving in that area if there is an ongoing problem.

- Arrangements are in place to canvass levels of satisfaction with community policing (eg, surveys of opinion formers and customers).

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should agree national standards for community policing and decide how performance in each area should be monitored and managers held accountable.

Deployment Tactics

4.33 Whatever patrol model a force has adopted, day-to-day policing and proactive work should be intelligence-led and driven through a co-ordinating and tasking process. All forces are aware of the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) approach to problem-solving recommended by the Home Office report, *Not Rocket Science*[1], although the extent to which it is being implemented in practice is variable; in particular, the assessment element is invariably missing or minimal.

4.34 Another notable omission from co-ordinating and tasking group meetings is input from partners. The inspection team was unable to identify any examples of BCUs involving partners at this tactical level on a routine basis.

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[1] *Not Rocket Science? Problem Solving and Crime Reduction*, Paper 6, Home Office Police and Reducing Crime Unit, by Tim Read and Nick Tilley, 2000

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should involve partners within the co-ordinating and tasking group meetings structure, or at least consider the impact and additional resources partners can bring on a problem-solving basis.

Visibility as a Tactic to Reassure

4.35 A theme running throughout this report is that tackling crime and disorder is integral to public reassurance – increasing police visibility and accessibility as 'stand alone' strategies will be insufficient. This should not, however, lead forces to discount the impact of visibility techniques as part of an integrated approach. As a tactic for preventing crime, visible patrol is widely believed to have limited value[2] on the grounds that *"Given present burglary rates and evenly distributed patrol coverage, a patrolling police officer in London could expect to pass within 100 yards of a burglary in progress once every 8 years*[3]." Although superficially persuasive, this argument is too often overstated. Such a case relates to random patrol – which all would agree is a poor use of resources – and intelligence-led patrol has a far better chance of disrupting criminal activity and even of catching perpetrators in the act. Similarly, evidence was presented to the inspection team of effective use of high visibility patrol to displace crime into areas where proactive operations were ongoing, and reducing disorder in hot-spot areas such as outside licensed premises at closing time.

4.36 Most forces have identified 'default' locations for officers to patrol during response 'downtime' (ie, when they are not answering calls); these are mostly linked to crime or – more rarely – disorder hot-spots, which are identified through the co-ordinating and tasking process. Anecdotal evidence from response officers suggests that there is, in practice, little scope (or appetite?) for visiting these locations, and even less evidence that supervisors monitor attendance to hot-spots when shifts are debriefed (assuming, of course, that officers are debriefed). In response to the HMIC questionnaire, 50% of officers stated that they had not been given specific tasks to complete. Of the forces visited, only five were able to produce data concerning preventive patrol by response officers. From the data available, it was apparent that only around 15% of response officer time is dedicated to preventive patrol.

4.37 There was limited evidence of high visibility patrols being used primarily as a means of reassurance, despite the fact that visible patrol is seen by certain sections of the community as an integral aspect of policing. However, there are noteworthy exceptions.

[2] *Crime and Police Effectiveness*, HO Research Study No 79 by Ronald V. Clarke and Mike Hough

[3] Assumes 8 hrs a day/365 days coverage: burglary rate of 10%, speed 3 mph, 5 minutes to complete a burglary and a foot beat with 1,500 h/holds. Average foot beat covers square half mile with 4-5 miles of public roadway and population of about 4000

Reassurance through High Visibility Patrols

1. Humberside Police has made visibility a central element of its policing philosophy, with an obvious high-level commitment from the Chief Constable. The investment in high visibility patrol has been pump-primed with 'new' money from sources such as the Rural Policing Fund and an increased precept on local taxpayers. The approach varies between divisions but all non-operational police staff are required to do high visibility patrol. Some shifts and individual officers have targets for hours spent on high visibility patrol, with data collected via forms submitted at the end of the shift. Performance on high visibility patrol is monitored and evidence was seen of divisions being held to account.

On 'C' Division, officers on each of the eight sectors are set patrol objectives as part of the personal development review process. The commitment to patrol was evidenced by the six-weekly performance review meetings, when the superintendent operations and the sector commander meet. The levels of patrol, together with the results from patrol effort, are discussed; meetings are minuted and reassurance patrol issues are palpably top of the agenda. As part of the performance review process the superintendent may send out 'improvement notices' to sector teams.

2. Lincolnshire is working to enhance patrol officer visibility and improve accessibility at the same time, both with the object of increasing public confidence. Officers, even those assigned to mobile patrol, carry out foot patrol in targeted areas for at least one hour per shift; they wear high visibility jackets, gather intelligence, identify problems, liaise with staff at licensed premises etc. The locations are identified by local intelligence units and sector beat teams, while tasking groups prioritise the locations nominated. All divisional patrol staff, plus traffic, dog handlers and operational support units, are required to take part.

Importantly, the scheme is not just about reassurance but is based on intelligence-led patrolling and problem-solving. However, in order for the initiative to work, officers have to be encouraged to park their vehicles and walk.

4.38 To some extent, securing a commitment to reassurance patrol requires some officers who are sceptical of the benefits of patrol being persuaded of the benefits of visibility. One BCU commander expressed his scepticism in graphic terms:

"Placing officers outside somewhere like a railway station to be seen is both futile and an insult to the community."

4.39 This sentiment flies in the face of evidence of the public's demands for visible patrol and the evidence that – *when intelligence-driven and targeted* – it can be highly effective in areas of high foot-fall such as high streets, schools and rail stations. Although crime intelligence alone might suggest this is inefficient deployment, community intelligence can be used to make a good business case for a quality, highly visible patrol designed to bring about reassurance.

4.40 The view of the BCU commander was not unique, although few expressed it so forcefully. This is not surprising for a generation of managers who have been fed on a diet of crime reduction and associated indicators.

4.41 Whether high visibility patrol is an activity that requires the full range of police powers is debatable; it may be a suitable role for staff who are employed for limited purposes – the police auxiliary concept. The MPS and Lancashire are examples of forces that have begun exploring this option in some detail.

Case Study

Two-tier Policing

Lancashire Constabulary has around 100 traffic wardens but has recognised that their traditional role will gradually diminish as local authorities take on fuller responsibility for parking enforcement. Because the Force will retain the budget and staffing levels, it needs to explore feasible and productive ways of using the former wardens. One option being piloted is to train them as community safety wardens; over a six-month period from October 2001, a small number of staff will be trained and deployed (wearing a new style uniform) on high visibility patrol in locations and at times where they are accessible to the public, specifically to enhance public reassurance. Their role will be non-confrontational – ie, they will not be expected to manage incidents or make arrests – but will include giving crime prevention advice and dealing with community problems.

The objectives of the pilot are to:

- Test the feasibility of utilising traffic wardens in a community safety role.

- Promote public reassurance.

- Increase the level of public satisfaction in respect of visible patrol.

- Impact positively on quality of life issues and reduce fear of crime in the areas where wardens are deployed.

- Make the police service more accessible to local people in places and at times where there will be the maximum impact upon reassurance.

4.42 Lancashire is effectively introducing a neighbourhood warden scheme within a vertical 'extended police family', by creating a type of auxiliary grade of police officer, albeit in a restricted form. Increasingly, business cases are being developed for a grade, or grades, of employee who could undertake a range of roles that do not require the full range of police powers. One such example can be found outside the United Kingdom.

Reassurance through High Visibility Patrol – The Netherlands

The police service in the Netherlands has a rank structure similar to that of the UK, with the exception that, below the rank of constable, it has created a role of police surveillance officer. This officer has nothing to do with covert surveillance and should not be confused with the UK meaning of the term. Surveillance is used in its broadest term – to keep watch.

These officers have police powers and are armed. They provide routine foot patrols, high visibility patrol and static duties in high-risk areas such as guard duty outside embassies/diplomatic missions. They are also used for escort duty and staffing front desks as cover; they can take reports of crime but do not investigate. They receive less pay and training than regular officers and the selection criteria are less demanding, therefore they are cheaper to deploy.

4.43 Whether an enhanced Special Constabulary, with increased certainty about the available hours to be worked, will fill the need remains to be seen, but there are many good examples of using specials positively to enhance reassurance.

Case Study

Reassurance through High Visibility Patrol – the Special Constabulary

1. In response to a rising number of calls regarding anti-social behaviour, Three Rivers BCU in Hertfordshire established community safety patrols on Monday to Thursday evenings between 7pm and 11pm. These are undertaken entirely by special constables, and consist of two double-crewed cars, one covering Watford and North Watford and one covering Rickmansworth and Oxley.

Crews are given patrol logs that designate target areas with ongoing problems of anti-social behaviour, the bulk of them regarding nuisance caused by youths. These areas are selected largely on the basis of information/requests for support from neighbourhood officers. Once in the area, the specials patrol on foot in high visibility jackets. Officers record the outcome of their visits on the patrol logs; target areas are reviewed on a monthly basis.

Patrols also are assigned to respond to non-emergency calls related to anti-social behaviour that are received while they are on duty; they pick up calls that otherwise would remain unanswered, taking the load off neighbourhood officers. Last year, special constables on the BCU performed 14,538 hours of duty – 57% of which was spent on high profile patrol – and responded to 3,500 calls.

2. Following high numbers of youth nuisance calls in the Pencoed area (South Wales Police), 12 – 15 special constables undertook targeted high visibility foot patrol over a three-month period. This took place on Tuesday and Friday nights between 7pm and 9pm when the youth clubs were open and the youths were congregating on the streets. The officers were able to engage with the youths explaining the impact they were having on the levels of reassurance amongst the local residents. The youths were directed to the youth clubs. Over the period there was a 32% reduction in youth nuisance calls.

4.44 The *Streetwise* report in 1996 found the arguments for and against the introduction of a police auxiliary rank to be finely balanced, and this is still the case. However, whilst the term auxiliary police officer suggests a 'one size fit all' approach, current proposals within the police reform programme offer a more flexible response. It is suggested that chief officers and police authorities, if judged to be in the interest of force efficiency and effectiveness, will be able to appoint support staff to provide a uniformed presence in the community with powers customised to local need. A number of imponderables remain, such as how the public will view another category of uniform presence on the street, alongside regular police, Special Constabulary, traffic and neighbourhood wardens, and what effect such a role will have on the status of the patrol officer. Answers to such questions are best reached through rigorously evaluated pilots.

Enhancing Support and Supervision for Patrol Officers

4.45 Considering the pivotal role response and community officers play in delivering the visible, accessible and familiar service so valued by the public, it is important that the roles attract the best people for the job. An important element in this is the status that is attached to the role, which in turn is linked to the support officers receive in terms of supervision, information, training, rewards and recognition.

Views on Patrol

4.46 Officers were asked their opinion about the importance of police patrol and how they felt it was perceived by both police managers and the public:

Response officers' views

	Very important	Important	Not important	Did not respond
The public	81%	15%	2%	2%
Force senior management	23%	38%	36%	3%
Response officers	73%	23%	2%	2%

Community officers' views

	Very important	Important	Not important	Did not respond
The public	89%	10%	1%	1%
Force senior management	29%	38%	31%	2%
Community officers	65%	31%	3%	1%

4.47 There was considerable consistency between the views of the community and response officers. A majority in both groups felt that patrol was important or very important, consistent with what they felt were the views of the public. However, a significant number of both types of officers felt that senior management did not attach the same value to patrol.

4.48 As a supplementary question, community officers were asked to rank in order of importance those measures that would enhance the way community policing is viewed. The payment of a shift allowance and improved equipment for the role were seen as the most important measures, closely followed by greater recognition by management. Better training was rated the least important. The same question was asked of the Community Officer of the Year focus group; these officers placed 'greater recognition from their management' as the best means of enhancing the status of uniformed patrol officers (both response and beat), with the next highest being 'better training'.

4.49 The group still felt the community officer was seen as a 'punishment post' or one for lazy officers or 'sticky bun and tea drinkers'. This reflects the dominant police culture – probationers tend to be developed towards a specific career (CID, traffic etc.) rather than community policing, where career paths are far less apparent. The officer who commits to the community for a number of years is still seen as the exception, and is regularly abstracted to supplement other shortages. As one officer said, *"You are considered as not developing if you want to stay in uniform".*

4.50 Beat officer status has been a perennial problem for the Service. The Home Office, in consultation with the Service, is considering a number of options to redress this position, including increased responsibility and reward for managing and co-ordinating members of the extended police family. Any system that seeks to reward officers with skills and responsibilities which are valued by the Service will need to be thought through carefully, as such an approach may have the unwelcome effect of devaluing other roles (such as investigators). It would be a mistake to deal with the reward system of beat officers in isolation without considering the knock-on effects elsewhere. This does not mean that the idea should be rejected out of hand, but enhanced payments to patrol officers or shift allowances for operational staff should be considered as part of a wider review of police reward systems.

Strategic Framework

The Home Office, ACPO and APA should consider enhanced payments for patrol officers as part of a wider review of the reward system.

4.51 However, there is a potential 'quick win'. Day-to-day supervisory recognition of the good work undertaken by patrol officers will pay dividends at little cost. Recognition by supervisors can go a long way to enhancing patrolling officers' self-esteem. The extent to which supervisors can do this is inevitably linked to the time they are able to commit to front-line supervision, a problematic area in many forces.

Supervision

4.52 In 1992/93, average management on-costs[4] for all police forces in England and Wales exceeded 45%. Efforts to streamline management have been pursued since the mid-1990s and the current average (2001) for all forces is 36.12%. West Midlands Police currently reports the lowest on-cost figure – at 29.47% – with the highest figure being 43.35%. This thinning out of the ranks has not been achieved without cost, and most focus groups of inspectors and sergeants highlighted difficulties in providing front-line supervision in the face of competing demands on their time such as paperwork, custody and staff appraisals.

4.53 In order to test these views, officers were asked about the number and type of interactions they had with their supervisors during a typical tour of duty. (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3 Response officers' contact with supervisor in last tour of duty
[officers could indicate more than one interaction]

Type of contact	Response officers
Briefed at start of tour	73% (528)
Given one or more specific tasks	50% (363)
Received advice on one or more occasions	45% (325)
Debriefed at end of tour	18% (123)
No contact at all	16% (118)

4.54 In 1996, the benefits of effective briefing and structured debriefing were highlighted in the Audit Commission report *Streetwise*. Five years on, the message is mixed; although a high percentage (73%) of response officers were briefed by a supervisor, only 25% of community officers received such a briefing (Table 4.4). One in six response officers reported that they had no contact at all with a supervisor during their last tour of duty, only 50% were tasked and only 17% were debriefed.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should keep the workload of front-line supervisors under regular review to ensure sufficient time can be committed to supervision of the patrol function.

Briefing

4.55 Considering the importance of patrol officers being suitably tasked and briefed, the questionnaire further explored the means by which this information was being conveyed. Briefing by a supervisory officer was the most common method, while 78% of community officers self-briefed (Table 4.4).

4   The ratio of costs of police officer management and supervisory ranks to those of constable ranks

Table 4.4 Method of briefing delivered in the last tour of duty

Type of briefing	Community officers	Response officers
Briefing by supervisor	25% (58)	73% (334)
Briefing by colleague	9% (20)	11% (52)
Self-briefing	78% (183)	22% (101)
Briefing by an intelligence officer	6% (13)	8% (38)
Other form of briefing	5% (12)	5% (22)
No briefing	5% (11)	1% (4)

[Some officers received more than one type of briefing and so figures do not add to 100%]

4.56 Methods used to self-brief varied:

- Examination of manual or computer-held records of crimes, incidents and intelligence sheets.

- Discussion with other officers on duty.

- Accessing designated electronic briefing systems via a computer network or pre-prepared video.

- Video conference link to the intelligence officer or duty officer.

- Messages left by other officers or members of the public on the answer machine/voice mail.

- Examination of a pre-prepared manual briefing package or briefing book.

4.57 High levels of satisfaction were recorded among community and response officers with the quality of briefings. Given the opportunity to grade their last briefing from 1 (Not Satisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied), 87% of respondents scored the briefing 3 or more (Satisfied or better).

Formal Briefings

4.58 To supplement the questionnaire findings, some 25 formal briefings were observed without prior notice. Their quality was assessed using a checklist, with a 'very good' briefing having all or most of the following characteristics:

- Dedicated briefing room with video/IT facilities and space for officers to write.

- Supervisor present to conduct briefing – debrief from previous tour.

- Information/intelligence in briefing pack and/or on walls – current and relevant target criminals.

- Quality of life issues covered when relevant.

- Information passed around the officers.

- Officers formally tasked.

- Officers take notes and ask questions/share information or intelligence.

- Officer safety issues considered.

- No unnecessary interruptions.

- Inspector/senior manager present.

- Intelligence unit/robbery/burglary squads involved when relevant.

- Length of briefing kept to a minimum and focused on target criminal, force objectives and quality of life issues/problem-solving.

4.59 The observations of the inspection team did not accord with the general view of officers that briefings were satisfactory. The quality of briefings observed was patchy, both between and within forces, although a number were judged to be 'very good'. The inspection team was made aware of a number of reviews of briefings that had been undertaken by forces but ongoing quality control systems were not in evidence.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should introduce control mechanisms to monitor the quality of briefings given to patrol officers.

Performance Measurement

4.60 Forces continue to struggle with measuring the performance of patrol officers, particularly in terms of the outcomes achieved. Although higher level indicators of reassurance and confidence in policing outcomes can be drawn from surveys such as the BCS, the contribution of teams and individuals is far harder to quantify and in a performance-driven culture this tends to devalue the patrol function in the eyes of managers.

4.61 *Streetwise* suggested a number of indicators for patrol but these are mostly inputs (eg, hours spent on uniformed patrol) or outputs (eg, number of arrests, number of intelligence reports). The problems of outcome measurement are particularly difficult in relation to community officers. Response officers are largely demand-led and their performance can be measured in respect of response times and victim/caller satisfaction, whereas community officers' work tends to be more proactive, with less clearly defined parameters.

4.62 In the absence of agreed, generic outcome measures for community officers, BCUs will need to consider individual targets related to the needs of the wards/beats or communities covered. Although measures of input and output have a place as part of a 'balanced scorecard', outcome measures need to be set as part of the personal development review process and customised accordingly. Examples might include a measure to reduce repeat calls to certain problem locations, to tackle a specific crime problem or develop contacts with a particular hard to reach group.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should develop personalised performance indicators for community officers that are tailored to the particular problems they are tackling; these performance indicators should inform officers' personal development reviews.

Training

4.63 Discussion with the Community Beat Officer of the Year finalists identified training as one of the key mechanisms by which the status of community officers can be enhanced. Community officers provided the following responses to questions relating to the adequacy of training for their role (Table 4.5):

Table 4.5 Adequacy of Training for Community Officers

Level of training provided to community officers	Community officer views
Adequate	40% (144)
Less than adequate	13% (45)
No appropriate training	41% (145)
Did not respond	7% (23)

4.64 It must be a concern that 41% of community officers received no training to equip them with the skills required for the role, while another 13% considered their training had been less than adequate. The general view was that officers could make the transition from response to beat with little adjustment. The following training needs were identified by the beat officer seminar:

- Streetcraft.

- Community policing techniques (Problem Orientated Policing (POP)/ Scan, Analysis, Response, Assessment (SARA)).

- Diversity training – local culture and traditions – the group emphasised this should be 'delivered by and in the community'.

- Media training.

- Presentation skills.
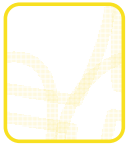
4.65 Other training needs were classed as 'desirable' and included:

- Social history of their community.

- Criminology – to equip them to understand and deal with the causes of crime.

- Management training – they tend to oversee special constables, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and potentially more community wardens/volunteers, and yet have no training in managing people.

- Legislation that they tend to deal with more often than other officers – eg, anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) and other community/crime and disorder legislation.

4.66 There was a strong feeling, endorsed elsewhere during the inspection, that the role of community officer should be professionalised and the skills given national accreditation, as is the case for traffic officers. There is currently no recognised national qualification for officers undertaking the community, problem-solving role, although individual forces offer some good examples.

Case Study

Accreditation for Community Officers

Cambridgeshire Police has worked with the local university to provide a certificated course for community officers, which aims to help officers to:

- Understand community policing and the community officer's role.

- Identify and analyse problems.

- Develop local solutions.

- Implement strategies.

The course involves nine months study through distance learning, mentoring etc. Successful completion leads to the award of a Certificate in Community Policing by University of Cambridge Board of Continuing Education

(60 credits at Undergraduate Level 1). Students are allowed 4 hours 'duty time' each week for study and are expected to make a personal commitment of a further 8 hours a week.

This is a new scheme launched in February 2001 and has not yet been formally evaluated (students have yet to complete the course). Prior to this, the Force has carried out its own in-house training for the past four years. The development cost of the course was estimated at £3,000 with the running cost of about £500 per student. The organisers suggest that the content would be easily transferable to other forces.

4.67 The main challenge highlighted by the Cambridgeshire example is ensuring that the acquired skills are maximised (through tenure, succession planning etc.) and not wasted by abstracting or moving community officers soon after completion of the

course. It also raises other questions – should it be mandatory for all community officers, and what might be its effect on officers' promotion prospects? Overall, however, this has the potential to raise the performance and status of community officers at relatively minimal cost, as well as providing operational benefits through the projects carried out by students on their beats.

4.68 The police service is developing a national competency framework that identifies the behaviours, knowledge and skills required by officers performing the patrol function. This should form the basis for national training standards and it is encouraging that the Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO) intends to seek accreditation for policing skills through a national qualification awarding body – this should help in professionalising the role and thus enhance its status. The combination of the particular skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for problem-solving in communities is unique to community officers and this should be reflected in the national training and qualifications regime linked to the national competency framework.

Strategic Framework

NPT should develop a nationally recognised training course for community officers linked to the national competency framework and the training needs identified during the inspection.

4.69 The concerns expressed above (paragraph 4.7) about the way some response officers conveyed negative messages in their role as ambassadors for the Service also highlight a training need. Members of the public have been left dissatisfied when basic 'customer care' skills would have resulted in a more positive outcome. There was a view in some forces that this element of police training has been neglected in favour of training focused on legislative change – a point that is confirmed by the emerging findings of the HMIC thematic inspection of probationer training which will be published in January 2002. Although the inspection team is acutely aware of the current demands on police training, the importance of basic customer care standards is such that consideration should be given to introducing customer care training to all staff who come into regular contact with the public.

Strategic Framework

PSSO, in consultation with ACPO, should set national standards for customer care and, on the basis of a training needs analysis, should ensure that probationer training and continuous professional development equip staff with the relevant skills.

Communication

4.70 The provision of mobile telephones is one small way of enhancing community officers' status, and their provision is becoming more common. They are an excellent way of enhancing officer accessibility, provided that systems are in place to manage communication during periods of absence. In those forces which were not providing phones, officers often use their own, restricting circulation of the number to key individuals. Eventually, the introduction of Airwave (the national radio communications project) will obviate the need for mobile phones. In the meantime, Northamptonshire Police has taken an innovative step.

