



Police Service of Northern Ireland

Inspection findings

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Glossary

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
CBRN	Chemical Biological Radioactive Nuclear
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CHIS	Covert Human Intelligence Source
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJI NI	Criminal Justice Northern Ireland
CT	Counter Terrorism
CTSA	Counter Terrorism Security Advisor
DIU	District Intelligence Unit
DPP	District Policing Partnership
FTR	Full Time Reserve
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
IT	Information Technology
LCJG	Local Criminal Justice Board
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MSG	Most Similar Group
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NP	Neighbourhood Policing
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
PCCG	Police Community Consultative Group
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSU	Police Support Unit
PwC	Policing with the Community
R2R	Resource to Risk
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SCTG	Strategic Co-ordinating and Tasking Group
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SOC	Serious and Organised Crime
SyS	Security Service
TCTG	Tactical Co-ordinating and Tasking Group
TSG	Tactical Support Group
VLI	Vulnerable Localities Index

Executive summary

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is subject to an annual statutory inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) under Section 41 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. In 2010, this inspection was conducted by HM Inspector Mr Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, MBA, MA (Oxon), CCMI.

PSNI is also inspected by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJI NI). HMIC works closely with CJI NI and has participated in a number of joint inspections, including *Policing with the Community* (March 2009) and *Customer Service* (July 2010). In this report, when areas of policing that have already been covered by joint inspections are discussed, this is clearly referenced. HMIC is grateful to CJI NI for its assistance with fieldwork during the inspection.

HMIC was asked by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) to examine progress against the targets laid out in its 2010/11 *Policing Plan*, and to look at a number of other areas of policing (including those which aim to protect the public from serious harm). This inspection also examined progress against recommendations made during the 2008 HMIC inspections on Major Crime and Serious and Organised Crime.

HMIC staff examined documents and performance data relating to PSNI and carried out a series of structured interviews and focus groups, conducted between 20 and 24 September and on 16 and 17 November 2010.

HMIC acknowledges the very challenging environment in which PSNI operates. This includes tackling the security threat and providing a service to very distinct communities, some with polarised views both of adjacent communities and of the police. PSNI officers and staff attempt to deliver as normal a service as is possible against an increasing threat. The National Security Strategy, whilst acknowledging the progress in stabilising the political situation in Northern Ireland, also reports that the security situation is unlikely to improve in the short term.

Examining performance within a six-month period (April – September 2010) does not provide a long enough time to give a reliable judgement on whether performance is likely to improve and be sustained. To inform its assessment, HMIC therefore also examined performance prior to the period currently under review.

Overall, and against a difficult background, PSNI is delivering mixed performance against the *Policing Plan* targets.

The Service is performing well in reducing the number of non-domestic violence with injury crimes, and in significantly reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads. Levels of sectarian crime have reduced over the last year; it is equally positive news that detections for this crime type are increasing and meeting the target.

More work needs to be done to improve the percentage of people who agree PSNI and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime in their area. There also needs to be increased focus on improving detections, especially in the areas of domestic violence with injury, racist and homophobic crimes.

The Chief Constable has a clear aim to provide a police service that delivers a “personal, professional and protective service to all”. Many staff interviewed understood and were supportive of this message.

The Chief Constable and NIPB regard the delivery and embedding of the actions recommended in Policing with the Community as essential to improving confidence and satisfaction amongst all communities, and as a means to return to ‘normalised’ policing. Dealing effectively with neighbourhood priorities, especially anti-social behaviour (ASB), will be part of this process. Although neighbourhood teams are in place, it is important to monitor abstractions to other duties, in order to ensure they are being given enough time to solve problems on their areas.

PSNI does not have effective systems in place to identify vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB. HMIC notes the Service has started to identify where the gaps are in dealing with ASB.

The way in which PSNI releases information to the media and communities about reports bombings, shootings and other attacks is a source of contention for many officers. PSNI reports on ‘terrorist attacks’ – a definition that only includes direct attacks on the security forces and on government. However, the attacks and incidents that fall into this category represent only around 25% of the total recorded for the security situation (which includes all attacks).

While statistics on the overall security situation are published on PSNI’s website, it is the ‘terrorist attacks’ data that is definition that is released to the media. Officers are therefore frustrated because they consider that the true extent of the threat is not being reported. It is important for there to be consistency when providing information on the security situation or on terrorist attacks.

PSNI has significant experience of dealing with public disorder. Hundreds of parades are held every year, some of which require the deployment of many officers in protective public order equipment and other specialist resources. The Service also deals regularly with spontaneous attacks on officers by criminals using petrol bombs and other projectiles. This is in addition to the regular demand of policing the night time economy. Whilst PSNI has the historical data to enable it to consider resources required for parades it does not have an overall, service-wide assessment on the threat, risk and demand on public order. PSNI also needs to develop its contingency plans, including those for public order and counter terrorist trained officers, with other forces.

It is anticipated that there will be significant pressure on all budgets in the public sector for several years. One way to maintain services for less or improve services at no additional cost is for forces to collaborate with others or with the wider public sector. PSNI is already working closely with the Garda Síochána and is delivering training for some officers from England and Wales. The introduction of a designated lead for collaboration would provide focus and co-ordination.

All officers and staff interviewed or spoken to during this inspection were constructive in their comments and are thanked for their assistance. Without exception, all were determined to provide the best policing service for the communities of Northern Ireland.

Recommendations

HMIC recommends that PSNI:

Recommendation 1

Introduce a method to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, and take action to reduce repeat victimisation.

(Local Crime and Policing page 19)

Recommendation 2

As matter of some urgency, and with the support of the Home Office, introduce systems to electronically update arrest and conviction data, thereby minimising risk to communities and officers in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 23)

Recommendation 3

Ensure there is consistency in reporting information on the security situation and terrorist attacks.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 26)

Recommendation 4

Prepare an annual Public Order Threat and Risk assessment to understand the overall level of demand and resources required.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 29)

Recommendation 5

Accelerate work with other forces and partners to ensure effective contingency arrangements are in place to cater for extraordinary demand, including Public Order and Counter Terrorism trained officers and resources.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 30)

Recommendation 6

Designate a senior lead for collaboration to ensure all opportunities are identified and fully exploited.

(Value for Money page 34)

Background

About HMIC

HMIC independently assesses police forces and policing activity – ranging from neighbourhood teams to serious crime and the fight against terrorism – in the public interest. In preparing our reports, we ask the questions that informed citizens would ask and publish the answers in accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence. We provide authoritative information and our evidence is used to drive improvements in the service to the public.

The public want the police to succeed in their mission to keep people safe and secure. It is in the public interest that the quality of policing keeps improving. At HMIC, we monitor and report on forces and policing activity with the aim of encouraging improvement.

We also continue to provide professional advice to police, using experienced officers and other experts (such as lawyers and accountants) to identify the ‘best practice’ which all forces can aspire to. We encourage operational excellence and, increasingly, a good deal for the public in terms of value for money.

Much of our work relates to the mainstream police forces in England and Wales, together with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and British Transport Police (BTP).

This inspection

This inspection of PSNI included an examination of documents and performance data relating to PSNI. Fieldwork was carried out between 20 and 24 September and on 16 and 17 November 2010.

A series of structured interviews and focus groups were carried out across all ranks and roles within the police. Findings were subsequently verified by ‘reality checks’ (establishing exactly what takes place as opposed to what should take place). HMIC is grateful for the contribution made by colleagues from CJI NI, who assisted during the course of the inspection.