Daventry Community Beat Unit – Internet Site

The use of IT in Daventry (Northamptonshire) is an excellent example of innovative practice. The use of the internet, coupled with mobile data, allows officers covering a rural area to maintain contact with members of the public to a degree that was not previously possible. The unique feature is that the community beat unit supports its own internet site, which is currently being integrated into the Force site, detailing the community officers and the areas they cover. Alongside officer details are the contact numbers, which allow text messages to be sent via the internet to a communicator carried by each officer. To ensure the message is not lost if the officer is not available, a copy is also sent to the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and the area intelligence office.

Tactical Option

Pending the arrival of Airwave, forces should consider providing community officers with mobile telephones.

Summary

4.71 Every force visited during the fieldwork deployed a number of officers in a problem-solving capacity with responsibility for a geographic area, but the pattern of deployment varies considerably. There is no 'best way', and each BCU needs to select a model which reflects the needs and circumstances that prevail in the area. Her Majesty's Inspector advocates an intelligence-led approach (using a holistic interpretation of intelligence) to the adoption of a community policing style. Whichever style is adopted, there is a need for some national standards governing patrol work, which should be agreed between members of the tripartite arrangement.

4.72 Day-to-day deployments are, ideally, informed by intelligence in line with the National Intelligence Model. Deploying patrol officers purely to provide a visible presence for the purpose of reassurance is resisted by police managers, and there is limited evidence of it taking place. The Service needs to take account of the public's views on visibility, changing the cultural and managerial mind-sets in order to better match public expectations. Arguably, visible patrol in areas of high foot-fall such as schools or rail stations might better be performed by a 'second tier' of auxiliary officers. The arguments for and against this approach are finely balanced, and there is a need for further research in this area.

4.73 Police visibility is not a 'cure all' for public reassurance needs, but part of the wider framework – including crime and disorder reduction – that strives to deliver governmental and local objectives in cost-effective ways. Visibility can, and should, be a higher priority.

4.74 The officers who deliver the visible, accessible and familiar style of policing are held in high esteem by the public and their own colleagues, but they believe that they are less valued by senior management. It is important that steps are taken to address the issue of status and that the important role that community officers play is recognised by the rewards, training, briefing and supervisory regime in place. One obstacle is the intangible nature of community policing outcomes and it is important that customised measures of community officers' performance are linked to personal development reviews.

4.75 Officers on patrol are the most obvious but not the only visible police presence within local communities. Police stations and offices within local communities are potent symbols of reassurance. The next section considers developments and good practice in the management of stations and other public interaction points.

Police/Public Interface Points

Vision

"Police/public interface points will be located in a way that supports local community policing styles and forces will make full use of the range of partnership opportunities. Staff working at the interface points will be valued and appropriately trained and supported. Working practices and systems employed will be customer focused. National standards will be published against which the performance of police station front counters will be measured."

Introduction

5.1   The police station, with its traditional blue lamp, is an enduring image of British policing that has almost as much symbolic importance as the uniformed bobby. In terms of public reassurance, it represents access to police services and, in emergency, a place of sanctuary. How well does the current police estate – traditional stations as well as one-stop shops and mobile facilities – serve the public's needs? Uniquely identifiable police/public interface points offering ease of access, convenience of location and high quality personal interactions are integral to a policing style that is rooted in the community and geared to its needs. This section looks at the relationship between police/public interface points and their contribution, practical and symbolic, to public reassurance.

Strategy and Policy – Supporting Accessibility

5.2   In 1999, the Audit Commission published its review of the police estate, *Action Stations,* urging police forces to:

- Better manage public expectations, meeting need rather than demand.

- Link property decisions explicitly to operational objectives.

- Improve asset management.

5.3   These recommendations formed a starting point for this element of the inspection, and those forces visited did have in place strategic frameworks setting out estate policies, priorities and responsibilities in support of operational objectives. For example, Leicestershire Police has used its well established estate strategy to underpin its move to a very local policing style, relocating a number of local policing units to the heart of the communities they police.

5.4   *Action Stations* recommended the adoption of a force-wide policy on the nature and location of public interface points, where necessary sharing accommodation as a way of improving public access in areas not served by traditional police stations.

The fieldwork evidence suggests that forces are now beginning to embrace such partnership approaches.

5.5   Public interface points fall in three general categories:

•   *Large city or town police stations*
     Typically, this station is a BCU HQ, located centrally or on the outskirts of the town/city, and often housing the custody facilities and other central functions. These generate a high throughput of personal callers – victims and witnesses of crimes, persons reporting on bail or friends of those arrested. Such stations tend to be large, busy and often not very welcoming premises. They are likely to be open 24 hours a day (or at least have the longest opening hours within the force) and are given the highest priority on the DDA improvement programme.

•   *Smaller town, estate-based or village public interface points*
     These include sector or neighbourhood patrol bases with a public enquiry office. In addition, there are shared public interface points, often located in the heart of the community. They are usually staffed by one locally recruited member of support staff and have variable opening hours (rarely 24 hours). The bulk of demand lies in the production of documents, lost or found property or general enquiries; although demand can be heavy, front counter staff typically take on additional roles such as lost property and office management.

•   *'One-stop' shops, mobile police stations and police surgeries*
     These are alternative public interface points, located to meet a particular local need. They can be highly innovative, ranging from a permanent venue in local authority premises or a desk in the local supermarket to a well used mobile police station, and staffed by permanent police employed staff, a mixture of police/local authority staff or even volunteers. Opening times are variable depending on the need and can be anything from regular 'office hours' to monthly events. These sites tend not to be linked to their force's IT or administration systems and provide little more than a basic information service.

5.6   A recommendation within *Action Stations* emphasised the importance of engaging with the community by 'taking steps to inform and educate the public about how police services are delivered'. This inspection found little evidence of the public being consulted about current and future plans. BVRs on public contact points, which should always include the results of consultation with users, so far provide little evidence of genuine consultation. For example, one review cited as consultation a customer satisfaction questionnaire that drew only 0.14% response, and which did not address the wants or needs of those using the facilities.
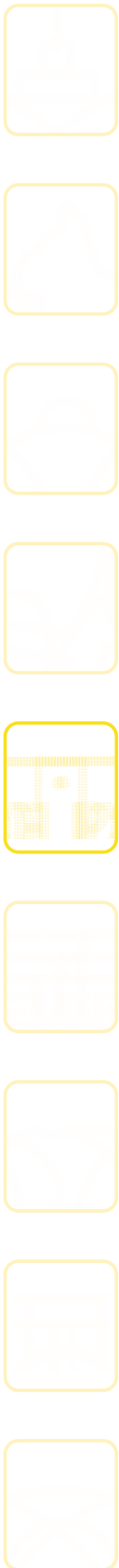
5.7 A small but increasing number of forces now collect management information on their public interface points, not just through the traditional mechanism of customer satisfaction surveys but also recording the numbers of people attending, when and why. This data is invaluable in informing decisions about opening times and staffing levels. Kent Constabulary is currently reviewing the locations and opening times of its public interface points based on the findings of a BVR. This identified a 'minimum standard' based on the number of daily, weekly and yearly visits. Currently, six of the force's public interface points fall below this standard.

5.8 Clearly, the number of visitors is only one dimension and the symbolic importance of a police presence in a neighbourhood should not be underestimated. A visit to the Police and Community Resource Centre in the Toxteth area of Liverpool provided a vivid illustration of the symbolic importance of a police presence within the community. Typically, on a daily basis only three or four callers visit this shop front resource, but this understates the reassurance value its existence brings to the whole community. This symbolic value is not easy to quantify, but both Merseyside and South Wales are attempting to 'score' public interface points in relation to community reassurance. South Wales relies on a weighting matrix supplied by divisional commanders, and both forces recognise how – next to the 'bobby on the beat' – a police/public interface point is the most tangible police presence within a community.

Tactical Option

Forces should devise audit and analysis mechanisms for evaluating the services provided by their police/public interface points, taking into account both levels of usage and the reassurance the point provides to the local community.

5.9 Merseyside's recently launched neighbourhood policing style is designed to ensure engagement with local communities. Each neighbourhood inspector has been tasked to identify an additional neighbourhood contact point, at zero cost. As a result, police officers are appearing in supermarkets, libraries, schools and church halls.

Case Study

Community Police Stations

The neighbourhood inspector for East Central Wirral has located her neighbourhood team in a rarely used, near-derelict police station in Bilston. East Central Wirral is a diverse neighbourhood, including some affluent communities but also deprived areas such as Bilston, which has higher crime levels and incidents of community disorder. Prior to neighbourhood policing, officers entered the area only to respond to calls. Basing the neighbourhood team via the re-occupation of Bilston police station has assumed a symbolic significance, as well as providing a practical presence on the streets.

5.10 As well as 'consumer' information, decisions about the location of public interface points need to be informed by intelligence issues, as illustrated in Figure 5.1. In line with the model for determining the community policing style developed in Section IV, decisions where to site public information points should be based on the wider definition of intelligence and be taken in liaison with partners. Major drivers should be estate and operational strategies and the need for Best Value.

Figure 5.1 Schematic For Developing Public Interface Point Strategies

Performance & Management Framework Drivers

Estate Strategy — Operations Strategies — Best Value

Police/Public Interface Business

- Access to information and services
- Symbol of police presence

Front Counters in police buildings — Mobile Police Station

Intelligent location of Community Contact Points from menus of options

Shared premises

Desired Outcome

- Public satisfaction with services at public interface points
- Public satisfaction with access to services
- Public reassurance

Police Buildings — Partner Resources

Inputs

Tactical Option

Forces should make use of the principles of the National Intelligence Model to ensure that public interface points are located in a way that maximises their value to local communities.

Service Delivery and the Implications of the DDA, 1995

5.11 The DDA prohibits discrimination in service delivery on grounds of disability, and will undoubtedly have an impact on policing. Although the Act took effect in 1999, service providers have until 2004 to make necessary structural alterations. How well prepared are police authorities and forces to meet the DDA responsibilities?
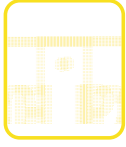
5.12 Nationally, forces have completed a mini-audit checklist to report on their DDA readiness. Most have focused on access issues as covered by Document M of the Building Regulations 1991, which gives practical guidance on access and facilities for disabled people. Ramps, mechanised doorways, signage and disabled toilets have become common additions to most police stations, even though the necessary work can be extremely costly. As *Action Stations* noted, 46% of police buildings were constructed before 1960, and 21% prior to 1930; some of them are listed buildings, making structural alterations particularly expensive and time-consuming. It is, therefore, vital that the estate is audited and that sufficient funds are earmarked for necessary work, unless alternative provision can be identified. In the forces visited by the inspection team, estate managers were found to have completed DDA audits but in many cases the force had already set its budgets for DDA alterations. This has resulted in shortfalls between what is needed and what forces can afford.

Case Study

Alternative Source of Funding to Improve Access

Avon and Somerset has recently made use of the Rural Policing Fund to pay for the refurbishment of Chard and Crewkerne police stations. The Force recognised that both these rural stations provided very poor disabled access and the current budget could not accommodate their refurbishment.

5.13 The inspection team found lower levels of consideration being given to people with hearing or visual impairments. The 'mini-audit' also identified a low level of knowledge and awareness of DDA issues on the part of public contact point staff and supervisors. Fieldwork visits revealed little or no evidence of formal training on the implications of the Act.

Case Study

Minimum Standards for Front Counters

In 1999, the MPS adopted minimum standards and good practice for station reception, focusing on:

- Supporting the station officer.

- Looking after the customer.

- Creating the right environment.

The document was revised to incorporate DDA issues and published as 'Front Office 2001', with an emphasis on design issues, disabled access and service delivery. 'Front Office 2001' is an ongoing project that is driving improved service delivery at all MPS public interface points.

Central to this project is a mock-up facility located in Lambeth, South London. This front office provides a three-dimensional template for all future refurbishment projects of MPS public interface points. It allows new technology and new thinking to be incorporated into the corporate design; these can then be tested out before making any financial commitment. Groups of building professionals, budget holders and – more importantly – front office user groups regularly attend the mock-up. They are invited to comment on the facility and their views are continually being fed back into the project.

5.14 Even those forces with robust DDA project plans have concerns about how 'reasonable access' will be interpreted in the courts. Forces are beginning to address these concerns by setting up disability programme boards, with representatives from personnel, solicitors, estate management, IT, community safety departments and other stakeholders to co-ordinate work from a holistic perspective. Working with disabled groups will be a particularly effective method of identifying appropriate solutions.

5.15 HMIC will be examining the progress made by forces towards the 2004 target as part of its inspection regime.

Tactical Option

Forces should view disability in its widest sense incorporating, for example, the needs of people with visual and hearing impairment in their strategic plans and increase the awareness of disability issues amongst staff.

Optimising Service Delivery to the Public

5.16 Service delivery at public interface points can be improved through:

- Better management of demand.

- Employing a variety of effective methods for communicating with customers.

- Appropriate use of shared resources with partners.

- Training and supervision of staff.

- Imaginative front counter design.

Demand Management

5.17 Smaller town or estate-based public interface points and mobile police stations offer excellent opportunities for timely service delivery. The demands on the larger city centre-based police stations are the most difficult to manage. Each one visited was characterised by the presence of queues – one had a constant queue of twelve people waiting throughout the forty minutes of observation. Service to the public in such stations is, unsurprisingly, often poor.

5.18 Typically, enquiry officers operate under considerable pressure in the larger police stations, despite the proximity of police and support staff working in adjoining offices. It is rare to find a situation – though common in the private sector – where office staff routinely help out during periods of peak demand. Enquiry staff do not feel empowered to ask others to assist. This could be easily remedied by training other staff to undertake basic front desk functions (such as the production of driving documents) so that they can be required to assist when demand exceeds the full time staff's capacity.

Case Study

Managing Demand, Utilising Other Staff

In line with Essex Police's move towards single points of contact for the public, Colchester BCU launched its service desk in October 2001. Service desks combine the current staff from the crime desk, crime recording, help desk and station office to provide a single multi-skilled point of contact for callers to the station. By locating the crime desk in the front office area and having other staff on standby, staff should be available for the morning and early evening peaks in demand. A caller at the station can expect to see at least three staff working behind the desk; if a queue builds, an extra third service bay will be opened. The BCU has employed a service desk manager, who has extensive previous experience dealing with demand management with the Benefits Agency, who together with three supervisors will be responsible for prioritising the work.

5.19 Telephone crime reporting is a method of reducing demand on enquiry counter staff. In Kent, visitors are taken into a room adjacent to the enquiry office where they can use the internal telephone system to report their crime in private. Most forces have internal telephone systems available to visitors to the front office, but few support this with lists of useful telephone numbers. This is a missed opportunity to provide prompt solutions to enquiries and reduce waiting times.

5.20 In response to customer complaints about the lack of privacy at front offices, Thames Valley is currently piloting ticketing systems to manage queues that form at busy stations. Four pilot sites are operating, where callers wait away from the counter, confident that they will be seen in order. The system is computerised and provides detailed management information on waiting and transaction times, and reasons for attending.

5.21 The challenge of demand management in smaller contact points is quite different. Where forces are committed to keeping these contact points open to the public, but are conscious of the small numbers of callers involved, enquiry officers are given additional responsibilities, typically administrative duties. Interestingly, the enquiry officers working in these smaller, more local contact points receive far more assistance and support from their police colleagues, an indication of their integration into the small 'police' team. Another solution could be for forces to provide limited training to appropriate office-based staff to assist front office enquiry clerks at times of peak demand.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should make arrangements to supplement front office staff during periods of high demand.

Communication

5.22 Police interactions with the public can be improved by professional handling of three communication issues:

- Corporate identity and signage.

- Displays of useful information.

- Privacy for customers.

Corporate Identity

5.23 There is significant scope for improvement in respect of signage, both in terms of street signs and the signs used within public interface points. Few police stations, let alone less conventional forms of police/public contact points, are adequately signed.

This contrasts with, for example, signs indicating the location of railway stations and civic offices, which are prominently displayed at strategic locations throughout most towns. One improvement would come from a nationally recognised brand or logo highlighting the location of police stations. Obviously, not all of those requiring assistance will be local to the area and a national recognised signage will thus benefit all potential users. Where there is a strong local attachment to a force's crest or logo, this could be displayed alongside the national identification.

Strategic Framework

ACPO should adopt a nationally recognised brand or logo which can be prominently displayed to direct members of the public to public interface points or other forms of contact with the Service.

Displays of Useful Information.

5.24 Overall, information on display externally and within police stations and other public interface points is poorly managed. Information is often out of date, faded beyond recognition, uses such small lettering that it is difficult to read, or hidden on a crowded notice board. One of the main reasons people give for attending a police station is to ask for directions, and over half of the sites visited contained some form of local map. Commendably, Kent has placed large local maps outside each of its police stations. Of the sites visited, most produced their information only in English, though there were exceptions. For example, most of Merseyside's enquiry desks have posters in a number of languages. On a positive note, there was excellent knowledge among enquiry officers of the Language Line interpretation service and most had used it.

5.25 One station visited in London served a predominantly minority ethnic population, most of whom did not speak English as a first language. The station office was one of the busiest visited, with a constant queue of 12 or more people, and although English speakers were in the minority, the information displayed was exclusively in English.

Privacy for customers

5.26 Privacy is a key concern for users of police/public interface points. Many sites visited offered private facilities away from the front office. This is recognised as essential, especially when dealing with vulnerable victims or witnesses. However, where only one enquiry officer is provided, it is difficult to deal with a caller in private and manage the front counter the same time. The MPS has incorporated a 'detailed enquiry point' into its corporate design. Glazed partitions allow the staff to see the extent of queues developing and customers can see to what extent the staff are committed.

Tactical Option

Forces should take steps to ensure visitors to police/public interface points have
access to private facilities to enable them to discuss with police issues of a private
and confidential nature.

Partnership and Resources

5.27 Sharing resources is a means by which the police service can reach communities not
easily served by traditional police stations. For example, they afford the opportunity
for police staff to interface with members of hard to reach groups who initially attend
the facility on non-police related matters.

5.28 The move towards partnership working, driven by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998,
has resulted in a number of initiatives surrounding the police/public interface.
The potential is still to be fully developed and forces are encouraged to further
promote the partnership approach in this regard. Inspection team visits identified the
occasional successful long-standing project, a number of innovative pilot schemes
and some nuggets of good practice.

Partnership Working

1. Dulverton Police and Community Centre on Exmoor (Avon and Somerset) is a joint venture with West Somerset District Council, Exmoor National Park, Somerset County Council and Dulverton Town Council. The Centre was formerly a closed and near-derelict police station unsuccessfully offered for sale in 1994. In 1996, it opened on a cost-sharing basis with the police being responsible for the building, while the councils provide a computer and pay half the staff costs. The Building Regulations Officer and Voluntary Services also use the Centre, as does the local MP for his surgeries.

2. Bebington One-Stop Shop, Birkenhead. In 1999 the local authority invited the police to work from the one-stop housing and benefits shop. This opportunity had the additional advantage of making the police accessible to groups of people who would otherwise not seek police assistance. In May this year a police officer began working there from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

3. Humberside Police Community Office in Scunthorpe is a police sector base, which was never intended to be accessible to the public but due to its position in the heart of a deprived area, the community has gravitated towards it. The office is based in a house which has been rented for a nominal sum of £1 per year from the local authority, which has also agreed to maintain the house and purchased security shutters. Officers gave up their spare time to decorate the house, and this activity attracted significant interest from residents. There has been a significant drop in both reported crime and levels of disorder.

4. Swale Community Information Centre, Kent, opened in April 2001. The aim of this initiative is to provide a single 'joined-up' point of contact for both the police and the council. The centre staff are trained in both police and council procedures.

5. Sandwich Police Office, Kent is located in shop type premises and is open from 10am to 12midday and 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday. Five years ago the police station in Sandwich was closed; a public meeting was called during which a number of residents volunteered to staff the front office. The offer was accepted and Sandwich now has six active volunteers who staff the front office during the afternoon.

6. Mobile Police Station, Swansea, South Wales. This 7.5 ton truck is equipped with front office counter and interview rooms; the cost of £40,000 was met by the crime and disorder partnership. It is being used on high crime estates to provide a police presence and focal point for a multi-agency 'clean-up' involving street cleansing, graffiti and abandoned vehicle removal. The housing department, local councillors and MP hold surgeries in this mobile police station.
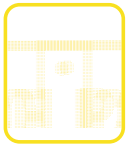
<div style="background:yellow">

Tactical Option

</div>

BCU commanders should make full use of the range of partnership opportunities to
enhance engagement with local communities.

Training and Supervision of Staff and Front Counter Design.

5.29 The majority of sites visited employed support staff in the role of enquiry officer. Occasionally, police officers were fulfilling the role, typically because they were on restricted duties. In most forces, probationer constables receive some form of exposure to front office duties.

5.30 A consistent factor evident throughout the fieldwork was the high level of commitment and dedication displayed by enquiry officers. Regardless of whether employed in the inner city, suburbs or rural contact points, enquiry officers tend to be a credit to their respective forces. It is therefore disappointing that many staff are unclear about line management relationships and/or have little regular contact with their managers. High levels of frustration and helplessness are commonplace, with enquiry officers citing a lack of resources and support. A frequent sentiment expressed is that *'No one cares about us'.*

5.31 Some forces, including Avon and Somerset Constabulary, have introduced front office supervisors to provide assistance and guidance to staff. To maximise the effectiveness of the service provided by front offices, it is essential that supervisors have direct links into operational police management. In one force visited, a support manager with responsibility for enquiry officers at a large urban station complained that decisions affecting her staff and their work practices were being made at operational police meetings which she did not attend. The manager had then to take it up at senior management level, which took time and caused bad feeling.

Front Counter Management

St Aldate's Police Station, Oxford (Thames Valley) employs a front counter manager responsible for the twelve station duty officers plus a supervisor, four property officers and two members of staff solely responsible for dealing with the 2,000 bicycles stolen each year in Oxford. Equivalent to inspector in authority, he has an overtime budget and the ability to bid for divisional and force funds. He reports directly to a chief inspector (operations). The post was created four years ago by the vision of the then chief superintendent who recognised the need for the growing members of support staff to be effectively managed.

Having a manager who understood the processes at work within the front office, and was empowered to make decisions, provided the opportunity for user-based knowledge and experience to inform the design and construction of the new facility. The resulting public interface point challenges many of the established conventions associated with front offices. The front office is open plan, carpeted and has plants on the windowsills. A ticketing system operates with both a visual dot matrix and audible information system. The expansive counter area is ergonomically designed, creating a pleasant, non-threatening environment, which also absorbs and distorts sound, thus achieving an effective sense of privacy. The deep, angled counter replaced the old glass screen and affords a higher level of safety. The staff side of the counter is raised, giving the station duty officers a psychological advantage without intimidating those that use it. Behind the desk, the staff office is modern, spacious and looks out into the reception area; there is also a comfortable relaxation and kitchen area.

The staff interviewed during fieldwork were very positive about their working environment (known affectionately as the Starship Enterprise) – relatively speaking, they were the group of enquiry staff most satisfied with their lot.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should ensure that there are clear lines of supervision and management for police/public interface points and their staff.

5.32   An issue of concern in all the forces visited was the inadequate level and quality of training for enquiry staff, which is at best ad hoc and at worst non-existent. Too many enquiry officers learn 'on the job', working under intense pressure in busy front offices and reliant upon the trainer skills of their colleagues. Few members of staff described themselves as skilled, but all described themselves as experienced. All enquiry officers had received generic force training on the Human Rights Act and community and race relations issues, but only one had received conflict resolution training. A small number of forces deliver customer care training to their enquiry

officers, but few of the staff interviewed had actually received such training. Coupled
with the lack of DDA awareness training, this represents a significant omission in the
drive for high quality of service.

Tactical Option

**Forces should review the training provided to the front office enquiry staff to ensure
that it fulfils the customer service requirements of the role.**

5.33   A member of the public may only visit a police station counter once but first
impressions count. If they are to be reassured it is essential that the environment is
welcoming and therefore that the design of the reception area takes into account the
needs and expectations of the public. Many banks, in a move to become more
customer friendly, have removed their protective screens in favour of open counters.
Whilst this may not be appropriate in all police/public interface points there may be
scope for forces to incorporate customer friendly design features.

Case Study

Front Counter Design

Avon and Somerset Constabulary is currently working on a refurbishment of the Bath public interface point. As with St Aldate's, the Bath project challenges the accepted pattern of the force's front office facilities. The finished design will have more in common with a hotel reception area than a police front office. This project heralds a move away from glass protective screens and is being personally championed by the Chief Constable; he is taking the lead in addressing security issues with staff associations and unions, while the estates department is exploring alternatives. Bath is to have a screen hidden within the desk, which can be raised in an emergency or used during the night shift.

National Standards

5.34   The inspection revealed a surprising level of inconsistency in the quality of service
delivered by different forces, especially in the larger and busier contact points.
Although the smaller front offices and contact points offered a restricted range of
services, they were more likely to be tailored to the needs of the community; the
larger sites are barely able to cope with demand.

5.35   The key message is that current service levels, already inadequate in many respects,
may well decline unless, through BVRs or other mechanisms, forces begin addressing
the quality of interaction. A person attending a public interface point anywhere in
England or Wales should know what services are available, what quality of service to
expect and how to complain if it is not delivered. Central to any successful attempt
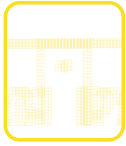
to drive up service quality will be the adoption of a set of national standards governing service delivery at contact points. Although the finer detail of such standards will be a matter for agreement among the members of the tripartite arrangement, this report highlights possible areas for consideration:

- Better signposting of facilities including the adoption of a nationally recognised police logo.

- Agreed standards for waiting times.

- Information available in appropriate languages.

- Compliance with DDA criteria.

- Clear statements of what services are available.

- Effective management and training of staff.

- System of fast tracking visitors with appointments.

- Suitable environment (cleanliness, privacy, safe etc.).

5.36 It is important that methods of enforcement are in place to ensure that, once these national standards are agreed, they are adopted across the country. Through the mechanisms of Best Value, police authorities should ensure that forces have due regard of these standards, to improve the experience of police/public interactions. HMIC, through the process of formal inspection of forces and of BVRs, will be able to evaluate the quality of the implementation of the standards and offer guidance where improvements are needed.

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should agree national standards of service delivery for police/public interface points.

5.37 The next section examines the impact that media coverage of policing issues can have on public reassurance and offers suggestions for improvement in this area.

Media, Public Relations and Marketing

Vision

"Forces will be maximising the opportunities to promote public reassurance through the proactive identification and provision of appropriate material to the local media and will have developed a distinctive reassurance way of policing with a national brand that is easily recognisable by the public."

Introduction

6.1 The appetite of the media and the public for news and information about policing seems insatiable. Every daily newspaper carries stories about crime, criminals and the activities of police forces, while the TV schedules are crowded with police dramas, documentaries and news items. Given the demands of a '24-hour news society', the situation is unlikely to change. For the police service this saturation coverage is a double-edged sword. It benefits from the opportunities offered to convey messages and seek assistance – for example, asking for help with enquiries (witnesses, information about suspects and so on). However, not all coverage shows the work of the police in a positive light. Stories of police corruption, racist or sexist behaviour and bungled investigations make better copy than successful enquiries or officer bravery.

6.2 Of particular concern is the impact that media coverage has on feelings of public reassurance. The public get much of their information about crime and community safety from TV, radio and newspapers, rather than Home Office statistical bulletins or chief constables' annual reports. This may help explain the paradox noted in Section I that people are largely unaware of the success story represented by falling crime rates – as long as they keep reading about burglaries, muggings and car thefts they assume it is happening all around them. The challenge for the police service is to exploit this high level of public/media interest in order to communicate its goals and priorities, convey its achievements and keep local communities informed. This requires more than simply putting a professional 'spin' on stories as they emerge – forces need to be proactive and use the full array of media liaison, public relations and marketing techniques in order to promote positive images and enhance public reassurance. This section examines some of the work that has been undertaken and suggests areas for further development.

How does the Public find out about Policing?

6.3   Members of the public have access to many different sources of information which influence their perceptions of police activity and the relative safety of the area in which they live, work or travel. Whilst there has been little rigorous academic research, some attempts have been made to identify how local communities acquire information. In 2000, Hampshire Constabulary surveyed local residents on how their opinions about the police were formed (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

Source	%
TV news	52
Local newspaper	44
Contact with or experience of police	43
Word of mouth/hearing about others' experiences	41
National newspaper	37
Documentary or crime programme	34
Neighbourhood Watch	11
British police drama programmes	8
Public meetings of groups of residents	4
American police drama programmes	2
Police websites	1
Other	7
Not stated	1

6.4   If Hampshire's findings are generally applicable, there are interesting messages for the Service. For example, the percentage of people who form views on the basis of contact with the police highlights the importance of accessibility – being able to contact the police easily and promptly – and high quality interactions with victims and witnesses. Clearly, the penetration of 'e-information' via the internet has a long way to go, and public meetings are an inadequate vehicle for communication of important messages. The prominence of TV news signals that forces need to shape their inputs into short 'sound bites' – not an easy task when so much of the information they need to convey is complex.

6.5   The importance of local newspapers as a source is interesting, because their readership penetration, combined with a desperation for items to fill their columns, means that a good relationship with them can reap major dividends. In fact, research conducted by the Newspaper Society shows that regional or local newspapers are the most widely read medium – 84.4% of all adults regularly read regional or local newspapers, and just over 40% of those who read a regional paper do not read a national daily (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2

Coverage by age	Any regional/local newspaper
15 – 24	78.9%
25 – 34	82.5%
35 – 44	85.2%
45 – 54	86.2%
55 – 64	87.7%
65+	86.2%

6.6 Many local newspapers are free and distributed to every household in their circulation area, so the potential for delivering reassurance messages, managing expectations and increasing awareness of police activities is immense. It is thus disappointing to learn that the negative and sceptical attitude that some police officers have towards the press means that relationships are not always cordial. Even where a symbiotic relationship exists, fieldwork suggests that a reactive approach – giving information only when asked – is not uncommon. Some officers do not volunteer information about items they think are routine and uninteresting, but in practice these 'routine' stories often show the police in a good light and help to reassure the public. Examples of good practice illustrate the need to review, and where necessary improve, local press coverage.

Case Study

Use of the Media – Melton Mowbray Police

The inspector for Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire has established a good relationship with the local media, and the Melton Times (circulation 13,722) has covered many community policing initiatives. He has been afforded whole pages of copy through which to introduce principal beat officers, with photographs and some personal details of officers' hobbies and interests. He is constantly seeking out stories that will interest the public and is in daily contact with reporters, informing them of current incidents and future events and initiatives. When plans for a new police station were being discussed, he invited local people with disabilities to review the plans and their input became a feature in the newspaper. Following their inspector's lead, other Melton officers are now much more aware of incidents and activities that may be of interest and are 'good news' stories.

The Media's Impact on Reassurance

6.7 What does the dominance of the media as a principal message conveyor mean in terms of reassurance? There is a dearth of academic research on how media coverage of crime and disorder influences feelings of safety and assurance, although police officers are in no doubt of its significance – their concern is that sensationalist coverage of, say, a child murder or a particularly violent crime heightens the fear of crime. An American study[1] suggests that, while stories of homicide do affect feelings of safety, their impact can be mitigated by local stories giving a positive picture of the neighbourhood. Further, people are less inclined to perceive that an area is unsafe if there is some detail in the coverage that would make them believe they are unlikely to be a victim. These findings are supported by Heath[2], who also suggests that stories about violent crime occurring *away* from their neighbourhood can make residents feel safe by comparison.

6.8 Because national and local media coverage focuses on high profile incidents such as murders or riots, forces are geared up to deal professionally with these (fortunately rare) events. There is also a commendable tendency for force press and media officers to network and share experiences, individually and through the Association of Police Public Relations Officers (APPRO).

Case Study

Media Coverage of the Public Order Disturbances during the Summer of 2001

The public order disturbances during the summer of 2001 in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford not only presented operational challenges to the three forces involved but also a pressing need to restore public reassurance through the media. Conscious of the need to learn from their experiences, Greater Manchester Police, Lancashire Constabulary (in conjunction with Burnley Council) and West Yorkshire Police engaged firms of PR consultants to evaluate their external communications plans, media releases and presentations with analysis against the actual media coverage. The use of the same firm by all three forces provided a consistency of approach and the final reports are sources of information from which all forces can learn.

[1] *Feeling Safe by Comparison: Crime in the Newspapers in Social Problems,* Vol. 37, No 3 August 1990 A. E Liska and W Baccaglini 1990

[2] *Impact of Newspaper Crime Reports on Fear of Crime: Multimethodological Investigation* in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 1984 Vol. 47 No 2 263-276. L Heath 1984

The Role of Media and Marketing at National and Force Level

6.9   The Service has worked hard in recent years to put press, PR and marketing activities on a more professional footing – gone are the days when officers on light duties filled the press office and marketing was limited to a stand at the county fair. Inspection fieldwork identified some excellent examples of proactivity and innovation but also revealed scope for improvement, especially in relation to marketing and moving expertise down the chain from HQ to local level. Before examining how the role is structured and highlighting good practice, it is useful to define the terms used in this context – the fact that they are often used interchangeably is confusing and inhibits the spread of ideas.

6.10   National research conducted by Mawby in 2001[3] found that, across the 43 forces in England and Wales, departments responsible for media and public relations operate under a variety of titles, with the most common being *Press and Public Relations* (6 forces), *Media and Public Relations* (5 forces) and *Corporate Communication* (4 forces). Some forces combine marketing with the other functions but elsewhere the marketing department is separate. His research uncovered confusion over the terms used in this crucial area of work, particularly in respect of 'marketing'. This was confirmed during fieldwork visits when many officers described all attempts to publicise or promote activity as 'marketing'. The following definitions are offered to aid consistency:

- **Media Liaison** – this is a daily activity, providing information on current police activity or involvement to all media sources – local, regional and national, including newspapers, radio and television. It also covers the provision of information to the media on forthcoming events and initiatives, typically through issuing news releases and/or interviews with police personnel. Press/media officers generally have a background in print or broadcast journalism.

- **Public Relations** – this activity involves providing information to the public, producing documentation in the form of leaflets and posters, and running campaigns for specific initiatives. Unlike press and media work, it is not necessarily topical and can be planned weeks or months in advance. Although generally outward facing, PR does also encompass some internal communication.

- **Marketing** – It is the distinction between PR and marketing that is most often misunderstood. The relevant professional body defines marketing as '… *the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements…*' (Chartered Institute of Marketing). Marketing is thus a strategic activity that goes well beyond simply promoting or publicising – it means seeing the services on offer from the perspective of the consumer/user and differentiating between the needs of different user groups. In a resource-constrained environment, marketing may also entail 'managing down' levels of expectation. The most commonly used tools and techniques are explored further below.

The National and Force Levels

6.11 At a national level, APPRO and the ACPO Media Advisory Group take the lead in developing policy and promoting the spread of good practice. The need for consistency on the nature and detail of what should and should not be released to the press has been addressed by the ACPO group in a series of guidance papers, available via the ACPO website. Relevant learning opportunities include a seminar run by the National Operations Faculty in summer 2001 on media handling for major incidents, using as case studies the Selby train crash, the ramifications resulting from the release of the names of potentially dangerous offenders in the Portsmouth area and the public disorder in Bradford.

6.12 At force level, press, PR and marketing all have an HQ base, with varying numbers of staff depending largely on the size of the organisation. Typically, these are small departments; although the average is 9, the range is from one to 62 people. They cover a range of duties, including media liaison, internal communications, campaigns and media training. Thirteen forces use police officers in various roles, the remainder relying upon specialist support staff with backgrounds in journalism, PR and/or marketing. Analysis by Mawby found that the head of department was graded at senior management level in 29 forces and middle management in the other 14 forces.[4] In only half of forces does the departmental head sit on the force policy group. Whatever the particular size or configuration, forces need to achieve the right balance of the different elements of media, PR and marketing. Good examples here include the models adopted in Lancashire and Wiltshire, bringing together a mixed-skill team.

[4] *Ibid*

Media Departments – Lancashire and Wiltshire

1. Lancashire's corporate communications department is headed by a senior manager with a strategic role. Her own background is in journalism, while her deputy brings skills and knowledge in the marketing field to the role of marketing manager. Other staff members include a graphic designer, media liaison specialists with skills in journalism and public relations, a Force publications officer and a person who has responsibility for the Force internet website.

2. Although a smaller department, Wiltshire's PR department is headed by a marketing and public relations specialist; the Force press officers have skills and experience in journalism and the Force also has media liaison staff on each of its BCUs.

Media, PR and Marketing Expertise at BCU and Partnership Level

6.13 Increasingly, BCU commanders are identifying the need for/benefits of a local media/PR/marketing capability, reflecting the size of the command (some BCUs cover a whole town or even city) and the partnership nature of much activity. The extent to which forces have equipped BCUs with expertise is difficult to pin down precisely. Mawby found that 15 forces had HQ managed staff – assumed to have specialist skills – on BCUs, retaining a clear link to the head of profession at HQ. A larger number have staff employed at BCU level with the words 'press', 'media', 'PR' or 'communication' in their job title. However, in Mawby's words, *"it was unusual for these members of staff to be communications professionals"*, they are as likely to be police officers as support staff, and often have other core responsibilities. Job titles and descriptions differ from BCU to BCU and from force to force, with little input from HQ specialist staff who have expertise in this area. Given the value of good liaison with local newspapers and the fast-moving nature of many news stories, forces are encouraged to consider providing BCUs with media expertise.

6.14 Few crime and disorder partnerships have dedicated media, PR or marketing expertise or the necessary infrastructure to proactively publicise their work. According to Mawby, 26 force media liaison departments provide some level of support to local partnerships; although force and local authority staff assist when requested to do so, they are unable to lend ongoing support and so much valuable work goes unreported. Fieldwork highlighted the potential value of police and partners working together to promote a common message.

Use of the Media to Promote Partnership Working

At Chippenham in Wiltshire, Operation Cirrus was an undercover police operation targeted against drug dealers, which culminated in a 'strike day' when 21 people were arrested and a considerable quantity of drugs recovered. Partners from social services, the local authority, youth workers and the drugs and alcohol working group were involved and all were mentioned in subsequent press releases and given an opportunity to explain their role at the police-led press conference. The subsequent local newspaper coverage highlighted the work of all members of the partnership, increasing their visibility in the community.

Tactical Option

Forces should consider the local deployment of suitably trained staff to optimise the opportunities for greater publicity of local policing activities.

Tactical Option

CDRPs should consider their media strategy and enhance their visibility within the community by delegating a 'proactive' responsibility for media liaison to a specific person.

Training

6.15 Departmental staff in 41 forces in England and Wales carry out in-force media training[5], suggesting that the majority of forces offer some level of guidance and media training to their staff. However, evidence from the inspection fieldwork indicated that staff with key roles in community policing – CBOs and sector inspectors, for example, – rarely receive any formal training in how to deal with the media and identify opportunities proactively to promote 'good news' stories. The fact that most officers interviewed were satisfied with, and indeed often complimentary about the advice and level of support offered by their respective HQ departments, is positive but may reveal low levels of awareness and expectation in this area.

[5] *Ibid*

Uses of the Media – Raising Awareness within the Force

Wiltshire Constabulary has published a small booklet entitled *An A to Z of Media Management*, which is issued to all staff and gives guidance on media policy and specific situations that may be encountered.

The booklet includes information about the Force media and PR department, tips on the types of information to release, advice on preparing a news release and details of some useful media contacts.

Tactical Option

Forces should provide key staff, such as community officers and sector inspectors, with appropriate training in dealing with the media and the identification of opportunities to maximise media coverage of reassurance stories.

Performance Measurement

6.16   As explained earlier, little work has been done to measure the impact of police communications with the public. Some form of measurement and evaluation is crucial to gauge whether a message has been received as intended. Most force media and PR departments have an annual plan that contains communications objectives and performance targets. Each force has differing measures of success and many concentrate on output measures such as the number of press releases issued and the number of items printed or covered in the media. Good PR practice suggests that, at the outset of an advertising campaign, a communications plan is drawn up with objectives and performance targets. At the conclusion of the campaign, research should then be undertaken and data collected to assess the results when evaluated against the plan. Some forces are already adopting these principles, especially in relation to communications plans for major crime or serious incidents.

6.17   In striving for continuous improvement, forces need to be able to benchmark their performance. Work is being undertaken by the ACPO Process Improvement Portfolio (previously known as the Harmonisation of Business Processes Sub-Committee) to develop some standard performance indicators for media and public relations departments. These are likely to concentrate on inputs and outputs; outcome measures of media management are acknowledged to be more difficult and it could be useful if further work was commissioned in this area.

The Role of Marketing in Promoting Reassurance

6.18 Marketing is given more prominence in this report because it is a less well developed specialism in the context of policing – indeed, a certain distaste for the techniques of marketing was obvious in some fieldwork interviews. Nonetheless, the inspection team considers that the Service has much to gain from marketing, and there are examples to demonstrate this.

6.19 In the private sector, the strategic role of marketing is to ensure that the organisation focuses on the needs and wants of the customer and identifies the best way of meeting those needs. The starting point is to consult customers and actively seek feedback, especially where the customer complains that the standard of service is not acceptable. In the public sector, and perhaps particularly the police service, demand often outstrips resources and it is then important both to acknowledge this and explain the reasons why the service cannot meet expectations. The way in which public expectations are managed and influenced is a critical determinant of public perceptions about the police and levels of reassurance. Customer feedback is vital to sustaining a successful operation; while all forces capture this type of data, few use the results systematically to change the way in which their service is delivered.

Case Study

Public Satisfaction Interviews

Since 1997, West Midlands Police has used its central call bureau to conduct public satisfaction interviews with members of the public who have reported an incident to the police. Four part-time operators are employed between 4pm and 8pm each weekday evening to call individuals who are recorded on the force's command and control system as having received a service. For example, all domestic burglary incidents over a 24-hour period may be sampled to provide a random list of victims.

Each telephone interview lasts about ten minutes, covering issues such as views on the initial response received from the officers, how the telephone call was handled, and whether they were given contact information or have been kept up to date with progress in the case. They are also asked about the best and worst aspects of service, the overall quality of service and their general level of satisfaction with the police.

While undertaking these surveys, call bureau operators also provide a service to interviewees by feeding back issues they have raised to local police stations, often including praise or requests for feedback. This 'aftercare service' also provides an opportunity for the local station to put something right which the member of the public feels has gone wrong. By asking additional questions, the Force is also able to evaluate the effectiveness of its publicity and the most appropriate media to use in order to make an impact on the public.

6.20 Police authorities in England and Wales have statutory obligations to consult local people and with their forces have devised numerous ways to capture feedback about the services they are delivering. These include surveys of callers who have contacted police through the 999 system, and the victims of road traffic accidents or crimes. The HMIC thematic inspection report *Winning the Race: Embracing Diversity* documented good practice in relation to methods of seeking the views of groups traditionally considered hard to reach, particularly the use of independent advisory groups, as did the APA review *Consulting Communities*; consequently, their findings have not been reiterated in this report.

6.21 A more recent development is the use of citizens' panels to elicit feedback. Many of these panels have been set up by local councils, and involve a structured sample of people whose age, gender and ethnic mix reflect that of the local community. Through these panels, police and partnership issues can be explored and opinions sought at specific time intervals; the results can then be analysed over time and trends identified.

Local Consultation

6.22 BCU commanders, sector inspectors and CBOs regularly attend a variety of public meetings. In some – though not all – cases these are a useful source of information for the community and local opinion formers, and the quality of the police input influences perceptions of the quality of policing in their area and levels of reassurance. One superintendent recalled *"… going into a community meeting armed with tremendous crime reduction figures, expecting to be carried out on their shoulders (in appreciation) but I got slaughtered. They said they thought the police had abandoned them and what they were concerned with were quality of life issues, not crime necessarily. This happened time and again and I realised that we need to start to reassure them in other ways."*

6.23 The inspection team observed a number of community meetings at which police officers, while presenting a professional image, appeared to lack sufficient material other than local performance indicators to inform meetings. For years the Service has been telling the public that it lacks resources and everyone is very busy – this is not the message the public want to hear. Officers need more 'themed' presentations that put local and force-wide issues into context and are more tailored to the needs of the audience. Referring to initiatives and activities under a public reassurance brand (paragraph 6.25) may be one method of communicating messages and managing community expectations. In order to achieve this, material could be made available corporately, possibly via the force intranet, which could assist officers when preparing for public meetings and presentations.

Case Study

Communicating Corporate Messages and Managing Community Expectations

Lancashire's corporate communications department produces bi-monthly material entitled 'Key Messages', highlighting current corporate issues with background information and a view of the key messages to be included in any public statement or presentation. It is circulated to all senior managers and posted on the Force intranet.

Tactical Option

BCU commanders should provide suitable material and support to local officers when attending public meetings to assist them in reassuring the public about levels of police and partner activity.

Segmentation

6.24 One of the keys to successfully marketing any product or service is recognising that different types of products or services are more attractive to different types of people. It is important to tailor products and/or services and any communication about those services to the needs and expectations of each section of the community – this is often referred to 'market segmentation'.

Operation Trident

Operation Trident is an MPS operation focusing on drugs related murders within the black community. Sustained campaigns publicising its work and promoting reassurance have been mounted by the MPS, using independent firms to evaluate the results of these publicity campaigns. One of the evaluation reports showed that it had not succeeded in reaching the target audience (black Londoners). The Trident 'brand' was recognised by only 8% of white Londoners and even fewer – 5% – black residents. A far more focused campaign is now being pursued and, rather than use the same material and traditional media channels (poster, radio, local press), a 'grass roots' campaign has been devised to target people via their localities and lifestyle activity. For example, posters have been tailored specifically for display in fashion shops used predominantly by black women.