Force overview and context

Geography and demographics

Northern Ireland occupies 5,461 square miles. On the east, it is separated from Scotland by the North Channel and from England by the Irish Sea; to the west and south it is situated next to the Republic of Ireland. The province has six counties and five cities, of which Belfast is the capital and main urban area. Northern Ireland is serviced by three airports, which between them serve a variety of destinations in the UK and beyond. There are also two busy seaports at Belfast and Larne.

The population of Northern Ireland is estimated to be in the region of 1.75 million. The overall population density is estimated at 127 persons per square kilometre; this density tends to be at its lowest in the west and the very north of the province, and higher in the east. Greater Belfast accounts for almost one-third of the total population. The Northern Ireland economy is relatively small compared with other parts of the UK, although performance has improved over recent years.

Department of Justice

The Department of Justice (DoJ) was formed in April 2010, after the devolution of policing and justice matters to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The DoJ has responsibility for policing and justice powers in Northern Ireland, including criminal law, prosecution, courts, prison and probation. DOJ has funding responsibility for PSNI, but does not have an accountability role around National Security matters; this remains with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Policing Board

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) is an independent body made up of 19 political and independent members. It was formed in 2001 following a recommendation from the *Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland* (Patten report). The main roles of the NIPB are to secure an effective and efficient police service, to consult with local people about the policing of their area, and to set and monitor local policing priorities and targets for police performance.

Chief officer team

The Chief Constable was appointed in September 2009. The remainder of the chief officer group consists of a Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), five Assistant Chief Constables (ACC), a Director of Human Resources and a Director of Finance and Support Services.

Structure

As of 31 March 2010 (and excluding secondees and agency staff), PSNI comprised:

- 7,387 regular officers;
- 382 full-time reserves;
- 703 part-time police officers; and
- 2,559 police staff.

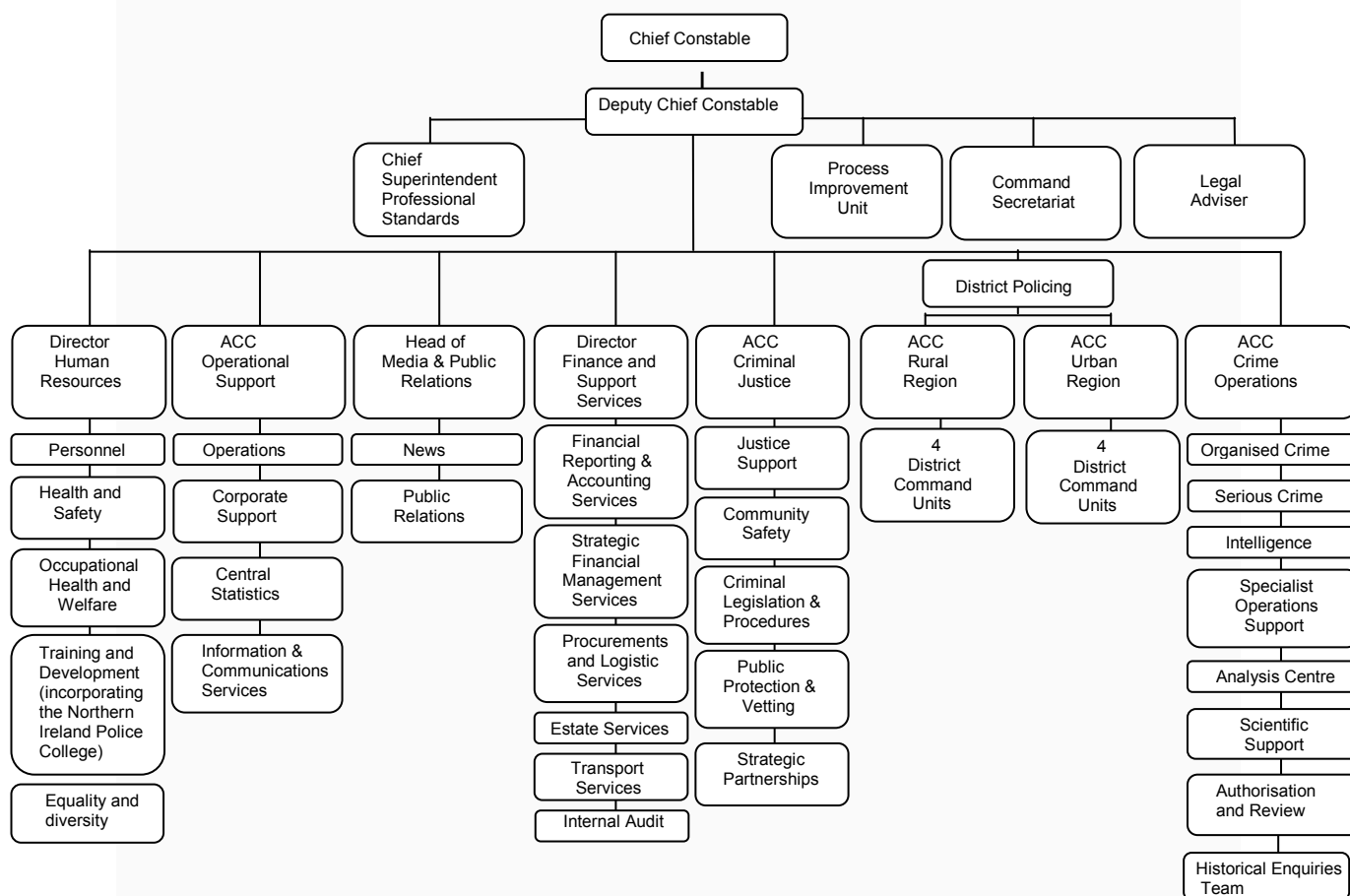
The structure of the force is shown in the organisational chart below.

Northern Ireland is divided into eight policing districts. Belfast comprises Districts A, B, C and D (Urban); the remaining four are E, F, G and H (Rural). Each District is led by a Chief Superintendent and Districts are further divided into areas, each headed by a Chief Inspector.

As a result of recruitment provisions made law by the Government, the Service is required to recruit 50% of officers from a Roman Catholic background and 50% from a non-Roman Catholic background. Whilst no formal target was set by Government, an aspirational target to achieve 30% of PSNI officers being from a Roman Catholic background by March 2011 has existed. As of November 2010, 29.4% officers were recorded as being Roman Catholic; the Service is on course to achieve 30% by March 2011.

The enabling legislation and decision as to whether to retain 50:50 is currently being reviewed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Organisational chart



Strategic priorities

The *Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2010–2013* sets out priorities and targets that have been drawn up after consultation with the Secretary of State, district policing partnerships (DPPs) and communities.

The following objectives have been set by the Secretary of State:

- PSNI to contribute to increasing public safety through reducing crime and the fear of crime, preventing re-offending and bringing those to justice who break the law.
- Increase public confidence in the PSNI through effective, efficient, visible and accountable policing.
- Be an effective partner in working with criminal justice agencies, other partners and the whole community.

NIPB has taken these objectives into account when setting targets in the *Policing Plan*. The Minister of Justice is currently in the process of developing new long-term policing objectives.

Overarching objective of the PSNI (stated in the Policing Plan)

‘To work with communities and partners to make Northern Ireland safe, confident and peaceful.’

Strategic principles (stated in the Policing Plan)

- Personal, impartial and accountable police officers and staff, present and influential in the heart of all communities, in the right numbers to make a difference.
- Responsive, flexible, 24/7 service: tailor made to the unique needs of the person or place, with a reputation for promise keeping and professionalism.
- Resources and time focused upon genuine operational delivery. Ensuring we have the right people in the right place to prevent harm, protect from danger and inspire confidence.
- Challenge the status quo, keeping red tape to a minimum, always at the forefront of value for money and effective practice.
- Partnership at the heart of our outlook and actions, sharing expertise and responsibility. Open and transparent in line with over-riding Human Rights or legal obligations.