Positioning

6.25 This term describes the distinctive place in the market that a particular organisation, product or service is perceived to occupy. In order to demonstrate this, 'branding' is used as a means by which the organisation can either promote itself, a product or a service. Traditionally, forces have sought to promote an identity through force crests, logos, livery, mission statements or corporate image. However, there is little evidence to indicate that the public can recognise different police forces and the differing methods by which they strive to achieve their stated objectives. These 'cap badge brands' tend to encompass all of the functions and services that the particular police force has to offer, some of which are juxtaposed and may confuse. For example, citizens are told that the force deploys resources to some incidents immediately and will not send officers to incidents in another category, but the distinction may not be understood.

6.26 Branding of particular policing styles or initiatives can help the public to understand exactly what the police are trying to achieve in a particular area and also help managers make decisions about resources, or galvanise staff in support of a common goal.

Branding Police Activity – Operation Spotlight

In 1996, Strathclyde Police launched an initiative to reduce violent crime, disorder and the fear of crime across the Force area. It was given the brand name of Spotlight, because the police and partners were spotlighting certain categories of crime and disorder. Since its launch, hundreds of operations have been successfully undertaken, ranging from education of young people and crime prevention initiatives in relation to burglary and violent crime, to high profile arrest days and sustained periods of high profile patrol in crime and disorder hot-spots.

In order to sustain the Spotlight brand, the Force established a small consultancy unit based at HQ. The unit produces a calendar of pre-planned events and provides a broad outline of the objectives and strategy, a range of tactical options that may be used by the division, and support and guidance in the form of training notes. It is then the responsibility of the local commander, through their divisional/departmental Spotlight co-ordinators, to translate it into activity, drawing on appropriate resources including deploying plain-clothes officers in uniform and obtaining specialist assistance from HQ. The Spotlight marketing unit is separate from the Force media and information department and it concentrates on communicating the message internally and externally. A major key to success is keeping its staff aware of the message. The unit ensures all staff are made aware of Spotlight and its objectives through training, presentations at meetings and the production of information for officers and staff.

The promotion of the message externally has been undertaken in a similar way to that of a commercial firm promoting a product or service. This has included the use of a distinctive logo, which has now been subject to trademark and copyright. The logo has also been used to endorse campaigns and promotional literature of partner agencies including the Scottish Drugs Enforcement Agency (DEA), local councils and the Scottish Executive. Such has been the impact and strength of the promotion of the brand, Spotlight were winners of the Royal Mail Scottish Marketing Award 1998 Grand Prix and Public Sector categories. When a strong brand has been established, any commercial company will vigorously protect the brand ensuring that it is not copied, used inappropriately or damaged in any way. To this end the Spotlight consultancy unit maintains the overall management of the brand and authorises its use.

The Force has engaged professional advertising agencies for the production of promotional material such as posters, leaflets, billboards, banners, signs and advert trailers etc. As Spotlight focuses on different aspects of crime and disorder and is applicable to many differing sections of the community, market segmentation is used to feature appropriate designs and messages targeted at specific community groups. Therefore, one campaign will have a variety of facades but will always contain the Spotlight brand logo and style. Indeed, for certain campaigns a variety of merchandising has been produced such as T-shirts, pens, beer mats etc.

Case Study

Branding Police Activity – Operation Spotlight (cont)

Other promotional tools have been used to heighten the awareness of Spotlight, reinforcing messages and engendering a greater feeling of public reassurance. Strathclyde Police was the first force in the UK to use television advertisements to advise the public of its work under the Spotlight brand. It has also used local radio adverts as well as being specifically featured in current affairs programmes through both these media.

The majority of the costs of advertising are met by sponsorship from commercial agencies and other public bodies.

The Spotlight brand has shaped Strathclyde's corporate image and the way in which it delivers the service to the public. It has raised awareness of police activity amongst the residents of Strathclyde police area.

6.27 Building on the success of Spotlight, other forces have begun to embrace the principles of branding, adopting and adapting the principles and lessons learnt from the Strathclyde experience.

Further Examples of Branding Police Activity

1. Although Central Scotland Police is a much smaller force in terms of numbers of staff, it covers a large geographic area and encounters many of the policing problems associated with a largely rural and sparsely populated area. Safer Central is a brand that is concentrating on making communities safer, reducing the fear of crime and increasing public confidence in the police. It was launched in February 2001 and is co-ordinated by an HQ-based unit in a similar way to Spotlight.

The activities of Safer Central are managed through the tasking and co-ordination process of the National Intelligence Model. Each division has a nominated co-ordinator (police constables), whose part-time role is to research and collate packages of activity and then present them in written form through the Force tasking and co-ordinating process. Bids are made for resources including staff and overtime. Safer Central has been allocated a budget against which commanders can bid, usually on a matched funding basis. Activities must satisfy certain criteria and contribute to the aims and objectives of Safer Central. If approved, the activity takes place and the results are reported upon at subsequent tasking and co-ordination meetings.

Safer Central has tackled crime issues as well as quality of life and reassurance issues. The activities range from high profile arrest days to high visibility patrols in disorder hot-spots and those areas of high foot-fall such as town centres during peak shopping periods and in the evenings patrolling licensed premises. At the commencement of any activity officers are briefed and given specific objectives. When the activity is concluded, supervisory officers submit a return to the Safer Central unit and a composite return of activity is presented to chief officers on a weekly basis.

2. Lancashire Constabulary is developing a marketing approach to the issue of public reassurance. It has started to examine the way it delivers services to the public under a strategic reassurance group, headed by a chief officer and including representatives from operational departments and corporate services. A number of projects and activities have taken place under the brand name of Operation Reassure, including arrest days and high profile patrolling in hot-spot areas. The specific activities are intelligence led and officers in HQ specialist posts are deployed to BCUs for short periods of time. All press releases are issued under the name of Operation Reassure in order to establish the Force's commitment and identify a brand for consistency.

6.28 Although all forces are engaged in initiatives to combat various types of crime and disorder and promote public reassurance, they tend to give each one a different name, usually with the word 'operation' in the title. Given the myriad of short and long term initiatives in each force, staff – and thus presumably the public – have difficulty remembering what each one is about. Where the initiative is undertaken with a number of partner agencies, the use of the term 'operation' may convey an impression that it is a short-term, police-only crackdown, rather than a sustained effort to reassure the community. Forces should thus consider more widespread use of brand names to create a distinctive identity for a continuous programme of police and partnership activity, particularly when the aim is public reassurance. It may also be appropriate in some circumstances to collaborate on national branding initiatives.

Case Study

Collaboration on Nationally Branded Policing Initiatives

The MPS was probably the first force to recognise the potential of branding a specific initiative with its launch of Operation Bumblebee in 1993. This was a response to a growing number of house burglaries and aimed to transfer the fear of crime from the victim to the offender. In 1994, Yellow Pages began sponsoring Operation Bumblebee and 3 million explanatory leaflets and stickers were distributed to homes throughout London. By the end of Operation Bumblebee's first year, burglaries had fallen by 13% and the detection rate rose from 11.9% to 16%. The success of the operation was recognised nationally and many forces took up the concept, including the brand name, with similar success rates. The name Operation Bumblebee was featured in both the national and local media and in fact became so well known that it was used in episodes of a television programme, The Bill.

Some forces borrowed the principles but gave them their own branding – this may have detracted from the wider impact of the initiatives.

Operation Bumblebee is still running in the MPS area and still achieving success. In the rest of the country, however, it appears to have lost the initial impetus and the brand has been dropped or used only occasionally.

6.29 These impactive and successful initiatives have done much to raise the levels of police visibility and accessibility, and contributed to reassurance, and should encourage a more widespread adoption of branding. The arguments in favour of more exercises in national branding include:

• The increased mobility of individuals lends itself to a corporate approach.

• The brand can be used as a generic banner under which a whole series of initiatives and activities can take place, conveying a clear and consistent message to staff and the public.

- The brand can be promoted in a variety of ways to engage diverse community groups, including people from minority ethnic groups and hard to reach sections of some communities.

- There is an opportunity to obtain sponsorship from commercial firms and other public bodies that want to be associated with the image of the brand.

- There are economies of scale in terms of literature and promotional material.

Strategic Framework

ACPO should develop more extensive national branding, using distinctive logos for initiatives and activities with the objective of enhancing public reassurance.

Using Advertising to Increase the Accessibility of the Police

6.30 The case study at paragraph 6.6 described ways in which the names, profile and contact details of local officers were being publicised through the local newspaper and newsletters. Unfortunately, such details are often thrown away after the paper has been read. In order to overcome this, forces have produced posters and leaflets that can be displayed in local public contact points such as libraries, doctors' surgeries and community halls.

6.31 The channels of communication used by commercial enterprises to increase their visibility and accessibility with their potential customers in the form of advertising are also open to the police service. When the public want to contact the police for a non-emergency matter, they are often confused as to where to go, what number to ring or who to ask for (paragraph 7.14).

Communicating to the Public the Police Services Available

Wiltshire Constabulary has placed the policing information on the first 8 pages of every Thomson Local Directory in the Force area. It was tailored to each local circulation and included appropriate contact information about police stations, email addresses, the criteria for a 999 call, information on the ACPO team and the Wiltshire policing style. The cost included the graphic design and the directory was circulated to 370,000 homes. The nature of the Thomson Directory means that the information is likely to be retained for some time rather than being thrown away.

Internal Marketing

6.32 Much of this section has been devoted to external communication. It has demonstrated that maintaining a dialogue with the media at a local level and adopting a marketing approach to the whole issue of public reassurance are valuable techniques. However, the success of all of the techniques outlined in this section of the report hinge upon the quality and consistency of the message. The principal conveyors of messages about policing style and quality of service are police officers and members of support staff – it is therefore essential that emphasis is given internally, to inform staff and to influence their behaviour. It only takes one negative interaction with a member of the public to undermine good work with regard to public reassurance.

Case Study

Co-ordinated, Internal Communications Strategy

In April 2001, West Yorkshire Police launched its Target initiative, to 'fight crime and fight the fear of crime'. The strategy is based on a series of highly visible, action-based police operations and high profile events. It is co-ordinated by a central team using staff from HQ to support divisions and is branded with a distinctive black and red logo. The external marketing tools and techniques that are being used are very similar to those used by other forces with branded initiatives.

One of the key aims of the communications strategy for Target was to deliver a co-ordinated, internal communications campaign to ensure that all staff were aware of Target prior to seeing references to it in their local media. In order to achieve this West Yorkshire Police undertook a major pre-launch internal communications campaign. This involved:

- A series of presentations to management groups and key operational officers.

- A large feature in the Force newspaper.

- Briefings by the Target co-ordinating team to all divisions and departments.

- Black and red Target posters placed in key points in reception areas and offices.

- A countdown on the Force intranet including a Target home page.

Since the launch, an internal communications programme has been sustained with regular intranet updates.

In order to encourage participation by CDRPs, the Force sought to ensure that personnel in local authorities, probation, health and education were fully informed about Target. This involved placing features in the respective staff newspapers and magazines as well as briefings with key people.

6.33 Staff need to be aware that what they say or the behaviour they exhibit will directly affect the public perception of the police and influence their feelings of reassurance. Over a number of years staff have been fed a menu of negative messages relating to

the misalignment of resources with demand, and too often this is being communicated to the public. Staff need to be 'on message', fully informed about campaigns and communications strategies, and know what their role is in contributing to them. Managers also need to take every opportunity to challenge cynical views that pervade the organisation which, if communicated to the public, can undermine public reassurance (paragraph 4.7).

Tactical Option

Forces should ensure that the marketing messages and activities relating to public reassurance are communicated internally *and* externally.

Summary

6.34 This section has outlined some good media management practice. It has demonstrated that formal channels of communication exist throughout England and Wales through which good practice and lessons learnt can be exchanged in the handling of the media in relation to major crime and significant incidents. It has also highlighted that the greatest opportunities to promote success stories to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the police lie at the local level. To this end, Her Majesty's Inspector considers it to be good practice to appoint a suitably trained person to not only be a contact point for the media but also to take a proactive role in the promotion of stories and the publicity messages and other material that will enhance public reassurance. In certain cases, this may also be linked to a similar role for the work of CDRPs.

6.35 The section has also established that much can be learnt from the marketing strategies employed by organisations in the commercial sector. This includes the quality of the product or service, the protection of any brand, its promotion or advertising and the quality of customer service. A number of forces have started to use marketing principles to establish a brand for a policing style or a long-term initiative tackling specific issues and reassuring the public. Their success depends on good internal communication and a sustained commitment. Consistent and quality branding can be flexible with the same brand name being tailored to meet the needs of differing communities. There is evidence of benefit from a national brand for reassurance work.

6.36 Nevertheless, it is a truism that however good the marketing and communication operations, if an organisation provides a poor service then they will eventually be 'found out'. An area where the inspection team experienced perhaps the greatest disquiet amongst community groups interviewed was in the quality of call handling. The next section will explore the issues that emerged when this activity was inspected.

Call Handling

Vision

"The public will be able to contact police services using a nationally agreed, easily recognisable non-emergency number. Callers will be answered promptly by a trained and knowledgeable operator who, with appropriate IT support, will be able to resolve their call at the first point of contact.

Forces will use standard definitions for incident grading. There will be a consistent framework of qualitative and quantitative standards and measures of performance."

Introduction

7.1   Section V examined the ways in which the public access police services via police stations and other face-to-face contact points. Increasingly, the principal mechanism for police/public contact is the telephone system, and a quality service here demands appropriate technology and well-trained staff. National issues around call handling are outlined below, followed by analysis of the four elements of this process. The problems encountered by forces are identified along with some suggested solutions, drawn from policing and the work of other agencies. Finally, the section highlights some of the existing gaps that hamper benchmarking and improvement.

National Strategy

7.2   In response to issues such as rising demand, the Home Office published the *National Call Handling Strategy for the Police Service* in 1999. This led to the establishment of the tripartite Police Call Handling Strategy Steering Group, with membership from all of the key stakeholders and suppliers, such as ACPO, APA, the Home Office and Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO).

7.3   Publication in 2000 of *Towards a Modern Interface between the Police and the Public*[1] by PITO raised the implications of new facilities such as NSPIS and Airwave and examined ways of exploiting public access to the internet. The Steering Group was consequently asked to widen its remit and develop a broad strategy to improve all communications between police and public. The Group was renamed the E-policing Management Group, tasked with recommending ways by which forces could:

• Improve the 999 service.

• Improve the response to non-emergency enquiries.

• Improve responses to requests for general information.

• Progress the implementation of a strategy for improving the police/public interface.

[1]   *Towards a Modern Interface between Police and Public,* Dr David Laing and Chief Inspector Bob Kennett, PITO, 2000

Strategic Framework

ACPO and APA should develop a national strategy to improve the handling of calls for service, with agreed milestones for implementation and timescales.

7.4 It is disappointing that slow progress has been made on these issues, emphasising the need for a national strategy for better handling of calls for service, with specific milestones for implementation and agreed timescales.

Processes

7.5 The handling of a call for service through the telephone system typically entails four distinct processes (Figure 7.1), all of which require attention if the service is to be improved:

- Initial contact.

- Assessment – ie, is the call urgent or non-urgent and does it require officer attendance?

- Secondary level call handling – resolving the call without officer attendance wherever possible.

- Dispatch of resources where appropriate.

In some cases, secondary call handling is carried out at the same location and by the same person who receives the initial contact.

Figure 7.1 Schematic For Developing Public Interface Point Strategies

INITIAL CONTACT
Eg "Help, I've been…" or "I want to tell you about"

→

ASSESSMENT – graded as
- Urgent
- Non urgent
- Non-attendant

→

SECONDARY LEVEL CALL HANDLING –
- Help/Advice Desk/ One stop shop
- Crime Management Unit
- Response by appointment etc

→

DESPATCH OF RESOURCES
- Immediate response

→

RESULT
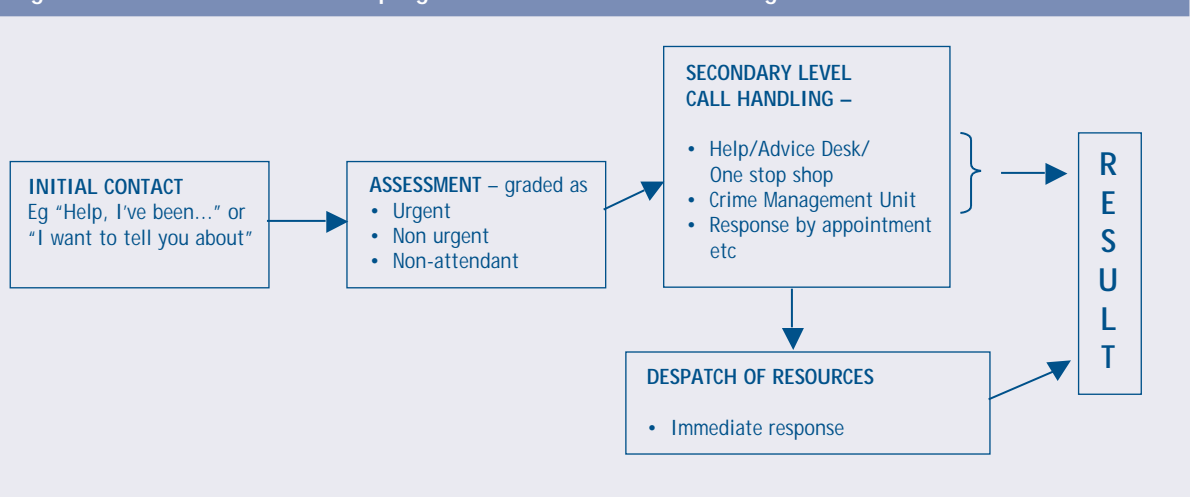
Initial Contact

> **INITIAL CONTACT**
>
> Eg, "Help, I've been…"
> or "I want to tell you about"

7.6   The initial telephone contact with police services occurs in one of three ways:

- Through the emergency 999 system.

- Through force and local switchboards.

- By direct dial to a known extension.

Emergency Number

7.7   Nationally, the 999 service has been in use since 1937. Emergency calls on the 999 system are initially answered by telephone service providers at a number of centres around the country. On receiving the call, the service operator ascertains which emergency service is required and transfers the caller to the appropriate local destination. Where – as is increasingly the case – the 999 call is made from a mobile telephone, it is normally routed to the appropriate force based on the cell site that the caller is using.

7.8   The number of 999 calls made in England and Wales rose by almost 31% between 1996/97 and 2000/01, roughly corresponding to the growth of mobile phone ownership. Despite this increase in calls, the number of incidents attended by police over this period remained relatively stable, suggesting that the increase is accounted for by 'duplicate' calls. An example from the MPS illustrates this point; 91 calls were received when a swan ran loose on the M25, but each call had to be answered and screened to ensure it was indeed a 'duplicate'. Hampshire Police estimates that 20–25% of all 999 calls are those where there is no request for a specific service, otherwise known as 'silent 999 calls' – an analysis supported by estimates from other forces. These calls still have to be answered, putting force systems under further strain.

7.9   A new national system was introduced on 1 October 2001 whereby all silent 999 calls are switched by British Telecom (BT) to a special centre for evaluation before being transferred to the police. If it is apparent that there is no one in need of assistance, the call will be terminated. This system should help to ease the strain in police control rooms, but no formal evaluation had taken place at the time of writing this report.

7.10 As demand has risen, so performance in the percentage of 999 calls answered within force target times has dropped. In 1997/98, 88.7% of calls were answered within target times but in 2000/01 the figure had fallen to 87%, and in some forces the performance was below 80%.

7.11 A further problem is inappropriate use of the system by the public. Only 23.4% of 999 calls received by the MPS during 2000/01 merited an immediate response, despite campaigns similar to those run by other forces to raise awareness about use and abuse of the 999 system.

999 Education Project

The MPS launched its 999 Education Project in September 1999. Through publicity, liaison and partnership, the project helped reduce 999 misuse and abuse. There was no annual increase in 999 calls to the MPS during 2000, and it had a positive impact on the quality of call handling including call-answering times.

The project is ongoing with new and imaginative posters, local radio adverts etc. being promoted periodically. In particular, young people have been targeted with education packs and videos being distributed to schools.

7.12 One contributory factor in the large numbers of 999 calls received is the public lack of knowledge about which number to ring in non-emergency situations. This has led nine forces, who responded to HMIC's questionnaire, to introduce a single, non-emergency number.

7.13 Anecdotal evidence from Sussex suggests that residents appreciate the single non-emergency number system. Careful marketing was undertaken prior to and following the introduction of the system in 1999 to prepare people for the change, and old and new numbers ran in parallel until the old numbers fell into disuse. However, in other force areas, some sections of the public have been more resistant to the introduction of a single number. This is particularly true when the number is not a local one, conveying a mistaken view that their local police have 'moved away', a phenomenon experienced with the introduction of centralised control rooms.

7.14 These problems are not unique to the UK. The Netherlands and the USA face similar difficulties in separately servicing their emergency and non-emergency numbers and educating the public about when it is appropriate to use the emergency number, but some lessons can be gleaned.

Case Study

Use of Single Non-Emergency Number

In the USA, Chicago Police use a city-wide non-emergency number – 311 – which gives access to the entire range of local authority services as well as non-urgent public safety agency calls. It has taken some pressure off the 911 emergency number and the public safety agencies' switchboards, and increased accessibility for citizens.

The Office of Emergency Communications has overall control of the 311 and the 911 centres; the 311 centre also acts as a fallback facility for the emergency number centre. All 311 calls are initially answered by city service agents (support staff operators), previously employed solely to deal with requests for local authority services such as defective street lighting and rubbish clearance. They can now not only take these calls, and arrange service on behalf of the city, but also take details or pass non-urgent calls for the other public safety services. For example, if a caller wishes to report damage to or theft from a motor vehicle, police call takers, who are co-located in the 311 centre, can deal with the call.

Similar procedures exist in the centre for non-urgent calls to fire and ambulance – eg, for advice.

Experience has shown that many calls for service involve more than one department or agency – eg, abandoned vehicles – requiring the police departments to work closely with other city services. The establishment of the joint call handling arrangement, backed by strong support from the Mayor, who has financial and operational responsibility for all public safety and local authority services, has removed many of the blockages that traditionally existed between the separate agencies. Staffing levels are set so that 98% of 911 calls (4 million annually) are answered within two rings, with an abandonment rate of only 1.3%, and 90% of 311 calls (2.75 million) within five rings, with only 4.9% abandonment rate. Such response times reduce caller frustration to a minimum. In addition, 950,000 administrative calls per annum are answered[2], 450,000 police and 500,000 fire/emergency medical service.

7.15. *Streetwise*[3] highlighted that many calls received by police should, in fact, be dealt with by other agencies. A partnership approach to call taking across a number of agencies was suggested, together with an easily recognisable single number such as 333 for all non-emergency calls. Her Majesty's Inspector considers that this recommendation remains valid and urges the Home Office and the Service to pursue it.

Strategic Framework

ACPO and APA should pursue the feasibility of a single recognisable number for all non-emergency calls and the possibility of joint call-handling arrangements between agencies.

2 911 *Statistical Facts 2000*, Office of Emergency Communications, Chicago
3 *Streetwise*, Audit Commission, 1996

Direct Dialling

7.16 The workload on force switchboards can be reduced if callers bypass it using direct dial-in (DDI) numbers for specific departments or individuals. All forces responding to HMIC's questionnaire stated that they were publicising and supplying DDI numbers to the public for a whole range of extensions.

7.17 Some forces have also attempted to grade or 'triage' non-emergency calls, using an auto-attendant facility. Callers are welcomed and invited to key in the extension number they require, if it is known. However, some callers find this impersonal and frustrating, preferring to use a direct dial number. Many commercial companies have systems that inform callers that operators are busy and give the estimated wait time or position in the queue. Although human interaction may be preferable, this system does allow the customer to make an informed choice as to whether they continue with the call or try again later.

7.18 While the introduction of DDI and auto-attendant can reduce callers' waiting time, they do limit the caller to the one extension they have dialled. If that extension is engaged or left unanswered, it may be necessary for the caller to phone again, with no guarantee of an answer on subsequent occasions. Callers can also bypass centralised filters such as call-handling centres, which actually may be more appropriately equipped to resolve their query. Only 45% of forces had a policy either limiting or encouraging disclosure of DDI numbers to members of the public.

Location

7.19 There are moves in most forces to centralise communications facilities, brigading or co-locating call handling, switchboard and dispatching facilities. Some 19 out of 33 forces replying to HMIC's questionnaire had streamlined to one 999 call centre. This does bring distinct advantages in economies of scale, consistency of service delivery and supervision. Conversely, disadvantages include the removal of locally-based services from the community, with a consequent public perception that the police have abandoned them, and in some cases a loss of local knowledge on the part of call-takers. This last drawback can be abated by use of technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), providing call takers with detailed maps of the area and CCTV facilities that allow them to 'see' the scene of the incident; an example of a 'virtual' call centre was seen in Vermont, USA.

Case Study

Virtual Single Call Centre

The state of Vermont is a predominantly mountainous, wooded landmass about the size of England, with a thinly spread population of 500,000. Public safety is carried out by some 300 state troopers, supported by small police departments in larger towns, and a largely volunteer system of fire departments and paid paramedics supported by volunteer first responders.

The Vermont E911 Board is a state body (paid for by a levy on each subscriber's telephone bill) set up to co-ordinate and regulate the provision of the 911 emergency telephone service throughout the state. They have, to a large extent, overcome the problems of remote population and distance by using technology to link their one or two person locally-based Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) multi-agency call-handling/dispatch units into virtual centres. These then mutually support each other, whilst still giving the impression of more local control. For example, many of the 911 calls for the whole state are initially answered at the largest PSAP at Williston and passed in real time to the appropriate local PSAP for recording and dispatch; the initial call handler remains part of the three-way call as long as necessary, in case extra resources are required.

The unique funding arrangement means that PSAPs are equipped with the latest telephone technology including Automatic Call Distribution over remote sites, and staff are trained to a high standard. With local PSAPs, local knowledge is widespread, but GIS is being installed to assist still further. These small departments would not have been able to afford the sophisticated equipment without the state support from the telephone levy. The model has now been taken up and applied to 120 PSAPs in Connecticut.

7.20 A number of police authorities have selected call handling as an area for early review in the Best Value programme. Considerations under the 'compete' heading will almost certainly be to outsource the function or to share joint facilities. At the time of the inspection, no authority had opted to outsource the whole service. Providers such as the Automobile Association are already performing contracted functions for several forces – eg, garage call-outs, emergency boarding up, keyholder call-out etc.

7.21 Three forces – Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Cleveland – have each secured funding from the Invest to Save Budget to work with their local fire and ambulance services on pilot projects to share facilities for call handling and dispatching. None have yet moved as far as joint working or multi-skilling of operators, although this is common in the USA. At present, Cleveland police and ambulance services are sharing accommodation only, although both services use the same command and control system and can exchange information. Neither Wiltshire nor Gloucestershire have reached the stage where they are sharing a building.

7.22 In all three pilots, difficulties have arisen because of variations in pay and conditions for operators in the three services, compounded by different working practices, technology and systems. If these problems can be resolved, the success of similar models internationally points to an immense potential for improvement in the quality and efficiency of call handling across all emergency services. It is important that forces and police authorities share the outcomes and good practice emerging from BVRs of call handling.

Equality of Access

7.23 Almost all forces have call-answering points able to handle effectively 999 and other calls from people with hearing difficulties, typically using Typetalk, where callers and operators converse by means of typing text which appears on the handset screen, or the Minicom system of amplification. The Minicom system predated Typetalk and is now rarely used.

7.24 Many forces also use local interpreters and/or subscribe to Language Line, which allows three-way conversation between the operator, caller and an interpreter. This system is also widely used in the USA, but some common problems exist. First, the operator must know which language is being spoken so that the appropriate interpreter can be selected. Secondly, there can be a substantial delay before a suitable interpreter can be found. (One force reported a prohibitive cost when the interpreter selected by Language Line was in Adelaide, Australia!). Alternatives to such facilities include asking the caller to use a family member or friend to translate into English, using a staff member who can speak the appropriate language, or, in extreme cases, sending an officer to visit the caller and ascertain the problem in whatever way they can.

Initial Contact Performance Measurement

7.25 Current measurement of call handling performance is limited; quantitative BVPIs capture the initial speed of answering calls but they are confined to 999 calls and there are local variations in the target times that forces set, ranging from 10 seconds to 15 seconds. All forces use a type of call logger to collect and monitor this data. The inspection team found that the technological capability of the call logger extended beyond this simple data, and forces are able to collect and monitor many more aspects of handling than just the initial call. Notably, one force found that it had experienced an abandonment rate of 16.5% for 999 calls – ie, almost one in six 999 calls were being abandoned before the police call taker responded. A probable reason for abandonment is that they are not being answered quickly enough.

7.26 It is obviously very frustrating for callers who have used the correct non-emergency number to be left waiting many minutes for an answer. Many commercial companies set strict targets for answering calls, because this is crucial to their business – failure to answer the phone may mean that a customer goes elsewhere. Police service customers are more 'captive' but forces cannot afford complacency; if people are discouraged from calling, valuable intelligence may be lost or their confidence in police availability may fall. The speed of answering a call is thus important, but data is no longer collected centrally in respect of the speed of answering non-emergency calls. Again, call logger technology is available to capture this. While there are no national performance measures, some forces collect and use the full range of call logger data to monitor performance and inform decisions about staffing levels.

7.27 Quantitative aspects of call handling are only part of the picture; it is also essential that the initial contact is a quality one, not only answered promptly but then handled competently and courteously by the operator. There are no national qualitative performance measures for the initial handling of calls. Although data is collected on the levels of satisfaction with police action in response to 999 calls, this focuses on how the incident was handled by the attending officer/s, rather than handling by the call taker.

7.28 Control room supervisors do undertake some quality monitoring, by dip checking tapes or real-time sampling, but there was little documentary evidence seen by the inspection team that this is done routinely. Supervisors state that they are often too busy doing other things to concentrate on the direct supervision of staff other than new or probationary staff members.

Case Study

Monitoring the Quality of Call Handling

Leicestershire Constabulary has developed a competency-based quality proforma that is completed by supervisors when monitoring the quality of the handling of a particular call. A 7-point score is used to grade professional skills such as: decision making, information-gathering and recording, communication, and personal skills such as firmness, patience, sympathy and reassurance. Its usage has largely been restricted to monitoring the operators during their probationary period.

Tactical Option

Forces should capture and monitor the full range of management information obtained from call logger technology and use it to improve their service.

Call Assessment

ASSESSMENT
Eg, graded as • Urgent • Non urgent • Non-attendant

Incident Grading

7.29 In a situation of finite resources, managing demand is essential and all forces have implemented a system of graded response to prioritise the most urgent incidents. A review of the system undertaken in 1995 by the Police Research Group[4] found that:

- There were wide differences between the ways that forces and individuals graded similar calls.

- The definition of the highest priority or 'immediate' calls varied between forces.

7.30 This situation persists today, with numerous definitions and a wide variation in the criteria for the grading of those incidents requiring an immediate response, as the following extracts from forces' policies illustrate:

- *"Any incident where it appears to the operator that there is an immediate threat to life or property."*

- *"Any incident where the operator taking the call, with the information available to them at the time, considers that an emergency response is required."*

- *"Life is at risk: crime is in progress/officers at the scene or nearby: persons injured, police assistance required: securing evidence for a serious crime: local operation of limited duration, approved by Head of Operations, where response within published criteria is crucial to success."*

Figure 7.2 % of Total Incidents Graded Immediate Response

Figure 7.2 % of Total Incidents Graded Immediate Response
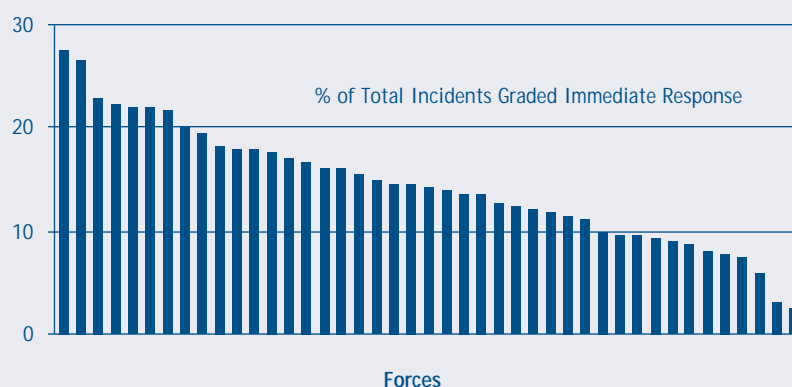
4   *The Use of Call Handling*, Police Research Group, Home Office, 2000

7.31 In England and Wales, the percentage of total incidents that are graded as requiring an immediate response averages 15%. However, the variations in grading definitions and criteria may explain why in one force 28% of all incidents are graded as requiring an immediate response, while in another only 3% are so graded (Figure 7.2).

7.32 Not only are there inconsistencies across forces in defining what constitutes an incident requiring an immediate response, there are also inconsistencies about the grading of other calls. Some forces have only three categories by which to grade an incident: immediate response; incidents where the time of the response can be negotiated with the caller; and those where the call can be resolved without the need to dispatch an officer. Other forces have four or more categories, which may or may not reflect differing local circumstances but almost certainly make grading policies less intelligible to the public.

Strategic Framework

ACPO and APA should agree on a national policy for grading incidents, using common definitions and categories.

Performance Measurement

7.33 The inspection team found little evidence of forces systematically examining past grading decisions and assessing the quality of the decisions taken, as a learning process. Quality control processes tend to be applied by individual supervisors rather than as standard procedure – if the quality of decision-making is to improve, forces need to be more proactive in monitoring grading implementation.

Scripting and Prompting

7.34 Correct incident grading relies on the accuracy of information obtained, which is determined by the caller's ability to convey the correct facts but also by the skill of the operator in asking the right questions and prompts. This latter capability comes in part from training but can be greatly aided by scripting and prompting systems. These can be hard copy flip cards or screen-based configuration – both support case-based reasoning. The operator is prompted to ask callers key questions and, dependent on these answers, to ask further questions in a predetermined order to identify the best course of action. Scripting is used extensively in commercial call centres in the UK and in public service call centres in the USA – in busy cities such as Chicago and Boston, quick decisions can prevent escalation. They are also widely used in more rural areas like Vermont, where call takers and dispatchers often work unsupervised in one or two person units as a 'virtual' call-taking centre, often in a multi-agency environment. To avoid litigation arising from poor decisions and to ensure the provision of a high quality service, call takers have instant access to departmental policy and legislation to guide pre-arrival instructions. Additionally,

extensive training and certification supports their use. These systems encompass rigorous quality checking systems, such as ring backs to callers, especially where the incident was not attended by a police officer.

7.35 The value of these systems, already in extensive use in UK ambulance trusts, is gradually being recognised by UK police forces – Cleveland, Lincolnshire and Dorset are helping to develop UK-specific scripting products. A typical system consists of 36 cards for police-related incidents, 20 for fire, and 32 cards with 7 appendices for medical emergencies.

Tactical Option

Forces should systematically audit the quality and consistency of grading decisions.

Secondary Level Call Handling

SECONDARY LEVEL CALL HANDLING
Eg
• Help/Advice Desk/One stop shop
• Crime Management Unit
• Response by appointment etc

7.36 Having dealt with the initial contact and assessed the call, the main methods of resolution are:

- **Where the incident requires immediate police attendance** – pass to dispatcher for attendance within target time.

- **Requires police attendance, but not immediately** – pass to a help desk/crime management unit/other local unit for allocation, to deal within period agreed with the caller.

- **Record only** – eg, non-injury road accident with no allegations – record and notify caller.

- **Advice only** – eg, cost of new firearms certificate – advise immediately or pass to relevant department to advise.

- **Investigation and reply only** – eg, query about traffic conditions – investigate and reply within a period agreed with caller.

- **Pass to partner, private or public sector** – eg, breakdown recovery, social services required, then pass and record.

- **No action required** – eg, called in error, accidental alarm activation or duplicate information, then all that is needed is to record the contact, and possibly refer for education purposes if this is one of a series of calls.

7.37 Many calls can be successfully resolved without the need to dispatch an officer. However, callers can get frustrated if they are passed from person to person and have to explain the reason for their call a number of times before they eventually reach someone who can help them. None of the forces visited had a policy of limiting the number of times that a caller is transferred.

7.38 It is important that the public can contact particular officers, notably their local beat/community officer. Yet few forces have a reliable method of ensuring that messages are passed to individuals and acted upon promptly, especially operational police officers, although there was evidence of the increasing use of e-mail and voicemail. Airwave, and the increased issue of mobile phones, may have an effect on improving the accessibility of officers by allowing the public to make direct contact more easily.

Help Desks

7.39 Most forces have introduced a crime management unit (or similarly named unit) with a facility for recording, managing and carrying out some investigations of crime reports over the telephone. Some forces have broadened the scope of these units to include a range of other functions dealing with all calls not requiring the immediate dispatch of an officer. These 'help desks' are sited either centrally as part of a call-handling centre or in a number of local stations.

7.40 A critical success factor for help desks is that operators can access quickly the information needed to resolve queries. Options currently in use include a browser-based frequently asked questions (FAQ) database, force intranet, books or other reference material. All of these allow operators to answer the majority of questions without further transfer. Most also have specialist reference points within or outside the force to whom they can refer the small minority of complex queries that are beyond their knowledge.

FAQ Database

A database pioneered by Leicestershire Constabulary and developed further by Avon and Somerset Constabulary has proved very useful. It consists of a bank of answers to FAQs such as the cost of a shotgun certificate, the law relating to wearing of seatbelts by children etc. Operators can quickly and easily log into the database and find the correct answer without having to refer the caller to any other department. As more questions are asked, so the bank of answers accumulates.

7.41 The inspection team found many examples of help desk facilities being used across forces but limited evaluation of their role has been undertaken. Each force, and in some cases each BCU, have differing structures and models for their help desk. No single 'best method' is recommended but forces are encouraged to review help desk operations.

Integrated Contact Centre

7.42 While help desks are very useful, they mean that a caller will have spoken to at least one other person, usually the switchboard, prior to their call being resolved. Consequently, some forces are moving towards an integrated contact centre approach. At present, many help desks are constrained by the lack of integrated technology. They lack the access to a reliable duties system and therefore are unable to answer even the simplest enquiry from a member of the public about when a particular officer will next be on duty. Similarly, most cannot pass on information or messages to individual members of staff, or search records of lost and found property without passing a caller to another department. Derbyshire Constabulary is piloting an integrated contact centre system, supported by appropriate technology.

Derbyshire Call Reception Centre

The Derbyshire Call Reception Centre uses an integrated telephony system, Easyspeak, to allow switchboard operators to undertake traditional switchboard functions in addition to dealing with queries. The operators are trained in customer care and telephone techniques. They have a full range of computer systems available to them, including the Command and Control System, Crime Information System, Police National Computer, Microsoft Outlook, and the Easyspeak bespoke call centre package incorporating DELIA (internal telephone directory and employee location telephone directory) and FRED (Force Rapid Enquiry Database) which is based on the Leicestershire and Avon and Somerset FAQ database.

This pilot system has enabled all calls for HQ and A Division (26%) to be dealt with at the primary answering location without the need for subsequent transfer. A second centre is planned following the success of the pilot.

7.43 It is common practice for many commercial companies to use integrated computer technology as a means of enhancing their ability to meet the needs of the customer. This technology recognises the originating telephone and links it to account history, informing the operator not only who is calling but details of their account and the reasons for previous contacts, together with results of queries etc. These techniques form part of 'customer relationship management'. This technology is expensive, requiring integration of a number of databases, but companies view it as essential in maintaining a competitive advantage. Those customers of commercial companies are drawn from the larger public who benefit from policing services, and are coming to expect a comparable quality of service. Ideally, a caller to the police should have an expectation that the person answering has immediate access to systems that can identify why they have previously contacted the police. The imperative is not a commercial one but could in extreme cases be a matter of life or death – for example, where a woman caller has been the victim of serious domestic violence.

7.44 Nine forces that responded to the inspection questionnaire use EISEC (Enhanced Information System for Emergency Calls). This is a system supplied by BT that can recognise the number and subscriber details from which an emergency call is made, and flashes the details onto a screen. Although there is no contact history to accompany the details, it does provide the call taker with details of the call far more quickly. A similar system is widely used by emergency service operators across the USA.

7.45 The police service lags behind in applying technological advances, usually because the costs are prohibitive. This is not helped by the myriad of different computer systems and databases used by the 43 forces in England and Wales – this patchwork quilt of provision makes it impossible to access all data relating to an individual from one enquiry. Section VIII considers how the concept of data warehousing is being developed to make this possible.

Strategic Framework

ACPO and APA should emulate the commercial sector's customer-focused technology to help make services more relevant and accessible. As an interim measure, help desks and contact centres should be supported by appropriate integrated technology.

Voicemail/e-mail

7.46 A finding of this report is the importance attached to community officers knowing and being familiar to their local community, and being easily accessible. Clearly, officers cannot be available 24 hours a day, but if messages are left for them it is vital that they collect and respond to them promptly. Forces are increasingly making use of voicemail/answering machines but there is much variance in their reliability, especially when officers are on extended absence because of training, annual leave

or sickness. A number of forces which responded to the questionnaire had a policy on the use of voicemail, but only six gave advice on a target time for response to messages left, and only one gave any instruction on what should be done with messages when an officer was on leave. No force had a system in place to monitor compliance with policy.

7.47 Some forces had also introduced external e-mail facilities but similar problems can arise when staff are absent unexpectedly or for long periods. The introduction of such technology can undoubtedly help to make officers more accessible, and boost public reassurance but only if proper safeguards and monitoring are in place. A lack of action or acknowledgement of the receipt of a message can quickly undermine public confidence, and give the impression of an unprofessional and uncaring service.

Tactical Option

Forces should consider how the use of voicemail and e-mail technology can enhance accessibility, but must ensure that effective monitoring and supervision processes are in place.

Performance Management

7.48 Although most forces have call-logging equipment to measure the abandonment rate of calls, there was little evidence that they measure or take action about the percentage of calls which re-present at the switchboard after unsuccessful transfer attempts, or which are abandoned at this stage. Meeting the speed target for handling the initial call is of little use to a caller if performance at the secondary level of call handling is poor – ie, their query cannot be dealt with because the extension they need is either not answered or constantly engaged. Few forces have tackled these problems effectively. Avon and Somerset has management information about which extensions are the busiest and which are rarely answered. It has used this data to ensure that busy extensions are adequately staffed, with BCUs and departments recognising their responsibility to provide staff to deal with the queries. It is also important not to route incoming calls to station offices where they will compete for attention with personal callers.

Tactical Option

Forces should measure and monitor secondary level call handling processes.

Dispatch

DISPATCH OF RESOURCES

- **Immediate response**

7.49 Research for this inspection found a roughly equal split between those response and
community officers who were satisfied with the quality of control room decisions,
and those who were not (Questionnaire base = 1,065 respondents from 8 forces).
Some 47% of response officers were satisfied with decisions compared with 56% of
community officers. Reasons for dissatisfaction (respondents could choose more than
one option) were lack of advice (62%); poor knowledge of the area (61%); wrong
grading and call handling delay (56%).

Attendance by Appointment

7.50 The majority of incidents that require an officer to be deployed do not merit an
'immediate response' grading. In these cases, an acceptable response time can be
agreed with the caller. However, many forces find great difficulty in making a
guaranteed appointment; often, officers get diverted to more urgent calls. Callers are
then informed that an officer will attend later that day, or the next day, resulting in
long waits and inconvenience. While people may understand and accept that their
call does not merit being given the highest police priority, they are likely to become
angry and frustrated if there is no response at all – this is not a quality service.

Case Study

Appointments Car – Humberside Police

Humberside uses an appointments system for
those calls graded other than 'immediate' to
smooth out peaks in demand and break the
culture of immediate reaction. An appointments
car is detailed each day with a list of pre-
arranged appointments. The system can work
well if sufficient resources are allocated to the
task to explain the process and ensure that
appointments are kept, and if the process is
properly supervised. If these conditions are
not met, however, a system of promising
appointments that are not met will raise both
expectations and dissatisfaction.

Performance Management

7.51 Current performance indicators for dispatch focus on those calls requiring an
immediate response, measuring the total time taken from the receipt of the call to the
arrival of the first resource at the scene of an incident. This combines two separate
but linked stages – call taking/dispatch and operational response. These indicators
are set locally and targets vary, although a common approach is to require 85% to
100% of 'immediate response' incidents to be attended within 5 to 20 minutes,

according to urban or rural location. Manchester Business School[5] found that wide variations prevent meaningful comparison between forces. A lack of rigour in the reporting or recording of arrival times, and subsequent estimation or exclusion of such incident logs when compiling statistical returns, introduces further erroneous or skewed data. Several forces highlight a lack of consensus about when the clock should start running – ie, should be from the instant that the 999 call is picked up or only when sufficient information has been obtained to activate a response.

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should re-examine the data collection criteria and standardise performance indicators on the speed of response to incidents.

Human Resources

7.52   Inspection fieldwork included focus groups with staff involved in call handling and managers with responsibility for the call-handling function. The former group raised concerns about:

- Workload and staffing.

- Career structure.

- Training.

- Leadership.

Workload/Staffing

7.53   Without exception, the inspection team was impressed with the commitment of the call-handling staff interviewed in focus groups. However, these staff were frustrated about what they see as insufficient resources, both within the call-handling function itself and the number of officers for operators to deploy. Compounding this were 'inappropriate' performance indicators that valued the volume of calls handled rather than the quality of the interaction. The question of resourcing could not be addressed but Her Majesty's Inspector agrees that a balance between quantitative and qualitative indicators is important.

7.54   Call handlers are a ready source of ideas for improving processes and systems, but there is little evidence that their potential is being exploited by management. The Manchester Business School research found that *"compared to private sector practice, the involvement of call-handling staff in continuous improvement and other process improving programmes appeared negligible"*. Hopefully, BVRs, with their requirement for user consultation, will prompt more forces to use this relatively untapped source but there should already be a regular process of staff involvement.