Changes within PSNI

The PSNI has undergone significant change since the Patten report (1999).

These have included:

- Phased reduction in the number of officers;
- Voluntary severance and loss of experienced staff;
- Change in the workforce profile – including 50:50 recruiting, phasing out of the Full-Time Reserve;
- Major cultural consequences of change from the RUC to PSNI;
- The end of Operation Banner (routine military support); and
- Reorganisation from 29 to 8 District commands.

After a self-commissioned Strategic Review, the Resource to Risk (R2R) process began in January 2010, following an initiative by the Chief Constable to optimise the number of police officers in operational roles. It also promoted visibility in the Policing with the Community and Protective Services functions. The process required the examination of all police officer and staff roles and classified them as either critical or desirable.

Critical roles include those requiring warranted powers, those used for visibility (neighbourhood policing), response, and those required for operational functions such as firearms and command and control. This is the first time PSNI has segmented its workforce in this way.

As a result of the R2R process PSNI state that there are an additional 490 officers on the frontline (158 to neighbourhood policing teams and 332 to response). These officers have come from:

- Non-operational roles (i.e. HQ or District HQ);
- A change in role (for example, schools officers more closely aligned with neighbourhood teams);
- Newly appointed probationers allocated straight to response teams; and
- A moratorium on transfers/appointments (which has allowed only critical specialist operational posts to be filled).

Most similar group of forces

In England and Wales, a force's performance is quite often compared against that of its most similar group (MSG) of forces. The MSG for PSNI is:

- Nottinghamshire;
- Greater Manchester;
- West Yorkshire;
- Northumbria; and
- West Midlands.

However, it must be borne in mind that there is no direct comparator for PSNI. Some of the data used in England and Wales to make comparisons is not collected in Northern Ireland or is collected in a different format, and there are also differences around hate crime, fixed penalty notices and the absence of crime and disorder reduction legislation.

Moreover, PSNI faces a unique challenge when it comes to the threat and risk presented by the security situation, and in the level of resources it dedicates to tackling the threat. PSNI considers that around 34% of its budget is required to police the security threat.

Also unique to PSNI are the number of legacy issues the Service has to deal with. These are estimated to account for around £6m per annum, and include the Historical Enquiry Team.

Northern Ireland still remains a divided society with predominantly segregated education. Many republican and loyalist communities are separated by 'peace walls'; there are now more of these walls than when first constructed by the Army as temporary structures in 1970. Such division – whether by distinct communities or physical barriers – makes for a harder task in providing a policing service. The task is

then made more difficult by sectarian attacks, disputed parades and an element of people in Northern Ireland who are intent on attacking the police.

PSNI frequently has to steer a course through particularly sensitive issues. An example is the run-up to devolution of policing and justice and the future of the Full Time Reserve. The political debate of policing in Northern Ireland continues within the Policing Board, the Assembly, and wider media, with PSNI finding its way through this complexity.

Inspection findings

Performance against Policing Plan objectives

The *Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2010–2013* sets out priorities for the service, grouped under three main objectives:

- Service excellence;
- Tackling serious harm; and
- Personal policing – dealing with others.

Performance against targets as of 30 September 2010 – ie six months into the policing plan – is grouped under these three objectives. A view is provided on whether PSNI is likely to meet the yearly targets by the end of March 2011.

Overall, and against a particularly difficult background, PSNI is delivering mixed performance against the policing plan targets.

The Service is performing well in reducing the number of non-domestic violence with injury crimes, and in significantly reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads. Levels of sectarian crime have reduced over the last year;¹ it is equally positive news that detections for the same have been steadily increasing since 2007. Progress is also being made in increasing the numbers of officers in neighbourhood and response roles.

However, more work needs to be done to improve the percentage of people who agree that PSNI and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime in their area. HMIC notes that there is no legislation in Northern Ireland that places a duty on statutory partners to give due regard to crime and disorder. There also needs to be an increased focus on improving detections, especially in the areas of domestic violence with injury, racist and homophobic crimes.

Explanation of Colour Codings	Green	Likely to meet or exceed the target
	Amber	Will potentially meet the target
	Red	Unlikely to meet the target

¹ Reduction in recorded sectarian crime from 1300 to 1000, November 2009–October 2010

Service Excellence

Performance indicator	Benchmark	31 March 2011 Target	Performance as of September 2010
1.1 Increase the number of police officers assigned to neighbourhood and response policing roles by 600.	2,320 (03/06/2009)	2,920	2,810 (+490)
2.1 Increase the percentage of time spent by officers on operational duty outside police stations.	39%	45%	N/K ²

Northern Ireland Crime Survey Data				
Performance indicator	NI Crime Survey 2008/09	NI Crime Survey 2009/10	31 March 2011 Target	July 09 – June 10
3.1 Increase the percentage of people who agree the police and other agencies are dealing with the ASB and crime issues in local area.	38%	37%	49%	37.1%
4.1 Increase the proportion of crimes reported by police			50%	N/K
5.1 In partnership with other agencies, increase the percentage of people confident in the fairness of the criminal justice system	59%	58%	61%	58.7%
5.2 In partnership with other agencies, increase the percentage of people confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system	37%	37%	38%	38.7%

1.1 Increase the number of police officers assigned to neighbourhood and response policing roles by 600

Progress has been made in increasing the number of officers assigned to Neighbourhood and Response Policing (158 officers to Neighbourhood and 332 to Response). To reach the target, a further 110 officers will need to be posted to these roles. Although PSNI now has the freedom to alter the mix of police officers and police staff, the proposed plan to civilianise some roles (150 station security posts that are currently filled by the FTR) was not approved by the NIPB. As a consequence, PSNI will be deploying police officers into this role. Despite this and other challenges (such as the loss of the FTR), PSNI are fully expected to meet this target.

2.1 Increase the percentage of time spent by officers on operational duty outside police stations

HMIC is unable to judge performance against the target of officers spending more time out of stations, because data will not be ready until after April 2011. Data is based on activity analysis with each District carrying out its own surveys twice a year. It would be more useful for the NIPB to be able to monitor this target in year.

² Data will not be available until April 2011 for targets 2.1 and 4.1

3.1 Increase the percentage of people who agree the police and other agencies are dealing with the ASB and crime issues in local area

Although PSNI has several examples of where they are tackling ASB effectively, more needs to be done to ensure a Service-wide approach. This target (as with those relating to the Criminal Justice System) is also dependent on other agencies fulfilling their obligations. The Service is not on course to meet this target. (More information on ASB is provided on pp.17 of this report.)

4.1 Increase the proportion of crimes reported by police

The Patten report, and more recently the Strategic Review carried out by PSNI, identified that there was still under reporting of crime in Northern Ireland. The target is to increase the number of crimes reported to the police. Performance against this target will require careful reporting if the target is to be achieved.

5.1 In partnership with other agencies, increase the percentage of people confident in the fairness of the criminal justice system; and

5.2 In partnership with other agencies, increase the percentage of people confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system

PSNI understands that it can have an impact on the confidence of users of the justice system, and considers the route to improving levels of confidence to be speedy, proportionate and visible justice. The Service Excellence Board is leading on several initiatives, including the use of discretionary disposals and streamlined files. When extended from the pilot sites to all districts these schemes might assist in raising levels of user confidence. PSNI will potentially meet the first target (5.1), and is most likely to meet the second target.