[5]   *Police Call Handling: A Pilot Project to Benchmark Call Centre Performance within the Police Service in England and Wales, Prof. P Barrar, Manchester Business School, December 2000*

Tactical Option

Forces should ensure that their staff and relevant representative bodies are routinely involved in work on continuous improvement of call-handling systems.

Career Structure

7.55 Another glaring issue is the lack of a career structure for call handlers. As forces move towards centralised call centres, a critical mass is reached which necessitates the introduction of managerial grades. Kent is looking to take this one stage further and grade staff according to skills.

Case Study

Competency-based Pay Structure

Kent is restructuring the control room set-up by moving to one call centre and dispatch centre at HQ. It has introduced a competency-based pay structure for call handlers/operators.

Level 1 is the initial entry stage.
Level 2 is when initial training and performance assessment is complete.

Level 3 indicates competence in public and emergency call handling.
Level 4 is when the staff member has become advanced in the above competencies.
Level 5 is competence in either resourcing/ crime recording and investigation/ research.

The levels then go up including team leader and shift manager etc.

Tactical Option

Forces, in consultation with relevant representative bodies, should consider developing career structures for call-handling staff.

Training

7.56 High levels of dissatisfaction among patrol officers with the standard of call handling (paragraph 7.48) suggest a need for training. Leicestershire Constabulary has introduced a modular training approach to new call handlers and recognised the need for continuation training.

Modular Training for Call Handlers

Currently, all new call handlers in Leicestershire receive an initial five-week course (two weeks for police officers) that is classroom-based. There follows a six-week module where the new staff member is attached to a tutor. Module 3 sees the new operator spending a week in a local policing unit, watching the work of the police including going out on patrol. Module 4 is an attachment to the dispatch desk.

Existing operators receive 3 hours training every 6 weeks.

A three-day communications package has recently been developed to address attitudes towards callers and behaviour. This has only been run twice and objective evaluation has not been undertaken.

7.57 The growth in the number of commercial call centres has led to a great demand for staff with transferable skills. Police call takers and dispatchers need to be proficient in a number of areas, and if high calibre staff are to be retained it is essential that those skills are recognised and rewarded. A number of forces such as Gloucestershire are encouraging their staff by providing opportunities in gaining call-handling qualifications with national accreditation.

National Accreditation of Call-handling Qualification

Gloucestershire Police, in conjunction with Thames Valley, developed both a NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 course in customer care for call handlers. The Force has three assessors and at the time of the inspection 10 members of staff who had qualified to Level 3. A further 21 candidates were about to embark on the Level 2 course. Staff who successfully complete the course receive a salary increment. The NVQ is accredited by the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) accreditation body.

Tactical Option

NPT and the PSSO should establish a recognised national accreditation for call-handler training.

Leadership

7.58 Generally, the Service does not take a holistic view of call handling. While all forces that were visited had appointed a head of (initial) call handling, few forces had done any work on ensuring that secondary call handling was adequately resourced. At the

time of writing, Merseyside Police was appointing a superintendent as head of calls
and response and bringing aspects of secondary call handling, such as incident
management units, into the role. The purpose is to introduce greater levels of
corporacy and leadership into the function. Combining responsibility for the call
handling function under one manager promotes a consistency of approach across all
sites and gives call handling a voice within the organisation. Devolved control room
management runs the risk of being subsumed by other operational issues.

7.59 The Merseyside approach could also address another issue identified during the
inspection, namely a failure to quality control at this level. Forces need to get a grip
on overall quality management of call handling. Although responsibility for
introducing systems for answering calls at remote sites must rest with the BCU
commander, there is a role for the head of call handling to act as quality controller
on behalf of the force.

Tactical Option

Forces should recognise the importance of managing the whole process of call-
handling and introduce a regime to measure and improve its quality.

7.60 A common theme of this section is the need for consistent standards across the range
of call-handling performance indicators. It makes little sense for there to be variations
in service levels across forces, both from the customers and individual force
perspectives, where there is a pressing need to benchmark performance. Areas where
national standards are relevant include:

- Definition of an immediate response incident.

- Percentage of calls made by the public that fail to get through to primary
handling.

- Percentage of 999 calls answered within a specified time.

- Percentage of non-emergency calls answered within a specified time.

- No more than a specified percentage of calls to be re-presented to the
switchboard/primary call handling facility.

- Levels of satisfaction with service, using a national standard methodology and
sample size.

Strategic Framework

ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should set national call-handling
standards for service.

Summary

7.61 Call handling was the subject of considerable comment by community focus groups convened during the inspection, with telling anecdotes of callers left hanging on extensions that were never answered, or messages being left which never reached the intended recipient. The majority of the public make their initial contact with the police through the telephony system, and first impressions count. It is vital that 21st century technology is employed to provide the public with swift and easy access to police services. A sharper focus on public needs and expectations is required if the service is to keep up with commercial sector practice. The use of auto-attendant, DDI, voicemail and other technology does enhance the accessibility of the service. However, there is a great danger that unless it is monitored and managed its misuse could erode public confidence.

7.62 The lack of consistency in standards, training and performance measures across the whole range of call-handling processes and procedures impedes continuous improvement. A strong case exists for the introduction of national standards for call-handling performance to facilitate benchmarking (internal and external) and to provide consistent service. Beyond the national standards, good management practice suggests that forces should introduce local qualitative measures at each stage of the process with appropriate monitoring mechanisms and accountability.

7.63 For some forces, a significant improvement in the quality of call-handling service may require an equally significant level of financial investment. However, telephone call handling is only one of a number of electronic media that can be used to access police services. The use of others, including e-mail and the internet, is increasing daily and could reduce demand on telephone call-handling systems. Although telephone calls and those received through other electronic media are examined discretely within this report, they are in fact component parts of an overall electronic contact strategy. The next section considers electronic media and developments in other areas of e-policing.

E-Policing

Vision:

"A long-term e-policing vision and strategy will be in place which moves police forces towards achievement of the Government's target that all services are electronically available by 2005.

Processes and systems will be harmonised across forces such that maximum benefits can be achieved through national e-policing services and legal, security and organisational blockages will have been overcome.

E-technology will be delivering real business benefits and Best Value in terms of enhanced accessibility to police services and reduced time spent by officers away from patrol."

Introduction

8.1 The Prime Minister announced in March 2000 that all public services (with exclusions for policy or operational reasons) should be available electronically by 2005. The document, *E-Government a Strategic Framework*[1] requires public sector organisations to:

- Establish new ways of doing business.

- Implement common standards and framework policies.

- Develop 'e-business' strategies.

- Provide services which are accessible via the Government and other portals.

Core processes such as financial transactions, sending and receiving information, regulation and procurement, will be delivered through the internet, mobile phones, digital TV and call centres. Although there is some uncertainty about the extent to which aspects of policing will be exempted from this Government target, there are clear implications for the way that forces interact with the public.

8.2 The shorthand term 'e-policing' is used to describe the programme of work designed to increase the accessibility of police services and improve communication with the public. Another dimension is the potential to use technology to increase the officer time available for front-line patrol and other operational duties – for example, mobile data terminals in cars will obviate the need to return to the police station to complete paperwork. E-policing will extend customer choice rather than replace current service delivery mechanisms. The need for e-policing is obvious – authoritative figures (UK-online[2]) suggest that in autumn 2000, one-third of the UK population had internet access, and this figure will continue growing. Work by Thames Valley Police[3] identifies three new communication channels which could change police/public contact:

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[1] *E-Government – A Strategic Framework for Public Services in the Information Age:* Cabinet Office, 2000
[2] *UK-online Annual Report,* Sept 2000
[3] *Thames Valley Police Integrated E-services Strategy Vision,* February 2001

- Use of the internet to gather/convey information through electronic forms.

- E-mail – to send and receive messages, documents and images.

- Text messaging on current mobile telephones.

8.3 The Thames Valley study anticipates telephone use approaching saturation, letters dwindling to near zero, e-mail replacing letter and some telephone interaction, and a gradual increase in face-to-face contact (Figure 8.1). Web access increases as more e-services become available.

Figure 8.1

	150 years	100 years	50 years	Today	+5 years	
Web/SMS/Other				▯	▮	Web access increases as more e-services become available
E-mail				▯	▮	E-mail replaces letter and some telephone interaction
Telephone		▯	▮	▮	▮	Telephone at saturation point
Letter	▮	▮	▮	▯	▯	Letters dwindle to near zero
Face to Face	▮	▮	▮	▯	▯	Gradual increase in face-to-face contact
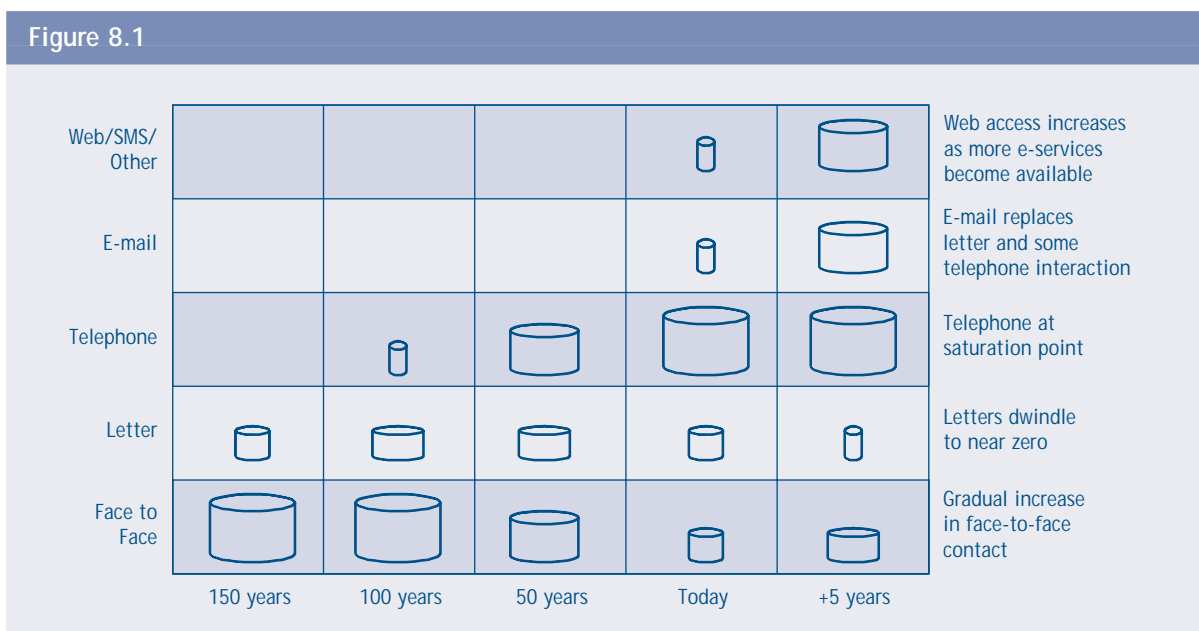
National Strategy

8.4 It is important that e-policing strategies are developed not in isolation but fully integrated with wider Information Management (IM), Information Technology (IT) and Business Strategies. Police business should drive technological solutions, not vice-versa. An ACPO Futures Group paper[4] illustrates this concept (Figure 8.2).

[4] *Future of Police Information Management and Technology* – ACPO Futures Group (2000)

Figure 8.2

8.5 The National Call Handling Strategy Steering Group has been renamed the E-Policing Management Group, to provide a more holistic approach to the management of the police/public electronic interface. It is co-ordinating a number of force projects to progress the e-policing agenda. One example is Thames Valley's integrated E-Services Strategy, which documents the Force's vision of dealing with the public by electronic means and could provide a model for the police service. The aim is to provide self-service facilities to the public that would otherwise require an office-based member of staff. For security and other reasons, it predicts much greater use by the public of form-based contact through websites, rather than e-mail. Each force will require a centralised website content management system with a network of content providers. Presentation capabilities will be required for interactive digital TV and other emerging technologies.

8.6 As well as conventional services offered by face-to-face and telephone contact, the potential exists for new services such as:

- Electronic searches for information.

- Rapid publication of information such as traffic reports.

- Electronic discussion groups.

- Electronic information submission – eg, online crime reporting.

- Multi-lingual information.

- Integrated access to other public service and local government organisations.

8.7 Although work on e-policing is under way at a national level, with great potential for enhancing the accessibility of policing services, work in many forces is still at an embryonic stage. The service needs to define the boundaries of e-policing and assess what more remains to be done in order to meet the Government's 2005 target, exploiting economies of scale wherever appropriate.

Strategic Framework

ACPO should produce a national e-policing vision and strategy, that has milestones for implementation and been agreed with partners, which will help guide the Service towards the achievement of the Government's 2005 target.

Force Strategies

8.8 As part of the study described above, Thames Valley Police and PITO identified that websites generally fit into three generational categories:

- First generation – information or 'brochure' sites, with no or limited interaction with visitors.

- Second generation – transactional sites allowing e-commerce, with product catalogue, payment processing and tracking.

- Third generation – personalised sites adding customer analytical ability and which adjust dynamically to individual customer requirements.

Force websites are currently almost exclusively first generation, and there is limited evidence that the potential for second and third generation development is recognised.

8.9 In terms of strategies, 39% of forces advised HMIC that they have developed an e-policing strategy, although these vary considerably in depth and content. Most others stated that such strategies were being prepared. One of the more developed approaches is that of the MPS. This identifies a number of barriers to e-policing:

- *Corporate issues* – may affect organisational structure and unsettle staff; e-policing needs to be integrated with wider information systems plans.

- *Culture* – some members of the public do not trust technology solutions, and therefore e-policing must be run in parallel with other service delivery mechanisms.

- *Organisational issues* – forces may experience difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff with the skills needed for e-policing.

• *Legal and Data Protection issues* – may inhibit some aspects of e-policing.

• *Security and integrity* – forces need to authenticate transactions, guarantee the confidentiality of some data and ensure integrity (for example, so that an individual transaction can be verified).

8.10 The MPS strategy acknowledges that implementation should be comprehensive, flexible and progressive and fully integrated into the wider IT strategic framework. There is a need for robust governance of e-policing and corporacy – maintaining a common image of service delivery.

Strategic Framework

Forces should make e-policing an integral part of their IT and police/public contact strategies.

E-Policing Initiatives

8.11 A major step to e-policing has been the introduction of online reporting of minor crime through the police portal. Where an individual has website access, he or she can use the 'life events' section of the citizens' portal – www.ukonline.gov.uk – to link to the national police website – www.online.police.uk. This allows notification, rather than full reporting, of minor crime; the facility is now active in all forces but highlights some of the problems entailed in introducing national systems.

8.12 Other innovative approaches include:

• Online lost property reporting in Surrey and Sussex, with a searchable database in Surrey.

• Leicestershire makes press briefings and releases available.

• Bedfordshire and Essex offer electronic access to applications for Data Protection Act disclosure.

Money from the Treasury's Invest to Save Budget has been awarded to Avon and Somerset and Northumbria to develop their web presence; they hope to predict the likely national take-up of electronic services in order to establish the priorities for development.

National Online Reporting

The national online crime reporting project was undertaken by PITO, using a BT application to link the report to the appropriate force via entry of information on UK-online. The application could initially only be online notification of crime, rather than a full report, for a number of reasons.

- The variation in force crime reporting systems meant that the information supplied had to be at the level of lowest common denominator. Following notification of a crime, forces have to contact informants for fuller details, and to supply the crime reference numbers required for insurance purposes.

- Short timescale prevented development of interfaces to different crime systems in use.

- Absence of secure networks prevented forces from electronically transmitting information onward within their force or to another force.

- As the project had not arisen from strategic development, forces were in different stages of readiness to adopt the process and integrate it with their systems.

- The complexity of the front-end application, even for simple notification, was considerable.

An apparently simple idea of allowing the public an additional access point to report crime to any force resulted in a system which added layers of complexity to the process. Instead of a full crime report, forces were faced with a notification that they had to print off, send to the appropriate district or division by fax, and then manually re-input, after contacting the informant for further information.

Development of future national e-services will be severely hampered unless a suitable migration strategy for all forces is considered at an early enough stage.

Case Study

Development of Web Presence

1. Services being developed by Avon and Somerset Constabulary include:

- Information centre with a database of FAQs.

- Local information including crime figures down to beat level.

- Details of the local beat manager and the ability to contact them.

- Real-time traffic information.

- E-commerce for the sale of security products.

- Firearm and shotgun licensing and payment.

- Online recruitment.

- Lost and found property.

- Full online crime reporting.

- Fine payments.

2. Northumbria Police is exploring the potential of new technologies such as:

- Bluetooth – wireless connection of devices – eg, headset or control panel and radio body, household devices and appliances.

- Mobile phones with GPS (Global Positioning Systems).

- B2B (Business-to-Business linkages for electronic commerce).

- Online retailing.

More importantly, the Force is reviewing how technological developments will affect policing processes, and what adjustments will be necessary. For example, how services can be more accessible to hard to reach groups such as the rural community, the deaf, the physically disabled, and students, who may be unable or reluctant to attend a police station or navigate a telephone system, but be active internet users.

Northumbria has partnered with organisations such as BBC Online, NHS Direct Online, and local authorities to keep abreast of developments and maximise the content value of the channel.

3. The American city of Chicago has a population of 3 million. The police and city council website provides basic request forms for policing and city services. One facility, Citizen ICAM, allows both citizens and non-residents to access crime information down to block level. The information is derived from the extensive data warehouse maintained by the police department, using information collected at least daily from all of its systems. Residents and local beat officers benefit from up-to-date information to inform discussion at their joint beat meetings. This section of the website has had hundreds of thousands of hits and is widely used and popular with residents.

(Web address www.ci.chi.il.us and select Citizen ICAM).

8.13 For several years, forces such as Cleveland and Lothian and Borders have been experimenting with interactive touch screen kiosks in police station waiting areas and other public places, as a means of providing information to the public. These systems, together with local authority initiatives to provide free internet access in schools and libraries, help those who do not have access to computers at home or work to benefit from web-based services.

Case Study

Kiosk Developments

1. Consignia (formerly Post Office Counters) has installed kiosks in 200 post offices in Leicestershire, offering information, services and short-dial telephone contact to providers such as the police, social services departments, the employment service and local authorities. The Force has collaborated to ensure that relevant policing information can be accessed. The target audiences are the elderly, jobseekers and mothers with children. Currently, only downloaded information is available but future development may allow real-time access to each of the organisations.

2. Humberside Police is working with East Riding County Council to provide kiosks with video conferencing facilities at 150 public sites, such as supermarkets, to give access to services even when police and local authority offices are closed. Callers to this service will eventually be identified by means of a personal 'smart' card. The video caller is answered by an operator in a call centre, then routed to the relevant council departments, police station, Citizens Advice Bureau or other agencies as appropriate. A scanner will be provided in the kiosk to aid document flow.

3. Lothian and Borders Police reintroduced police boxes to the streets of Edinburgh in November 1998. Three police boxes were renovated and upgraded with touch screen interactive technology. Features include a video link to the Force control room, one-to-one telephone access to police officers and a database of information concerning the Force and the locality. An interesting feature is the ability to display urgent notices on the screen, asking for public assistance or providing information, eg, reports of missing children, road closures and crime appeals.

8.14 Another force is making use of technology to impart information to 'captive audiences' – in this case, customers queuing to purchase food.

Learning from the Private Sector

8.15 Developments in the private sector such as internet banking offer some clues as to
how policing services could be delivered in the near future.

Case Study

Public Display Screens

Norfolk Constabulary is collaborating with the local franchisee of a fast-food chain to provide 'Force Link', broadcasting crime information, press releases, Homewatch notices, crime prevention advice and requests for assistance. Large TV screens have been placed in restaurants and police station waiting areas.

The system is remotely updated using a telephone line from the local intelligence office and has the facility for real-time information. The Force Link system is also used by British Transport Police and the MPS.

8.16 Many services currently offered by the police could be delivered along the same
principles as online banking. It would, for example, improve call handling
significantly if operators have sight of the previous history of contacts with that caller
or their address. Persons reporting crimes could be given a unique access code to
track the progress of their report through investigation to conclusion, including
arrests, property recovery, witness notification, court appearance and results. Officers
arriving at incidents could be better informed of the circumstances of current and
previous contacts, enabling them to handle the incident more competently.

8.17 Further enhancement of everyday processes could include automatic notification of
partners or other agencies. For example, a report of a break-in to a car might trigger
notification of an insurance claim to the company concerned and the garage that will
repair the damage, as well as generating prevention information to the victim to stop
a repetition. A theft of a shotgun might trigger an automatic e-mail circulation to
firearms dealers who may be offered the stolen item. A report of crime made by
an elderly or other vulnerable person might trigger notification to social services,
Victim Support or other agencies who could offer assistance, as well as alerting local
patrol officers.

Programme Valiant

8.18 The incompatibility of systems within and across forces and other agencies is a
significant obstacle preventing 'joined up' service provision. The hoped-for solution-
NSPIS – is still some way from delivering consistent IT systems across all forces and

business areas. Programme Valiant, due to report towards the end of 2001, aims to define a programme of work that will enable forces to share information. Among its strands are an audit of existing systems and an assessment of how to migrate to a common standard of development, maximising the opportunities for interoperability. One proposed approach is for existing systems to feed information into a data warehouse which, with certain safeguards, can be accessed internally or externally. The following case study provides an example of a force that has adopted the data warehouse concept locally.

Use of the 'Data Warehouse' Concept

Wiltshire Constabulary has adopted an interesting approach, independently of Programme Valiant but compatible with it. The disconnection of systems within the Force meant that even the simplest transaction or enquiry involved multiple systems – eg, a stop check of a driver could need a PNC name and vehicle check, a property check, local intelligence, command and control, warrants etc. The Force wanted to move towards information access via a 'digital desktop'.

The first step was to build simple interfaces and query tools for all Force systems holding useful information, no matter what their age or anticipated lifespan. These included crime recording, intelligence, custody, firearms and shotguns, fixed penalty offences, scenes of crime, warrants, file movement, command and control, prisoner images and duties management. These were connected to a data warehouse holding some of the information itself, and acting as a conduit to older legacy systems to allow real-time searching of their information. A search on a name – typed once on the desktop – automatically accesses information from all or selected systems and presents it on the screen within seconds. Even archived data from systems that are no longer in use is accessible. Information is automatically hyperlinked, leading enquirers to other information and allowing single word searches if necessary, on all systems including Force policy.

The same access is available in the call centres, public service desks and enquiry offices, allowing operators to give a consistent level of service to both internal and external customers. Basing their systems on browser technology and the corporate data warehouse has meant that Wiltshire is already developing along the lines proposed in Programme Valiant and can integrate NSPIS developments without fundamental redesign.

Mobile Data Terminals and Airwave

8.19 The outward-facing services delivered through the internet will undoubtedly enhance the accessibility of police, and thus contribute to public reassurance. E-policing also offers opportunities to obviate the need to return to police stations in order to conduct enquiries and obtain further information.

Mobile Data Terminals

Some forces such as Sussex, Cleveland, the MPS and Derbyshire have piloted mobile data terminals. These are hand held or vehicle mounted, providing operational officers on the street with direct access to information previously obtainable only via voice radio through an operator, or by returning to a police station to use a desktop computer. Officers can access PNC for vehicle and name checks, command and control for incident despatch and resulting, and GIS for mapping and directions. There is also a facility for sending and receiving messages to and from other officers.

8.20 One of the blockages to the further development of mobile data availability has been the absence of an affordable carrier for the data. Hopefully, Airwave will provide a cost-effective answer to this problem, although no force is yet using the mobile data capability of the system. Airwave will provide vastly improved coverage and voice quality, in addition to the facility for mobile telephone calls, notification of duty state, availability for despatch, arrival at incidents etc. It will reduce voice radio traffic to a minimum, as mobile data terminals become the preferred method of conveying information. The system is due for full national implementation by 2005.

8.21 Currently, the Service's voice on e-policing development needs is the ACPO E-Policing Management Group. The history of computer-based technology for policing purposes illustrates the importance of, but difficulty in, securing nationally compatible systems and packages. It may be worth considering an outsourcing route to develop e-policing further. PITO argues that the Service must retain the intellectual property rights in any systems produced and have the relevant expertise to deliver. Its preferred option is a partnership approach with suppliers and other public sector organisations. Whichever route is pursued, it is vital that the police service articulates its needs as an 'intelligent customer' to avoid 43 variations of the same product.

Summary

8.22 Forces are currently at different levels of e-policing development. With only four years to go before the target date for e-services, it is worrying that the implications of this objective have not been properly scoped and there is no common understanding of the boundaries of e-policing. Work is under way to develop a national strategic framework but a greater sense of urgency is needed.

8.23 E-policing presents a number of challenges beyond the purely technical. It makes sense for many web-based services, such as online crime reporting, to be provided through a national portal but the full benefits will not be realised while there is such variation in core processes. A number of forces are piloting e-policing initiatives on behalf of the Service but transferability requires common systems and processes. The process of harmonisation, together with resolution of the security, legal and personnel issues, are pre-requisites for the Service's e-agenda.

The Way Forward

Conclusion

9.1   Public reassurance is the 'feel-good' factor that many people thought would accompany the successes of recent years in reducing crime levels. This report sends a clear signal to the police service and its partners that crime reduction – though a vital element of reassurance – is insufficient on its own. Although much attention has been paid to the 'fear of crime' and the debilitating effect this has on people's lives, the solution to the reassurance problem goes beyond conventional approaches to preventing crime and catching criminals. Disorder and anti-social behaviour are more pervasive and can generate as much anxiety as burglary and car theft, which claim fewer direct victims. Policing style matters, not just the number of officers visible on the streets. A perception that the police have withdrawn from communities and resorted to 'drive-by' policing leads to alienation, and forces are working hard to re-establish the missing links with neighbourhoods. Along with these strands of visibility and familiarity, *Open All Hours* identifies a need to make policing more accessible – improving the service at front counters, ensuring that telephone interactions match the quality and consistency of the private sector and exploiting web-based technology to deliver e-policing.

9.2   The recently published White Paper on Police Reform outlines a course of action designed to lead to a police service of the future that is more clearly focused on delivering the key outcomes of crime reduction and increased public confidence. The two are interdependent. This inspection mainly concentrates on the contribution the Service can make to public reassurance, but also recognises the substantial role other partner agencies have to play.

9.3   The change needs to begin at the top, with a refocusing of the strategic framework governing policing. The priority given in the last decade to crime reduction has been reflected in streams of funding and a performance culture that counts crimes and detections, which in turn skewed police activity heavily towards these areas. The other components of reassurance have been largely ignored and there is a need to redress the balance. In total, 27 issues are put forward for consideration at the national level by the Home Office, ACPO, APA and others.

9.4   Policing is essentially a locally-delivered service – indeed, this report highlights the vital importance of getting to know particular communities and tailoring police responses accordingly. Clearly, then, a single blueprint for enhancing visibility, accessibility and familiarity would work well in only a few places. Instead, this report offers a menu of tactical options that are based largely on evidence of successful practice both in the UK and internationally. Both the proposed strategic framework and tactical options are summarised in the following pages.

9.5 The public tend to express their needs simply – a visible presence, a familiar face, a prompt response. By contrast, policing is becoming increasingly complex and requires a constant juggling of priorities and techniques – covert investigation alongside reassurance patrol, bearing down hard on organised, armed criminality while responding humanely to vulnerable groups and individuals. *Open All Hours* offers help in managing this complexity and setting a more positive course for public reassurance.

Strategic Framework

		HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
1	The Home Office should align challenge funding to the complementary goals of tackling criminality and enhancing public reassurance.	✔										2.7
2	The Home Office should work with APA, ACPO and other interested parties to ensure that the Overarching Aims and Objectives, together with Ministerial Priorities, give appropriate emphasis to public reassurance and police visibility.	✔	✔	✔								2.11
3	The Home Office Standards Unit should work with APA and ACPO to introduce standardised recording practices across the range of BVPIs and develop systems for quality control.		✔	✔							✔	2.13
4	ACPO, APA, the Audit Commission and the Home Office Standards Unit should: • Develop a BVPI that is a proxy measure for levels of police visibility. • Include within the BVPI suite a cross-cutting indicator based on the ACPO visual audit proposals. • Make BVPIs 121 and 122 applicable to all statutory partners.		✔	✔						✔	✔	2.18
5	ACPO should enhance the status of patrol by affording it a higher status than that currently experienced within its business area model.		✔									2.23
6	ACPO, APA and NPT should work with interested parties to ensure the concept of a 'centre of patrol excellence' is included within the proposal to merge the national crime and operations faculties of NPT, and also ensure that the work of the merged centre has an explicit reassurance dimension.		✔	✔					✔			2.24

		HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
7	Police authorities, forces and partners should develop systems for gathering data at BCU and/or CDRP level, which is comparable with force-wide data, gathered by the BCS for BVPIs 121 (Fear of Crime) and 122 (Feelings of Public Safety).				✔	✔	✔					2.26
8	Forces should encourage CDRPs to set objectives related to public reassurance within crime and disorder strategies.					✔	✔					2.33
9	ACPO, APA and the Home Office, in consultation with relevant representative bodies, should develop strategic guidance on the process of civilianisation and avoid a simplistic focus on overall police numbers.	✔	✔	✔								3.26
10	The Home Office should work together with ACPO, APA and staff associations to amend national regulations to permit more local flexibility in shift systems.	✔	✔	✔								3.48
11	Forces should seek to influence the development and deployment of neighbourhood warden schemes through: • The introduction of an accreditation process to ensure there is consistency in the standards of recruitment, training and staff monitoring. • The use of intelligence to co-ordinate wardens and police activity.						✔					3.67
12	ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should agree national standards for community policing and decide how performance in each area should be monitored and managers held accountable.		✔	✔							✔	4.32
13	The Home Office, ACPO and APA should consider enhanced payments for patrol officers as part of a wider review of the reward system.	✔	✔	✔								4.50
14	NPT should develop a nationally recognised training course for community officers linked to the national competency framework and the training needs identified during the inspection.								✔			4.68
15	PSSO, in consultation with ACPO, should set national standards for customer care and, on the basis of a training needs analysis, should ensure that probationer training and continuous professional development equip staff with the relevant skills.		✔									4.69
16	ACPO should adopt a nationally recognised brand or logo which can be prominently displayed to direct members of the public to public interface points or other forms of contact with the Service.		✔									5.23

		HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
17	ACPO, APA, and the Home Office Standards Unit should agree national standards of service delivery for police/public interface points.		✔	✔							✔	5.36
18	ACPO Media Advisory Group should commission further research in developing measures to evaluate the impact on the public of force media and public relations activity.		✔									6.17
19	ACPO should develop more extensive national branding, using distinctive logos for initiatives and activities with the objective of enhancing public reassurance.		✔									6.29
20	ACPO and APA should develop a national strategy to improve the handling of calls for service, with agreed milestones for implementation and timescales.		✔	✔								7.4
21	ACPO and APA should pursue the feasibility of a single recognisable number for all non-emergency calls and the possibility of joint call-handling arrangements between agencies.		✔	✔								7.15
22	ACPO and APA should agree on a national policy for grading incidents, using common definitions and categories.		✔	✔								7.32
23	ACPO and APA should emulate the commercial sector's customer-focused technology to help make services more relevant and accessible. As an interim measure, help desks and contact centres should be supported by appropriate integrated technology.		✔	✔								7.45
24	ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should re-examine the data collection criteria and standardise performance indicators on the speed of response to incidents.		✔	✔							✔	7.51
25	ACPO, APA and the Home Office Standards Unit should set national call-handling standards for service.		✔	✔							✔	7.60
26	ACPO should produce a national e-policing vision and strategy, that has milestones for implementation and been agreed with partners, which will help guide the Service towards the achievement of the Government's 2005 target.		✔									8.7
27	Forces should make e-policing an integral part of their IT and police/public contact strategies.						✔					8.10

Tactical Options

		HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
1	Forces should review the resources allocated to patrol, in the light of the new commitment to reassurance and associated issues of visibility and accessibility, and where appropriate they should increase the number of officers performing this function.						✔					3.8
2	BCU commanders should deploy officers as single vehicle and foot patrols as the norm unless there are sound operational or health and safety reasons to justify exceptions. Supervisors should have access to reliable management information and sound guidance to inform their decisions, for which they should be held to account.							✔				3.22
3	Forces should consider increasing the visibility of police personnel by: • Introducing a structured programme of 'patrol days' for non-patrol officers. • Reviewing the role performed by plain-clothed officers to assess whether this is operationally necessary; *wearing uniform should be the default position*. • Ensuring that, unless good operational reasons apply, plain-clothed staff wear some form of identification when performing duties in public. • Consulting with relevant representative bodies, to review the contribution support staff could make in raising the visibility of police activity in local communities.						✔					3.33
4	Forces should review vehicle fleets to ensure that all vehicles are marked unless there are sound operational grounds not to do so, and should exploit the available research on high visibility design.						✔					3.35
5	Forces should proactively manage the demand on patrol officers by exploring options for: • Reducing time spent on processing prisoners and case preparation. • Reducing time spent unproductively at court. • Ways to reduce the demands on the Service imposed by pre-planned public order events. • Reducing levels of sickness. • Outsourcing, or working with partners on non-core policing tasks.						✔					3.45

		HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
6	Forces should adopt a rational approach to workforce planning that allocates staff according to need rather than historic demand.						✔					3.54
7	Forces should consider the option of mobilising volunteers to support policing objectives.						✔					3.55
8	Forces should explore the potential for expanding the provision of policing services through external funding.						✔					3.69
9	Working with police authorities and CDRPs, forces should customise their policing style according to the needs of different communities, based on a combination of community, quality of life and crime intelligence.				✔	✔	✔					4.28
10	BCU commanders should involve partners within the co-ordinating and tasking group meetings structure, or at least consider the impact and additional resources partners can bring on a problem-solving basis.					✔		✔				4.34
11	BCU commanders should recognise the value of targeted high visibility patrol and take steps to identify the most cost-effective way it can be delivered.							✔				4.44
12	BCU commanders should keep the workload of front-line supervisors under regular review to ensure sufficient time can be committed to supervision of the patrol function.							✔				4.54
13	BCU commanders should introduce control mechanisms to monitor the quality of briefings given to patrol officers.							✔				4.59
14	BCU commanders should develop personalised performance indicators for community officers that are tailored to the particular problems they are tackling; these performance indicators should inform officers' personal development reviews.							✔				4.62
15	Pending the arrival of Airwave, forces should consider providing community officers with mobile telephones.						✔					4.70
16	Forces should devise audit and analysis mechanisms for evaluating the services provided by their police/public interface points, taking into account both levels of usage and the reassurance the point provides to the local community						✔					5.8

	HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
17	Forces should make use of the principles of the National Intelligence Model to ensure that public interface points are located in a way that maximises their value to local communities.					✔					5.10
18	Forces should view disability in its widest sense incorporating, for example, the needs of people with visual and hearing impairment in their strategic plans and increase the awareness of disability issues amongst staff.					✔					5.15
19	BCU commanders should make arrangements to supplement front office staff during periods of high demand.						✔				5.21
20	Forces should take steps to ensure visitors to police/public interface points have access to private facilities to enable them to discuss with police issues of a private and confidential nature.					✔					5.26
21	BCU commanders should make full use of the range of partnership opportunities to enhance engagement with local communities.						✔				5.28
22	BCU commanders should ensure that there are clear lines of supervision and management for police/public interface points and their staff.						✔				5.31
23	Forces should review the training provided to the front office enquiry staff to ensure that it fulfils the customer service requirements of the role.					✔					5.32
24	Forces should consider the local deployment of suitably trained staff to optimise the opportunities for greater publicity of local policing activities.					✔					6.14
25	CDRPs should consider their media strategy and enhance their visibility within the community by delegating a 'proactive' responsibility for media liaison to a specific person.				✔						6.14
26	Forces should provide key staff, such as community officers and sector inspectors, with appropriate training in dealing with the media and the identification of opportunities to maximise media coverage of reassurance stories.					✔					6.15
27	BCU commanders should provide suitable material and support to local officers when attending public meetings to assist them in reassuring the public about levels of police and partner activity.						✔				6.23

	HOME OFFICE	ACPO	APA	PA	CDRP	FORCE	BCU	NPT	AUDIT COM.	STANDARDS UNIT	PARAGRAPH Ref.
28 Forces should ensure that the marketing messages and activities relating to public reassurance are communicated internally *and* externally.						✔					6.33
29 Forces should capture and monitor the full range of management information obtained from call logger technology and use it to improve their service.						✔					7.28
30 Forces should systematically audit the quality and consistency of grading decisions.						✔					7.35
31 Forces should consider how the use of voicemail and e-mail technology can enhance accessibility, but must ensure that effective monitoring and supervision processes are in place.						✔					7.47
32 Forces should measure and monitor secondary level call handling processes.						✔					7.48
33 Forces should ensure that their staff and relevant representative bodies are routinely involved in work on continuous improvement of call-handling systems.						✔					7.54
34 Forces, in consultation with relevant representative bodies, should consider developing career structures for call-handling staff.						✔					7.55
35 NPT and the PSSO should establish a recognised national accreditation for call-handler training.								✔			7.57
36 Forces should recognise the importance of managing the whole process of call-handling and introduce a regime to measure and improve its quality.						✔					7.59

Methodology

The first stage of the inspection was a questionnaire-based survey of every force in England and Wales, designed to obtain comparable data on how forces were tackling some key issues relevant to the inspection. However, early piloting of the questionnaire revealed considerable differences in the terminology used by forces which would frustrate efforts to gather comparable data. The questionnaire was restructured to provide a snapshot of the policing style and initiatives that forces were undertaking to address public reassurance issues. In order to gain insights into different policing styles and approaches, eight forces were selected for in-depth fieldwork visits. This was complemented by examination of specific initiatives in 16 English or Welsh forces, two in Scotland and nine overseas forces and agencies (listed overleaf). Visits to private sector organisations were undertaken to consider specific issues of accessibility.

A research protocol was developed to conduct the fieldwork robustly and consistently; this was trialled in Northamptonshire Police and subsequently revised. A series of hypotheses was generated to structure the information collection and test the findings emerging from fieldwork visits. A number of techniques were employed:

- Detailed pre-inspection analysis of data and documentation.

- Questionnaires sent to a sample of patrol officers prior to fieldwork visits.

- Questionnaires completed on site at each BCU visited – followed by interviews with operations managers to ensure data consistency.

- Extensive interviews, consultation and meetings with HQ-based managers and staff, BCU commanders, managers and staff and partnership and community groups.

- A seminar convened with recent winners of the National Beat Officer of the Year award.

Evidence from all of these sources was captured on a specially designed database which has interrogation and cross-referencing facilities. The fieldwork findings were underpinned by extensive research undertaken by the team, including a review of relevant Home Office research papers, ACPO papers and reports, and numerous academic references. In addition, many leading spokespersons, experts and academics were interviewed.

A Strategic Reference Group was established to advise on methodology and offer critiques of emerging findings and the draft report. Membership was drawn from ACPO, APA, the Superintendents' Association, the Police Federation, UNISON, the Black Police Association, PITO and Home Office officials.

The inspection team comprised HMIC and Home Office staff, supplemented by personnel made available for this inspection by Surrey, Suffolk and South Yorkshire. The support offered by these three forces is particularly appreciated.

The backdrop to this thematic inspection has been a dynamic debate about reforming and modernising aspects of policing in the UK, during which the profile of reassurance has increased in significance. Throughout the inspection, the team has sought to link its work with this wider debate and the development of ACPO policy on reassurance.

Forces Visited

In-depth fieldwork visits were made to:

Northamptonshire – methodology pilot

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Humberside Police

Kent County Constabulary

Leicestershire Constabulary

Merseyside Police

Metropolitan Police Service

South Wales Police

Wiltshire Constabulary

Short visits were made to:

Cleveland Police

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Derbyshire Constabulary

Durham Constabulary

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Gwent Police

Hertfordshire Constabulary

Lancashire Constabulary

Lincolnshire Police

Norfolk Constabulary

North Wales Police

Nottinghamshire Police

Staffordshire Police

Thames Valley Police

West Midlands Police

West Yorkshire Police

Central Scotland Police

Strathclyde Police

Other police organisations visited were:

Haaglanden Politie, The Netherlands

Netherlands Centre for International Police Co-operation, The Netherlands

South Holland South Politie, The Netherlands

Utrecht Politie, The Netherlands

Boston Police Department, Massachusetts, USA

Chicago Police Department, Illinois, USA

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Police Department, USA

Montpelier Police Department, Vermont, USA

Vermont State Police, USA

HMIC Review of British Crime Survey and Associated Research Studies

In seven of the last eight years, recorded crime levels have fallen in the UK, reversing a seemingly inexorable pattern of year-on-year rises. Impressive reductions of 43% in residential burglary and 35% in motor vehicle crime have been achieved over this time. Suggestions that this positive trend is simply a manipulation of police statistics are discounted by the evidence of the BCS.[1] Respondents to the BCS recount their personal experience, and those of others in their household, both for property crimes such as burglary and crimes against the person such as assaults. Each experience is then categorised and comparisons made with equivalent crime data as recorded by police forces. The BCS data set, known generically as BCS crimes[2], gives a more complete picture because it includes a substantial number of incidents/crimes that are not reported to police. The fact that BCS crimes have fallen confirms that the drop in recorded crime is not attributable to anomalies in recording practices (Figure B.1).

Figure B.1 – Percentage change in recorded crime and the BCS 1991-2001[3]
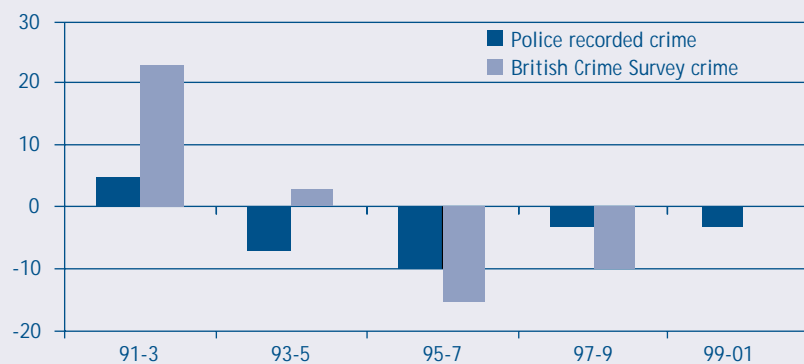
BCS crime[4] rose by 3.2% between 1993 and 1995 while recorded crime fell by 8.5%, suggesting that a smaller percentage of crimes was being recorded by police. By 1995, however, the two sets of figures were starting to converge and the BCS crime level also began falling. Between 1995 and 1999 BCS crimes fell at a faster rate than recorded crime. Over the last five years, recorded crime has fallen by 11.7%; within this overall total, the figure for burglary in a dwelling has dropped by 37%, that for thefts from motor vehicles by 23.5% and thefts of motor vehicles by 34%. Other categories of crime have bucked the downward trend, though – robbery has risen by 34% and theft from the person by 45%. These large percentage rises need to be seen in context – the absolute number of offences is relatively small and the two categories of crime account together for only 3.5% of total crime.

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[1] *The British Crime Survey* – Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00, Kershaw, Budd, Kinshott, Mattinson, Mayhew and Myhill

[2] The BCS does not cover all crimes - it excludes, for instance, homicide, fraud, 'victimless' crimes and covers crime experienced by adults living in private households only

[3] *Recorded Crime in England and Wales; 12 months to March 2001*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 12/01, David Povey et al

[4] The full report on the BCS discusses in detail the issue of statistical significance

These figures reflect the significant effort made by police forces and their partners to
reduce crime and strengthen preventive work. Unfortunately, this 'good news' message is
not informing the public. When asked whether they thought the recorded crime rate for the
country as a whole had changed over the previous two years (ie, between 1997 and 1999),
33% of BCS respondents believed crime had gone up 'a lot' and 34% felt it was 'a little
more' (Figure B.2). In fact, BCS crimes had dropped by 10% and comparable recorded
crime – taking into account changes in crime recording practices – fell 5%. This was
consistent with the findings of the 1998 survey, when 59% of respondents thought that
crime had risen between 1995 and 1997, whereas recorded crime fell 12% and BCS crimes
fell by 15%.

Figure B.2 – Beliefs about the Change in the National Crime Rate 1996 – 2001
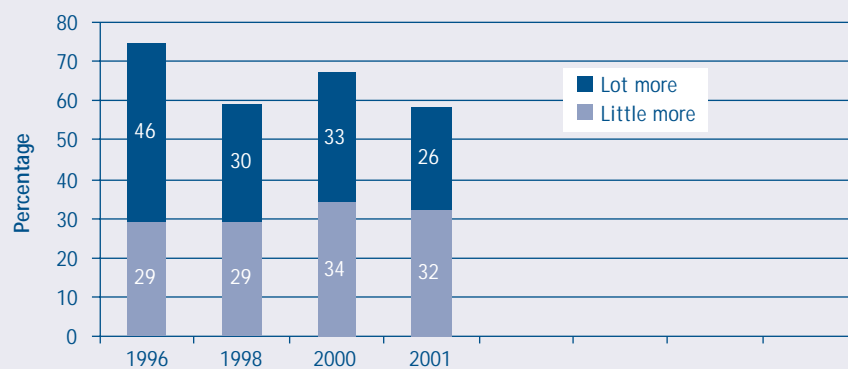
The recently published survey (October 2001) is a little more encouraging, as the number
of respondents who believe that crime is rising is now down to 58%, but this still means
that the majority of respondents have missed the key message – the total number of crimes
reported to the BCS fell by 12% between 1999 and 2000. The total number of crimes
recorded by police increased by 1.2% over two years to the end of March 2001, comprising
a 3.8% increase to the end of March 2000 followed by a 2.5% decrease in the year ending
March 2001.