Tackling Serious Harm

Performance indicator	2008/09	2009/10	31 March 2011 Target	1 April - 30 September 2010
6.1 Report four times per year on the number of organised crime gangs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled.			To have reported four times in year.	Three reports to NIPB
6.2 Increase the number of PSNI interventions directed at criminal finances.		294	Increase on previous financial year.	61
7.1 Reduce number of non-domestic violence with injury crimes by 5%.	11,581	11,432	10,860	5,761
8.1 Increase the detection rate for violence with injury crimes by 10 percentage points (pp)	27.04%	31.2%	41.2%	31.2%
9.1 In partnership with other agencies, contribute to reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road.	1,104	1,096	1,095	462
9.2 In partnership with other agencies, contribute to reducing the number of children killed or seriously injured on the road.	102	110	109	54
10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Domestic Violence with Injury crimes by 10pp.	37.8%	44.0%	54.0%	46.4% (+2.4pp)

10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Most Serious Sexual crime by 5pp.	20.2%	18.7%	23.7%	21.5% (+2.8pp)
10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Sectarian Crime by 5pp.	15.2%	16.9%	21.9%	23.8% (+6.9pp)
10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Racist Crime by 5pp.	12.5%	16.2%	21.2%	14.6% (-1.6pp)
10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Homophobic Crime by 10pp.	21.6%	18.8%	28.8%	18.2% (-0.6pp)
10.1 Increase Detection Rate for Robbery by 5pp.	16.4%	18.6%	23.6%	21.4% (+2.8pp)

6.1 Report four times per year on the number of organised crime gangs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled

There is no qualitative reporting to NIPB on activity taken against Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs): only headline numbers of OCGs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled are provided. This adds minimal value to explaining what PSNI is doing to tackle organised crime.

The Organised Crime Branch restructured earlier this year, and systems have been designed to capture the detail and of policing activity against all OCGs (including those owned by districts). In the next report to the NIPB more detail will be provided, and will include Service-wide numbers of arrests, searches, charges and seizures relating to OCGs.

6.2 Increase the number of PSNI interventions directed at criminal finances

The measurement of this target is based on a number of wide-ranging interventions,³ which are quantitative and do not provide any overview of the action PSNI is taking to exploit opportunities through the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act. The Service has made fewer cash seizures compared with the same time last year, but the value of confiscation orders is considerably higher, as the following table shows.

Personal Policing – dealing with others

Value of cash seizures (01.04.10-29.09.10)	Value of cash seizures (2009/10 benchmark)	Value of confiscation orders (01.04.10-29.09.10)	Value of confiscation orders (2009/10 benchmark)
£465,857.73	£595,185.85	£1,083,502.73	£59,740.34

Performance indicator	2008/09	2009/10	31 March 2011 Target	End of September 2010
11.1 Reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour to ensure a 15% reduction by 31 March 2011.	87,168	82,086		42,978
12.1 Reduce the number of domestic burglaries by 5%.	7,351	7,270	6,906	3,667
12.2 Reduce the number of non-domestic burglaries by 5%.	4981	5191	4931	2539
13.1 Increase the detection rate for burglary by 5pp.	12.0%	11.5%	16.5%	9.8% (-1.7pp)

³ Intervention is defined as cash seizures; referrals to other law enforcement agencies; and orders relating to restraints, confiscations, financial reporting, and serious crime.

Local crime and policing

PSNI has 710 officers dedicated to providing neighbourhood policing within 87 neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods cover all of Northern Ireland, and were identified through consultation with DPPs and communities.

Policing with the Community was a key part of the Patten Report, and is considered essential for securing the confidence and support for the police from all sections of the community. The recommendation from the Patten Report was that 'Policing with the community should be the core function of the police service and the core function of every police officer'.

CJI NI and HMIC carried out an inspection on *Policing with the Community* in March 2009, and found that much work needed to be done to implement this recommendation. This work included introducing obligatory partnerships and PCSOs, and more effective call-management arrangements. A revisit of the *Policing with the Community* recommendations will be carried out in early 2011.

PSNI has embarked on a project named R4 to improve its call management, the purpose of the project is to ensure more effective response to demand which in turn will improve confidence and satisfaction levels.

Anti-social behaviour

Around 40% of the 240,000 incidents PSNI records each year relate in some way to ASB, and a 2010 survey carried out by District Policing Partnerships showed that 82% of those responding considered ASB to be their main concern in their area. Tackling ASB effectively is heavily dependent on adequate call management processes and on effective neighbourhood teams.

There is positive news: an overall decrease has been recorded in the number of ASB incidents. In 2008/09 there were a total of 87,000 incidents involving ASB; by 2009/10 this had decreased by 5.8% to 82,000. Available figures show that this is decreasing further, with a total of 79,000 ASB incidents recorded between November 2009 and October 2010.

However, and despite some good work identified during the inspection, PSNI needs to provide a more consistent approach to dealing with ASB.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable and Northern Ireland Policing Board are committed to delivering *Policing with the Community*, and believe this is the route to improve confidence and satisfaction within all communities in Northern Ireland.
- The Chief Constable has directed that neighbourhood and response duties should be resource priorities; this has in part been delivered by the R2R project. In 2010 an additional 158 officers had either been posted to neighbourhood policing teams or had their roles adjusted (eg schools officers integrating further into neighbourhood teams) as part of R2R.
- Neighbourhood officers spoken to by the inspection team were committed and keen to deliver a good service.
- ASB is a stated Service priority, and features within the NIPB *Policing Plan*. Every district contains a target for ASB within its own plan.
- Performance on ASB is monitored by districts and through ACC accountability meetings with district commanders. It also features during DPP meetings, in

which local commanders provide updates on activity. ASB incidents are also monitored monthly during Tasking and Coordination Group meetings.

- A repeat victim referral protocol has recently been introduced in B District (East and South Belfast). Community Safety team ASB officers (of which there are two in B District) maintain a victim's database and notify the relevant neighbourhood team if there are repeat victims. (See also Areas for improvement, below).
- To improve visibility and reduce bureaucracy, approximately 2,000 frontline officers (including Roads Policing) have been issued with mobile data devices. This means officers can carry out a range of administrative functions remotely and faster, whilst out on patrol and amongst communities, rather than having to return to a police station. A further 840 devices will be issued to neighbourhood constables and Tactical Support Group (TSG) by the end of January 2011, and an additional 1,800 will be allocated as directed by the project board.
- A Contact Management Support Unit (CMSU) was introduced into E District in July 2010. This means officers can telephone details of crimes and incidents to an inputter who records information directly onto Niche. This provides for faster and more accurate recording of crimes and incidents. PSNI intends to extend coverage of CMSUs to cover all eight districts as part of the R4 project .
- PSNI and the NIPB hold an annual awards ceremony to recognise 'outstanding examples of local police engaging with local people to find local solutions to local problems'. Categories include Community Police Officer of the Year, Neighbourhood Policing Team of the Year, and a Partnership Award. Dunmurry Neighbourhood Team from D District won this year's award for work improving community relations. The team identified local crime hotspots and provided high visible police patrols to address issues that were impacting on the community's quality of life. Working with community representatives, the team deterred large crowds of youths who were involved in ASB, and dealt with underage drinking.

Work in progress

- The Chief Constable is leading an initiative to introduce service standards into PSNI. These standards will be known as the PSNI 'Policing Commitments'. The Commitments are currently in draft form and will be officially launched in April 2011. The Commitments will cover visibility and accessibility of neighbourhood officers (and include targets for limiting absences), the setting of local priorities, dealing with victims and handling cases of dissatisfaction.
- PSNI have learned lessons from the use of the 'Confidence Route Map', as set out as good practice by the National Policing Improvement Agency to progress the Policing with the Community Delivery Guide and deliver improvements in public confidence. PSNI is preparing a delivery plan to support this work, which will be monitored by the Service Excellence Board.
- The Service has developed its training for neighbourhood officers (up to and including inspector level). The 'Neighbourhood Management Programme' contains 8 modules, including Community Engagement, Partnership Working and Problem Solving. The programme is accredited. There have been 22 officers who have completed the programme, and 117 are undergoing various modules. PSNI is also piloting a programme that involves partner agencies.

- A telephone-administered 'User Satisfaction Survey', which replaces the current Victims Survey, will commence in 2011. The survey will be administered by an external organisation and be directed at victims of assaults, burglary, theft, criminal damage and hate crime. PSNI also plan to contact at least 2,900 people per year who have reported ASB, and establish how effective they thought the police response and level of service provided was.
- At the time of the inspection PSNI were in the process of carrying out a gap analysis on how it tackles ASB against HMIC specific grading criteria. This work is intended to inform a more significant piece of work that will commence late 2010.
- PSNI have carried out two significant pieces of work to better identify vulnerable communities. The Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI), a system developed by the Jill Dando Institute, pulls together crime data and indicators on social exclusion (such as income, employment and educational attainment) to identify locations worthy of further analysis. Analysts have received training on how to prepare reports using VLI as a source. The PEACE iii Project engages with 'disenfranchised groups' to promote better community relations. It identifies communities that have experienced segregation, sectarianism, racism and the legacy of the Troubles. The project aim was to identify 14 neighbourhoods that would benefit from PEACE iii funding.
- The VLI and PEACE iii have now been merged to create the Community Prioritisation Index. This is also being used to inform PSNI on where to prioritise the postings of officers who are being transferred from non-operational roles to Neighbourhood or Response roles. The work will also help to improve the quality of information in neighbourhood profiles.

Areas for improvement

- Although PSNI records calls to National Call Handling Incident Standards, it does not have definitions for ASB or a Service-wide process to identify vulnerable callers or repeat victims of ASB. Common sense is used in the majority of cases to identify callers who might require more support.

Recommendation 1

PSNI introduce a method to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, and take action to reduce repeat victimisation.

- Although PwC and NP feature in the Confidence Route Map work which is being carried out under the direction of the Service Excellence Board (which is co-chaired by two Assistant Chief Constables), there is not an identifiable chief officer lead for NP or ASB.
- The 2009 CJI NI and HMIC PwC inspection, and more recently the 2010 Customer Service inspection, identified abstractions of officers from the neighbourhoods as slowing down the progress of NP teams. Abstractions are recorded to some extent within districts, but this information is not used within performance monitoring in any meaningful way at Service level. The NIPB dropped the requirement for abstractions to be reported because PSNI stated it was too difficult to provide reliable data. The Policing Commitments (see Work in Progress) will contain a target of retaining NP officers on their areas to deal with local priorities and concerns for at least 80% of their time. It is important that PSNI has a definition of abstraction that is relevant, practical and fully

understood by officers and staff as this is the first step to ensuring effective monitoring.

- NP and ASB do not feature prominently on the PSNI website or on posters/literature in police stations. NP information on the website is quite limited, although it does provide names of NP officers and contact numbers. Where activity against priorities has been listed on the website several updates are undated. Although reference is made to PACT meetings on the site, dates of forthcoming meetings are not included. HMIC does note the initial success of the use of social networking sites in North Down, Ards and Ballymena to interact with communities.
- There is no marketing strategy for the Service to provide guidance on how to feed back Service and district performance against NP to communities.
- PSNI guidance on ASB is limited to a 2006 Service Procedure (amended 2010) that provides information on ASB Orders, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Social Behaviour Forums. PSNI does not have a procedure specifically covering ASB. Such a procedure would provide clarity for officers and staff, and ensure consistency by detailing Service-wide attendance and graded response requirements. It should also include victim risk and deployment policies.

Protection from Serious Harm

While the majority of policing activity takes place within neighbourhoods, a small number of people present a serious danger. The threat they pose is not always visible to the public but the potential impact is great. Such threats include major crime and serious and organised crime (and the links to terrorism). In Northern Ireland significant risks exist around the terrorist and security threat, as well as public order.

This section of the report includes commentary on how PSNI tackles these functions, but also includes observations on how PSNI handles intelligence.

Intelligence function

All police services rely heavily on reliable intelligence to inform where resources should be focused and to understand the success (or otherwise) of police operations and activity. This need for intelligence applies equally to PSNI, and to its close partner in tackling the threat posed by terrorist groups in Northern Ireland, the Security Service (SyS).

In October 2007 national security intelligence work in Northern Ireland transferred from PSNI to the SyS. This brought Northern Ireland under the same working arrangements as the remainder of the United Kingdom, where lead responsibility rests with the SyS.

Overall, for this current inspection HMIC found that PSNI collect and share intelligence appropriately and have robust systems and processes in place to maintain operational security.

Strengths

- The intelligence function for the PSNI is delivered by C3 Intelligence Branch within Crime Operations Department and under ACC Crime Operations.
- PSNI describe a good working arrangement with SyS, with regular dialogue and close working relationships. Arrangements are formalised through a number of

service level agreements, covering (for example) Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) and intelligence handling.

- In line with the St Andrews Agreement, PSNI has full visibility of Northern Ireland-related intelligence held by SYS. PSNI officers expressed confidence in the level of interaction and intelligence-sharing that takes place.
- Each District has a DIU responsible for the tasking, collection, analysis and sharing of intelligence. DIU staff are an integral part of C3 Branch, which allows for a consistent approach to the handling of intelligence across the PSNI.
- Niche is the software tool used by PSNI to record intelligence. Although described by users as being a good research tool (for example, because it allows for the automatic search of a number of records and databases), it was also found to be a source of frustration because of the complexity of the system.
- To assist users, a Niche helpdesk is available to assist staff with any problems in using the system.
- DIU staff use Niche to identify and cross-reference sources of information coming into the PSNI. This provides a process to ensure authenticity and ensures the identities of people providing information to the police are safeguarded.
- Access to intelligence on Niche is dependent on the operational requirement (ie C3 staff have a wider access to the system). This assists in maintaining security and integrity of intelligence.
- Assessed intelligence is tasked for action within DIUs. For example, intelligence leads may be tasked to district staff, C1 or C2 Serious and Organised crime branches, or forwarded to the Dedicated Source Unit (DSU) for noting or further research and development.
- Intelligence is classified against PSNI strategic priorities. Centrally initiated Strategic Intelligence taskings are sent to districts for action. DIU staff estimated around 30-40% of intelligence was actionable.
- DIU C3 office Intelligence Management staff provide information for electronic briefings and deliver personal briefings to shifts at least once a week. Briefing screens are regarded as reference tools, with hyperlinks to the most up-to-date threat assessments and nominals.
- Minutes from Daily Management Meetings (DMMs), including incidents and activity from the previous 24 hours, are emailed to all supervisors. A Daily Focus Sheet is updated and circulated with the DMM minutes and is used to task officers; this also provides results of previous taskings.
- Intelligence is reviewed at the DMM, weekly intelligence meeting, and monthly TTCG.
- Managing CHIS in Northern Ireland presents a number of risks, not least around maintaining integrity and public confidence. PSNI has adopted a rigorous process to review and manage the risks to the public and the Service through engaging with the most difficult and sensitive CHIS. The Review Group

is chaired by a chief officer and includes a Human Rights lawyer to provide specialist advice.