Perception of Disorder

The impact upon reassurance of lower level issues of disorder cannot be ignored.
Fortunately, few people are direct victims of crime but almost everyone's life is touched by
graffiti, vandalism, noise and anti-social behaviour. However, there is currently no reliable
measure of disorder. BVPI 130 captures the number of disorder incidents recorded by
police, but may be unreliable because of variation in local recording practices. The visual
environmental audits being developed by ACPO have the potential to fill this gap.

**Table B.1 – Trends in disorder perceived to be a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem (1992 to 2000 BCS)**

Percentages	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	8	8	8	8	9
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	20	26	23	27	32
Rubbish or litter lying around	30	26	26	27	31
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	26	29	24	26	32
People being attacked/harassed because of their race/colour	3	5	4	5	7
People using or dealing drugs	14	22	21	24	33

Since 1992, the BCS has asked about (affective) perceptions of disorder, and the results may shed light on the missing 'feel-good' factor as crime levels fall (Table B.1). The percentage of people troubled by various disorders – excepting noisy neighbours and litter – increased between 1992 and 2000, and 37% of respondents stated that disorder had a negative impact on their quality of life. From April 2002, responses to this question will form the basis of BVPI 122 (on feelings of public safety), providing another proxy measure of reassurance. As with crime, increased concern about disorder does not necessarily mean that the *actual* level of disorder has risen, and ACPO's work will be valuable in proving or disproving the link between perception and reality.

Confidence in Policing

Not surprisingly, a public perception that both crime and disorder problems are mounting is reflected in diminishing levels of confidence in policing. The percentage of BCS[5] respondents who believe that their local police did a 'very' or 'fairly good' job fell between 1982 and 1992, stabilised during the 1990s but then fell again in 2000 (Figure B.3).

Figure B.3 - Public confidence in the police (1982 to 2000 BCS)
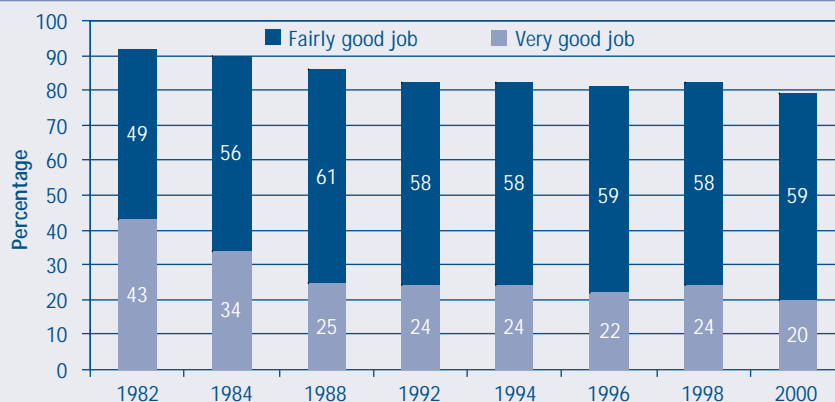
[5]   *Research Findings* No. 13, L. Sims and A. Myhill, Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate

A similar question elicited public perceptions of the performance of the different agencies within the CJS. Although the police service still receives by far the highest ratings, with over half of the respondents believing they do a good or excellent job, there has been a marked decrease since 1996[6] (Figure B.4).

Figure B.4 – Criminal justice system agencies doing a good or excellent job
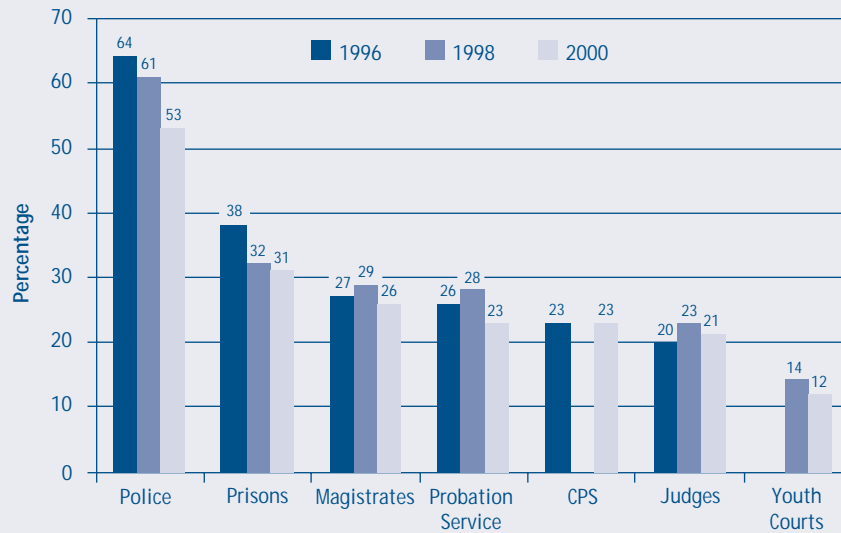
Figure B.5 – Percentage of white, black and Asian respondents who see criminal justice system agencies as doing a good job or exellent job
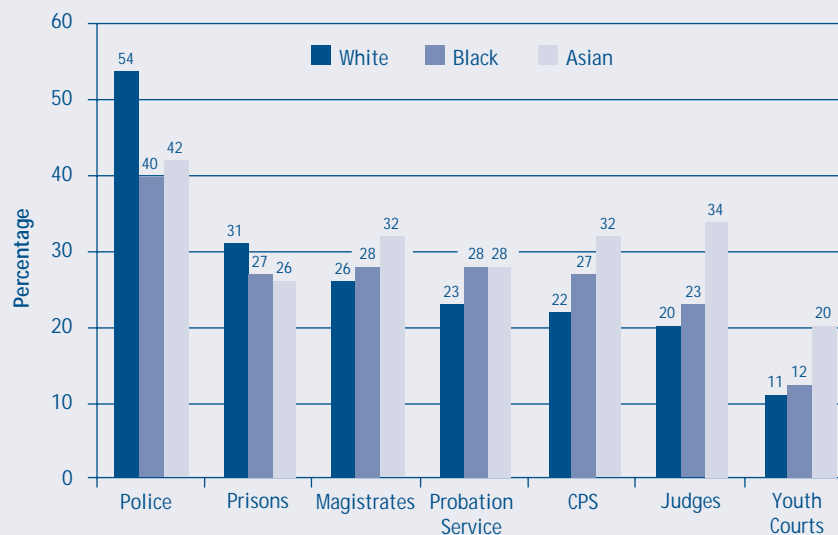
Black and Asian respondents tended to rate the work of magistrates, probation officers, the CPS, judges and youth courts more favourably than did white respondents, but they had a less positive view of police performance (Figure B.5).

[6] *Research Findings No 137*, C Mirrlees-Black, Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate

Developing a Model for Public Reassurance

Making use of early fieldwork and a literature review, the inspection team constructed a model of public reassurance which was tested as the work progressed. This helped refine the later fieldwork and then provided a structure for the report.

Seven factors interact with an individual's unique biography to develop their feeling of reassurance:

- **Perceived vulnerability** – experienced by four broad groups – women, the elderly, the poor and those with a limiting illness or disability.

- **Ethnicity** – Black and Asian respondents to the BCS were far more worried about all types of crime than white respondents; this may be linked to their fear of racial crime.
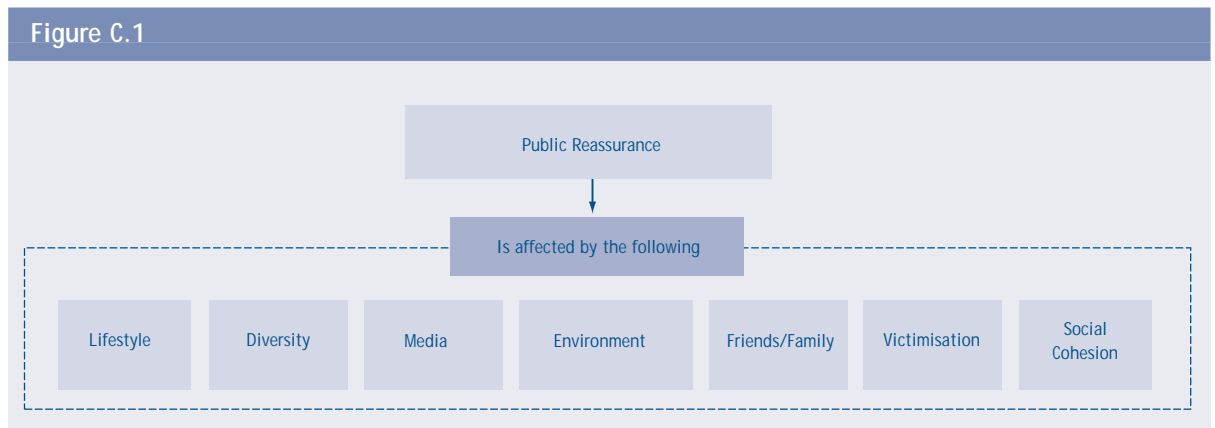
- **Victimisation** – a person who has been the victim of crime, or whose friend/relative has been a victim of crime, will fear further victimisation.

- **Environment** – ACPO[7] suggests that the primary cause of the 'reassurance gap' – ie, the difficulty in reconciling falling crime levels with rising public anxiety about safety – is the level of incivilities such as graffiti, abandoned cars etc. that people experience in towns and on estates. These belie the positive message of falling crime figures.

- **Social cohesion** – the effect of negative signals from the local environment can, to a degree, be offset in neighbourhoods with high levels of social integration.

- **Media** – there is a strong belief among officers interviewed during the fieldwork that the media is the strongest influence on an individual's level of reassurance.

- **Lifestyle** – an individual's lifestyle, and in particular the extent to which they frequent public spaces at night, will increase or reduce their exposure to the negative stimuli described above.

These seven elements can be shown diagramatically (Figure C.1):

Figure C.1

			Public Reassurance			
			Is affected by the following			
Lifestyle	Diversity	Media	Environment	Friends/Family	Victimisation	Social Cohesion

[7] An ACPO team has been established to consider ways of enhancing public reassurance as part of the work on police modernisation and reform

Research pointed to five strands of a strategy for enhanced public reassurance:

- Reduced levels of crime.

- Reduced levels of social and physical disorder.

- Enhanced visibility in public spaces.

- Enhanced levels of accessibility to police services.

- Familiarity between police staff and their local community.

These elements are underpinned by six enabling factors:

- A *performance and strategic framework* with BVPIs that encourage forces to balance resources appropriately and strategies (eg, estates, IT) which ensure an integrated approach.

- An approach that is *ethical and has integrity.*[8]

- *Recognition of diversity*, customising approaches to the needs of various communities.[9]

- Exploiting *intelligence* systems to promote the optimal use of resources.

- Working with *partners* to develop all aspects of public reassurance.

- The exercise of strong *leadership* from all parts of the tripartite relationship, to take forward the strategic vision and deliver enhanced public reassurance.

Figure C.2
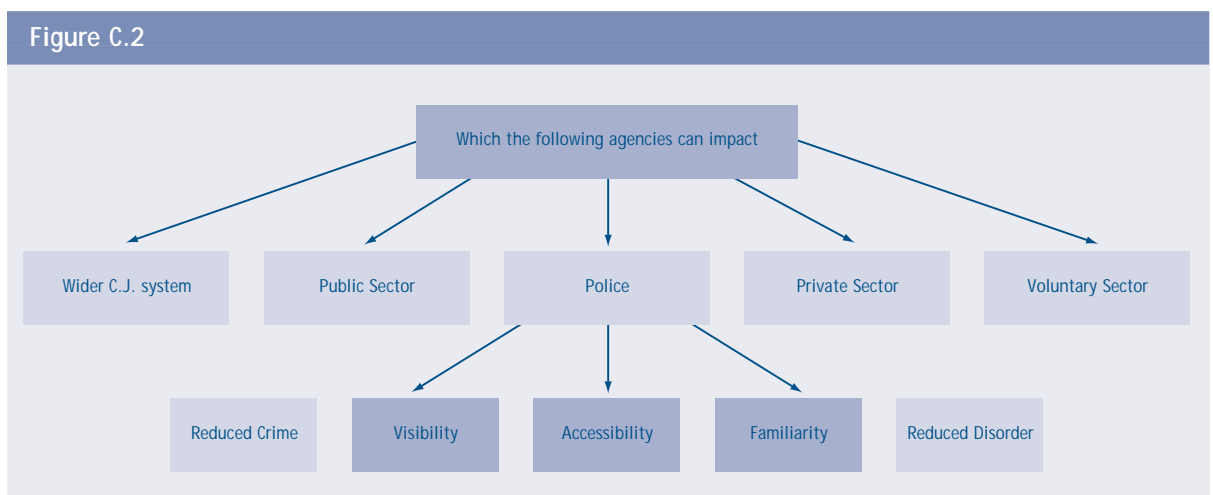
8   Issues addressed by HMIC thematic inspection report *Police Integrity: Securing and maintaining public confidence* 1999
9   This is the subject of a number of HMIC thematic inspection reports, the latest being *Winning the Race – Embracing Diversity* 2000

The inspection team then identified the following police activities as making important contributions to visibility, accessibility and familiarity:

- Media/PR/marketing.

- Visible street presence.

- Public interface points (eg, police station front counters).

- Call handling.

- Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) alternatives.

Figure C.3
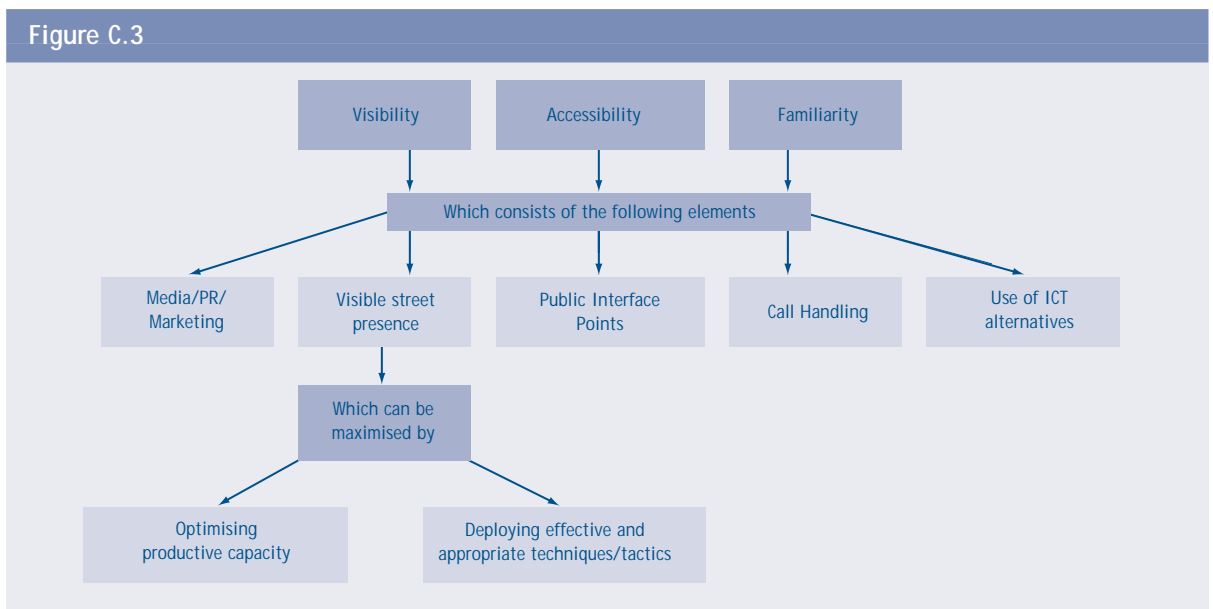
Bringing together figures 1, 2 and 3 creates an overarching framework:

Public Reassurance

↓

Is affected by the following

| Lifestyle | Diversity | Media | Environment | Friends/Family | Victimisation | Social Cohesion |

↓

Which the following agencies can impact

Wider C.J. system | Public Sector | Police | Private Sector | Voluntary Sector

Reduced Crime | Visibility | Accessibility | Familiarity | Reduced Disorder

↓

Which consists of the following elements

Media/PR/Marketing | Visible street presence | Public Interface Points | Call Handling | Use of ICT alternatives

↓

Which can be maximised by

Optimising productive capacity | Deploying effective and appropriate techniques/tactics

Variation in Ratio of Number of Special Constables per 100 Officers

	Specials	Constables	Specials per 100 Constables
England and Wales	11,939	94,854	13
Metropolitan Police	800	19,003	4
Greater Manchester	367	5,440	7
South Yorkshire	188	2,417	8
City of London	43	527	8
Cleveland	93	1,123	8
Surrey	149	1,618	9
Northumbria	300	3,037	10
Leicestershire	162	1,635	10
West Midlands	617	5,995	10
South Wales	254	2,428	10
West Yorkshire	415	3,820	11
Durham	146	1,264	12
Hertfordshire	198	1,480	13
Bedfordshire	114	811	14
Sussex	306	2,169	14
Humberside	212	1,497	14
Gwent	140	986	14
Lancashire	360	2,505	14
Thames Valley	418	2,884	14
Kent	392	2,622	15
Merseyside	527	3,215	16
Avon and Somerset	400	2,349	17

	Specials	Constables	Specials per 100 Constables
Hampshire	462	2,640	17
Wiltshire	152	850	18
Lincolnshire	166	928	18
North Wales	204	1,138	18
North Yorkshire	182	1,015	18
Cheshire	281	1,541	18
Nottinghamshire	335	1,778	19
Cumbria	156	811	19
Derbyshire	275	1,406	20
Essex	445	2,241	20
Gloucestershire	183	912	20
Northamptonshire	188	917	20
Cambridgeshire	218	988	22
Norfolk	259	1,105	23
Dyfed-Powys	191	796	24
Staffordshire	401	1,635	25
Dorset	267	1,042	26
West Mercia	399	1,509	26
Warwickshire	221	734	30
Devon and Cornwall	804	2,299	35
Suffolk	349	883	40

Ratio of Support Staff to Police Officers, 1981 to 2001

	No. of Officers	No. of Support Staff	Ratio
1981	118,102	37,795	3.12
1982	119,973	37,818	3.17
1983	121,003	38,014	3.18
1984	121,053	38,420	3.15
1985	120,116	39,086	3.07
1986	120,848	39,351	3.07
1987	122,236	40,592	3.01
1988	124,080	41,786	2.97
1989	125,631	42,767	2.94
1990	126,777	44,525	2.85
1991	127,495	46,373	2.75
1992	127,627	47,283	2.70
1993	128,290	49,466	2.59
1994	127,897	49,953	2.56
1995	127,222	50,813	2.50
1996	126,901	52,933	2.40
1997	127,158	53,011	2.40
1998	126,814	52,975	2.39
1999	126,096	53,031	2.38
2000	124,170	53,227	2.33
2001	125,519	54,588	2.30

Case Study of a Simple Arrest[10]

26 March 2000

21.10: 'Raymond C' arrested for offence of throwing stones through 2 windows in a street in Lincoln. Officers attend the scene and 'C' arrested by PC 'S'.

21.25: Prisoner arrives at Lincoln Police Station. Cell block procedures carried out which include booking in prisoner and searching him to ensure his safety and safety of officers.

21.38: Prisoner placed in cell.

21.50: PC 'S' returns to scene and records a written statement from a witness at the scene.

22. 30: PC 'S' returns to the station, intending to interview the prisoner. However, the prisoner is unfit through drink to be immediately interviewed; PC 'S' is due off duty at 23.00. In view of this, he prepares a hand-over file, which consists of:

1 x statement from witness at scene.

1 x statement from arresting officer.

1 x brief summary of the facts of the incident.

23.00: PC 'T' comes on duty and takes over case of 'C'. Not fit to interview and so goes on patrol.

01.00 to 01.30: Officer apprises himself of the evidence and prepares interview.

01.38: Interview commences (10 minutes approximately). Prisoner admits offence during interview.

01.55: Hand over to custody officer (prisoner escorted to cell).

02.00: Police officer commences paperwork. Pocket Notebook entry (completed during process of events contemporaneously).

Paperwork – complete Charge Sheets – computer generated – most details are filled in, name and bail dates have to be entered.

02.30: Officer charges prisoner. Fingerprint and photos plus relevant forms.

02.45: Officer completes initial file for court:

MG 1 Front Sheet

MG 5 Summary of evidence

MG 6 Disclosure form

MG 11 Statement of evidence

MG 15/16 Conviction/Cautions

MG 19 Compensation Forms

Crime report hand written and faxed to HQ.

Telephone call to HQ for details of previous convictions.

03.55: Officer resumes patrol.

[10] *A Diary of Two Constables:* HMIC unpublished 2001

29 March 2000

Prisoner 'C' appears before magistrates, enters plea of Not Guilty.
File returned for PC 'T' to submit full file of evidence. Work involved:

2 x witness statement from additional witnesses: 45 mins – 1 hour each (including travelling time).

Telephone enquiry with housing office to establish cost of damage: 10 minutes.

1 x witness statement from housing officer: 30 minutes.

Completion of full file of evidence (2 hours) consisting of:

MG 6(b)(c)(d) Disclosure/confidential information

MG 9 Witness lists

MG 10 Avoid dates witness lists (contact witnesses, confirm avoid dates)

MG 11 Witness statements

MG 12 Exhibit lists

4 January 2001

Officers called to attend Lincoln City Magistrates to give evidence.
2 x officers changed from core shift 24-hour cover to 9 x 5 days.

09.00: On duty.

09.45: Arrive at court.

10.15: Informed court case has been double listed.

Note. This practice is where courts deliberately double-book cases for full trial, on basis that usually one will plead guilty. If both continue for full trial, one case is adjourned and all witnesses have to return on another date (although they are guaranteed priority on that date).

10.30: Cancelled for court.

20 March 2001

Officers called to reappear at Lincoln Magistrates.
One of officers called on rest day (which was reallocated reducing cover for full day).

09.00: On Duty.

09.45: Court.

10.00: Waiting to give evidence.

12.00 (approx): Case completed, officers released.

The above was a simple case, where no delays were caused unduly for solicitors, interpreters etc.

Glossary of Abbreviations

A & E	Accident and Emergency
ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
APA	Association of Police Authorities
APPRO	Association of Police Public Relations Officers
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order
ASR	Annual Statistical Return
BCS	British Crime Survey
BCU	Basic Command Unit
BT	British Telecom
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
BVR	Best Value Review
CAPS	Chicago Alternative Policing Style
CBO	Community Beat Officer
CFF	Crime Fighting Fund
CCTV	Close Circuit Television
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CO	Community Officer
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1995
DDI	Direct Dial In
DTLR	Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions
EISEC	Enhanced Information System for Emergency Calls
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GIS	Geographic Information Sbystem

HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System
ISB	Invest to Save Budget
IT	Information Technology
LGA	Local Government Association
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NSPIS	National Strategy for Police Information Systems
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PITO	Police Information Technology Organisation
PNC	Police National Computer
POP	Problem Orientated Policing
PSAP	Public Service Answering Point
PSRCP	Public Safety Radio Communications Project (Airwave)
PSSO	Police Skills and Standards Organsiation
RAF	Resource Allocation Formula
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
SARA	Scan, Analysis, Response, Assessment (Problem Solving Model)
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOCO	Scenes of Crime Officer