- Analysts working in DIUs are tasked in line with local priorities. Skills and accreditation of analysts is carried out centrally by C5 Branch, who monitor and quality assure the analytical products
- PSNI has sufficient sites around the force that are accredited to handle Top Secret material within a secure environment. The number of sites required to maintain operational efficiency is kept under review.

Work in progress

- A review was carried out in early 2010 by C3 Branch into District Intelligence Units (DIUs). The purpose was to bring standardisation of intelligence processes within the eight districts. The review made 16 recommendations, which have been met and are awaiting sign off by the Security and Serious Harm Board. These recommendations include weekly reviews of intelligence, clarity around the scoring and ownership of organised crime groups and providing a senior managers' awareness training package on CHIS.
- PSNI is in the process of forming a Regional Intelligence Unit based at HQ Belfast. The unit will be focused on serious organised crime (not National Security) with staff from Serious and Organised Crime Agency, United Kingdom Border Agency and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, working in a co-located premises with PSNI officers and staff. The aim is to improve intelligence-sharing and provide a faster response to the Organised Crime Task Force. The unit will be fully operational by the end of 2010.
- PSNI is working to combine the Confidential Units of C1 and C2, which will sit with the C3 Organised Crime Intelligence Cells. This will have the benefit of more joined-up and consistent working practices, as well as economies of scale. Plans are in place but the date of implementation has yet to be set (although it is anticipated that this will be early in 2011).
- PSNI is reviewing the deployment of analysts across the service. The proposal is to reduce the number in districts. This will enable the force to provide analytical support to the higher priority terrorist and serious crimes dealt with in the Crime Operations Department. (see also Areas for Improvement).
- Management of Police Information (MoPI) legislation does not cover Northern Ireland but can be adopted by other agencies and police forces in the United Kingdom. HMIC notes that PSNI has decided to adopt the Code of Practice, and that a draft MoPI handbook has been written. PSNI intend to start following this guidance from January 2011. Progress will be monitored by the Information Management Programme Board.

Areas for improvement

- PSNI does not contribute to national collation systems such as NABIS, NAFIS, and the National Source databases. Whilst this is perhaps understandable (owing to the potential risk around operational security), there could be benefits to the rest of the Police Service in exchanging information which, to date, has been considered as specific to Northern Ireland. Examples would be cases where terrorists are engaged in serious organised crime and their activities extend to the mainland.

- Although PSNI has full access to the Police National Computer as used in England, Scotland and Wales, it is not linked electronically. Arrest and conviction data from Northern Ireland is only entered onto the PNC for an agreed list of “serious” offences such as murder, serious assault and sex offences. This is a manual process and it can take up to a year to input some data because of backlogs and resourcing issues. The fingerprints taken for these “serious” offences are also manually inputted by the Metropolitan Police Service on behalf of PSNI to the Ident1 fingerprint system. All other fingerprints are held on PSNI’s own fingerprint system: but this does not have a link to the rest of the UK. From an operational perspective this means officers in England, Scotland and Wales cannot be certain of the accuracy of a PNC check carried out on a suspected criminal from Northern Ireland, as data might be missing. It is encouraging that DNA samples taken for all offences committed in Northern Ireland are profiled and loaded onto the National DNA Database. Achieving full connectivity will involve linking Niche Custody to PNC and making adjustments to the PSNI fingerprint system so it can link to the rest of the UK’s system. This work will cost in the region of £7.4 million and has been delayed due to difficulties in securing funding. Work is taking place between PSNI, Home Office, NPIA and ACPO to identify a solution.

Recommendation 2

As matter of some urgency, and with the support of the Home Office, PSNI introduce systems to electronically update arrest and conviction data, thereby minimising risk to communities and officers in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

- Niche entries lacking detail are returned direct to officers (rather than through their supervisor). Whilst this ensures information about the nature of the intelligence is confined to the officer submitting and the DIU, it does mean that supervising officers are not always aware of a performance issue relevant to one of their staff. Niche has an audit function that can provide detail on officer submissions, but this is not regularly used.
- The intelligence systems used by PSNI to handle the most sensitive intelligence will become obsolete within two years. There is a need to identify and plan for a replacement system.
- Although ACPO guidance on intelligence is followed, PSNI does not have a published operating model/manual that describes its intelligence processes. This would be of particular use to new staff or those posted into specialist units/teams. It would also enable PSNI to understand better how well the intelligence systems are operating and whether they are delivering value for money.
- PSNI does not have staff fulfilling the role of researcher. This means analysts carry out their own research, and this creates a particular problem within Districts. The inspection team were informed that analysts in one district were spending up to 20% of their time on research. This is not an efficient use of their time.

Security Situation

The UK National Security Threat Assessment includes terrorism related to Northern Ireland as one of the four highest priority risks. Within its strategy it reports that: 'despite the significant and continuing progress in stabilising the political situation in Northern Ireland the activities of residual terrorist groups have increased in the last 18 months, and the security situation is unlikely to improve in the short term.'

Despite the security threat not featuring prominently in this year's *Policing Plan*, significant resources and activity are directed at tackling it. For the six-month period from 01 April to 30 September 2010, 113 persons were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act. Of those persons arrested, 29 were subsequently charged (seven out of 63 were arrested for the same period in 2009).

Crime Operations Department has three specific performance indicators related to dealing with the threat:

- Incidents and investigations that disrupt Dissident Republican Activity;
- Increasing the detection rate against Dissident Republican terrorists; and
- Working more effectively with the SyS.

Strengths

- PSNI provide 'Crime Advisors' to SyS to identify evidential opportunities during intelligence operations. These are senior detectives, independent both of the intelligence operation they are asked to advise on and of the appointed Senior Investigating Officer. Their role is to advise SyS how the intelligence operation (on which they have the lead) could be directed to enable evidence to be gathered for a prosecution.
- Officers within the Terrorist Investigation Unit (TIU) undergo ACPO TAM training (stages 1-3). This means they can work with colleagues within the investigative CT Network in England and Wales, using common terminology and understanding of processes (see also Areas for Improvement).
- TIU and Major Investigation Teams have similar skill sets, that allow for an increase in demand for either CT or Major Crime.
- Performance is monitored through the monthly TTCG meeting (chaired by head of C2 Branch) and during quarterly performance meetings with ACC Operations (see also Areas for Improvement).
- PSNI has Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs) based within the Security Branch. Their role is primarily to provide advice to business and local agencies on security measures to be taken in order to minimise the chance of attack from terrorists. They also have a role in providing briefing and information within the Police Service and with partners.
- PSNI has identified sites considered to be critical to the national infrastructure (CNI) and otherwise of significance (e.g. places which could be a potential terrorist target because they are regularly crowded). This work has been undertaken using a methodology used across England and Wales.
- Response plans have been prepared for critical sites and other significant places, kept in electronic and hardcopy form (see also Work in Progress).

- CNI plans are tested on a rolling programme which includes live and desktop exercises.
- PSNI delivers briefings to business on security measures (Operation Argus).

Work in progress

- A five-year strategy, 'Countering the Terrorist Threat', is being written by PSNI in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Office. This is due for completion by end of December 2010.
- An operation is underway to examine historic CT-related offences that might provide investigative leads using advanced techniques, such as enhanced DNA profiling. Funding has yet to be secured for this work.
- PSNI has a schools programme delivered by officers working within NP teams (mainly dealing with citizenship). Under the leadership of the Deputy Chief Constable, PSNI is exploring with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools further means to develop such engagement.
- PPS and PSNI are engaged on a Strategic Programme of Criminal Justice Reform aimed at reducing delay and improving confidence within the Criminal Justice System. This programme will see PSNI move from a position in which most cases are managed by way of a summons to one in which the majority of cases are dealt with by way of a charge. To do this, a Case Ready Pro-Charge Policy will be piloted in 2011. This policy will be supported by more robust usage of 'pre-charge advice' from PPS and a 'Gatekeeper' function to ensure that cases are case-ready and charges are appropriate. The pilot will be applicable to certain offence types but will be reviewed to identify if the management of Counter Terrorism Cases can be improved as well.
- Sites of significance (such as those critical to the delivery of public services) are not flagged on the Atlas Command and Control System. PSNI have been working on an IT solution to resolve this. Plans will be placed on a data storage platform and districts will be able to limit access to sensitive plans to key personnel only.
- CTAs are in the process of briefing all district commanders on critical sites in their areas, and of explaining the corresponding response plans.
- Recommendations from a previous HMIC report on safeguarding critical sites are being progressed by PSNI. In particular, PSNI is pursuing the partnership approach to security planning, which has been developed in conjunction with the local CPNI representative, CTAs and District Emergency Planners.

Areas for improvement

- In the event of additional officers being required to manage an increase in demand for CT investigators, PSNI would use detectives from other parts of Serious Crime Branch. Although trained to similar standards, there are no formalised arrangements in place to use officers from Counter Terrorism Units from England and Wales should there be an extraordinary and sustained increase in demand. (See also Recommendation 5 page 30.)
- There are no quality assurance processes in place to test claims of success in disrupting terrorist activity.

- The understanding and interpretation of what constitutes an act of terrorism varied amongst officers and staff interviewed, and among different levels in the organisation.
- There is a source of contention amongst some officers and the Police Federation of Northern Ireland when information is provided to the media (and other government departments) by PSNI on bombings and shootings. If asked by the media how many 'terrorist attack' (bombings or shootings) have taken place in Northern Ireland, or when presenting figures connected to terrorism, PSNI respond with a figure around 25% of the absolute total. This is because PSNI describes terrorism as an assault on national security. This does not include attacks on civilian targets or on relatives of members of the police service. However, the Police Federation of Northern Ireland will report the higher figure. Consequently two different figures are provided and commented on by the media. The total number of attacks recorded and which relate to the overall security situation are however readily available to the public or media and easily accessed on the PSNI website. Detail is recorded by district as well as Service-wide. PSNI has followed this method of classifying 'terrorist' incidents for many years. Although information can be found on the website, there is a feeling amongst some officers that only a partial picture is provided to the media. This is a divisive as well as contentious issue that should be addressed through consistent reporting (including explanation) on information relating to the security situation.

Recommendation 3

PSNI ensure there is consistency in reporting information on the security situation and terrorist attacks.

Major Crime and Serious and Organised Crime

HMIC carried out an inspection on how PSNI tackles Major Crime and Serious and Organised Crime in 2008. Two recommendations were made for Major Crime, and one for Serious and Organised Crime. In July 2010 HMIC made a follow-up visit to examine progress. This section provides an update on the findings.

Major Crime

- The first recommendation was for PSNI to develop and implement a corporate control strategy.
- Working with advisors from the National Policing Improvement Agency, the Service has developed a force-level control strategy. Each priority in the strategy has a plan covering Intelligence, Enforcement, Prevention and Reassurance, with activity against each priority monitored at monthly Service-level Tasking and Co-ordination Group meetings (co-chaired by Crime Operations and Rural Assistant Chief Constables).
- The second recommendation was for PSNI to identify all vulnerable communities at a strategic and district level in order to better understand the threat posed and their vulnerability to criminality. The Service has introduced the Community Prioritisation Index and the PEACE iii project (covered in detail on page 19 above).
- Both of these major crime recommendations were signed off in June 2010 as complete.

Serious and Organised Crime

- The serious and organised crime recommendation was that PSNI should ensure the new 'Threat to Life' policy, and take full cognisance of all issues identified as areas for improvement in HMIC's report that related to threats to life, including the need to compare PSNI's way of working with good practice in other forces
- A new Policy Directive for Threats to an Individual and Location (PD16/08) was introduced by PSNI in January 2009.
- Following the transfer of ownership of the Threat to Life policy to C3 Intelligence Branch in February 2010, a decision was taken by the Service to carry out a more comprehensive review that also incorporated recommendations from other reports, including those from the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.
- The review has been completed and an updated Threat to Life policy was ratified at the Security and Serious Harm Board in December 2010.
- The updated policy has been adjusted following the lessons learnt from high profile events in Northern Ireland, England and Wales. PSNI has also been in regular contact with colleagues in the Metropolitan Police Service and Merseyside Police to ensure best practice has been captured. In addition, work is being done to ensure warnings are recorded on the Service IT system and to scope out training for inspectors and above.
- This recommendation is now signed off as complete.

Public Order

PSNI has a long history of facing demanding challenges in policing public order and is widely regarded by colleagues in other police forces for its excellence in this field. PSNI received very positive and public feedback from a number of political leaders for the restraint shown by its officers during violent clashes at Ardoyne earlier this year. Just over 80 officers received injuries during the violence. The Service has shared good practice with forces in England and Wales, and PSNI's approach of attempting early engagement with event organisers has been translated into public order guidance in England and Wales.

Parades are a regular feature requiring the deployment of public order trained officers. There are 3,000 notifications of parades each year in Northern Ireland, and over 600 take place on one day (12 July) of the Marching Season. Although not all require policing, some are large, high-risk events that necessitate significant police resources in terms of planning and deployment of officers.

PSNI also contends with a significant number of interface incidents, as well as those linked to actions aimed at disrupting paramilitary activity incidents (when missiles and petrol bombs are thrown with some regularity at officers). It also deals with public order generally associated with the night time economy.

The Service trains for and has the capability to provide 50 Public Order Units: 16 Level 1 Tactical Support Groups and 34 Level 2 PSUs. Ordinarily TSGs will be first to respond to spontaneous public disorder. For pre-planned and prolonged instances of spontaneous disorder they will, where required, be supported by Level 2 PSUs. Officers who make up Level 2 units are drawn from districts and HQ.

Although a maximum of 50 Public Order Units could be called upon, this deployment could not be sustained for any length of time. The resource impact would be mainly felt by district-based functions such as neighbourhood and response teams, as many officers used to provide Level 2 support have a full-time post in these areas, with public order as a secondary skill.

The most significant deployment in a public order situation in recent times was disorder at Whiterock in 2005. Twenty-six Public Order Units (TSGs and PSUs) were required over three days. It is worth noting that the Army provided four Battalions (approximately 1,600 soldiers) in support.

With the end of Operation Banner in Northern Ireland, HMIC considers it important for PSNI to have credible plans in the event of an extraordinary and sustained call on resources trained in public order.

Strengths

- ACC Operational Support is the Chief Officer lead for Public Order, and represents PSNI on the ACPO Public Order Committee.
- PSNI has 16 full-time Tactical Support Group (TSG) units, each comprising one inspector, four sergeants and 23 constables.
- PSNI has led in the development of providing human rights compliant graduated responses to complex policing situations. Learning from their approach has been identified and shared amongst other United Kingdom forces.
- About 10% of TSG deployments are on public order. The remainder is divided between:
 - Support for crime operations – searches, CT and crime;
 - Support for neighbourhood officers;
 - Night time economy issues (just like any other major city);
 - CBRN; and
 - Surveillance (foot).
- Level 1 (TSG) and Level 2 (PSU) officers receive a minimum two days' public order training per year. One day is devoted to tactics and the other is a multi unit day during which Level 1 and 2 staff train together.
- Officers considered 'escalation training' was effective and prepared them well for operational events.
- TSG officers interviewed by HMIC considered they had a good standard of personal issue equipment.
- Effective use is made of evidence-gathering teams, which leads to arrests being made promptly after events.
- To assist in engaging with communities, each TSG has appointed a sergeant who is responsible for identifying Policing with the Community opportunities. Several units now support local community policing teams through short secondments. TSG inspectors also attend community meetings with their district colleagues to obtain a greater awareness of community tensions and issues, and so they can directly contribute to their possible solution – one example of this in action is the Belfast Interface Conflict Resolution Consortium. TSG also contributes to the

Service's 'Better Understanding' initiative, which aims to address community perceptions of policing.

Work in progress

Some joint training has taken place with PSU-trained staff from England/Scotland (West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Strathclyde and Northumbria), but this is limited in terms of numbers of officers attending. The last training took place in November 2010 and involved one chief officer and one PSU from Northumbria training with PSNI Level 1 and 2 units (see also Areas for Improvement).

Areas for improvement

- Public Order is not highlighted as a force priority or a force risk in the *Policing Plan*, Force Strategic Assessment or Control Strategy.
- Although PSNI is aware of the demand and resources required during the parade season, it does not have an overall Public Order Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment to identify Service-wide known and reasonably foreseeable risks. Such an assessment would pull together information on public order (including that related to the night time economy, spontaneous public order and parades) from districts, and enable PSNI to:
 - Assess risks in terms of resource allocation and planning;
 - Identify gaps in current policies, procedures and training;
 - Providing a rationale for current levels of resources; and
 - Generate plans and actions to address the identified risks and gaps.
- The Strategic Security Review contains some of the information that would be found in a Threat and Risk Assessment, such as the numbers of PSUs in PSNI and the need to replace the PSU vehicle fleet. However, this is the extent of the information it contains. A more comprehensive approach needs to be taken in identifying the total threat and demand.

Recommendation 4

PSNI prepare an annual Public Order Threat and Risk assessment to understand the overall level of demand and resources required.

- As mentioned elsewhere in this report, PSNI faces significant challenges in respect of geography and its unique operating environment.
- There are several examples both of PSNI working closely with forces in the receiving and provision of long-term mutual aid (ie seconded officers), and of where it has provided expertise to other forces.
- A gap that needs to be filled is that of short notice mutual aid, especially for public order and counter terrorism. HMIC acknowledges that PSNI already has in place well-trained and experienced resources for these two areas of policing, and that it has considered where it will redirect its own resources in the case of an increase in demand.
- In the case of extraordinary and sustained demand, its plans need to be more credible. PSNI no longer has the ability to call on immediate support from the Army.

- There are difficult issues of geography, logistics and staffing issues (in deploying officers from one force to another) to overcome. HMIC considers PSNI's pace in putting in place contingency arrangements for a wide range of policing functions (including Public Order and Counter Terrorism) should be quickened. The same also applies for PSNI's considerations of how it can support forces in England and Wales.
- HMIC also considers all forces and staff associations have a part to play in ensuring appropriate and effective Service-wide contingencies are introduced.

Recommendation 5

PSNI accelerate work with other forces and partners to ensure effective contingencies are in place to cater for extraordinary demand, including Public Order and Counter Terrorism trained officers and resources.

- PSNI does not have documented Service-wide mobilisation plan that identifies in detail the resources (including equipment and transport) available for duty; the capacity and capability to sustain a policing response over a long period; and the logistical skills needed to manage such mobilisation, including costing and budgeting.
- PSNI has a fleet of 350 armoured Land Rovers. Some of these specialist vehicles are 20 years old, and TSG officers described how the vehicles were becoming unreliable (because of their age) and were in need of regular repair. PSNI plans to replace this fleet and 500 armoured vehicles over the next four years. The total cost to replace both fleets will be around £36.4m. A bid for this amount has been made to HM Treasury.
- There is systematic debriefing of pre-planned significant events such as the July parades. Examples of debriefs for some spontaneous public order incidents were provided. However, this should be extended to capture further good practice and ensure lessons are learnt.
- There is no time limit on postings to the TSG. Although officers have to leave TSG on promotion, many return. Examples were provided of some officers who have served on TSG for 20 years. HMIC suggests a review point is introduced after officers have been in the TSG for five years.
- In PSNI the TSG is in effect the force strategic reserve; but it does not have a consistent number of staff. At the time of the inspection, out of 448 staff there were 60 vacancies.
- TSG officers interviewed said they were up to date with public order training but that other training had slipped back. This was against a background of increased demand for TSG services.

Value for Money

This part of the report provides an overview on how much PSNI receives in the form of a budget and where it spends the money. To understand if an organisation is providing value for money it is important to examine costs of others providing a similar service. Despite an obvious difference in the threats PSNI faces, HMIC cannot see any reason why the Service should not benchmark more with other forces.

Although only recently introduced, the new Corporate Governance and risk management structure is also outlined below, and a number of areas for improvement are identified.

PSNI is carrying out work with others to become more effective in terms of cost and effectiveness. Work with the Garda Síochána is specifically highlighted in the collaboration section.

PSNI received a budget for 2010/11 of just over £1.2bn. During the current year it was also provided with £50.3m (initially £37.4m then a further £12.9m) by HM Treasury to deal with the increase of security attacks. Some of this additional money was spent on the Close Protection Unit and on introducing Automatic Number Plate Recognition

As with all public sector organisations, PSNI comes under close scrutiny to ensure it is providing value for money. It has been asked to consider the impact cuts will have on the service and in July 2010, it presented a budget scenario planning paper to the NIPB providing a response to potential cuts of 2.5%, 5% and 8%. This paper was endorsed by the Board and has been forwarded to the Department of Justice. A decision is still awaited on the budget settlement for 2011/12.

The force employs a total of 11,031 staff. This includes regular officers (7,387), the Full Time Reserve (382, all of which will have to leave the Service by 01 April 2011), part-time police officers (703), and police staff (2,559).

This combined number of staff in 2010 is significantly lower than the 15,700 the Service had at the time of the Patten Report in 1999. It is worthy of note that unlike 1999, PSNI is no longer able to call on the Army in time of immediate and extraordinary demand.

Benchmarking

PSNI employs around twice as many officers per head of population than its most similar group of forces in England. However, other forces do not face or experience the same level of threat, risk and demand in dealing with a security situation as in Northern Ireland. It is also important to understand that the level of threat is increasing in a number of areas. Recent work by PSNI (untested by HMIC) estimates 34% of its budget is directly related to the security situation.

Although some detailed benchmarking has taken place within Financial Services, benchmarking as a means to test out the allocation of resources and to identify efficiencies has yet to be carried out across the whole of PSNI. As the work to identify costs associated with the security threat becomes more sophisticated, PSNI should take the opportunity to benchmark with others. With some functions (ie Call Management and IT) there does not appear to be any reason why benchmarking could not start sooner rather than later.

Governance and managing risk

It is a legal requirement⁴ for the Chief Constable to be an Accounting Officer for the Service. This responsibility involves the proper use of resources and reporting to the NIPB and Justice Minister.

⁴ Section 27 Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000

In June 2010, PSNI introduced a new corporate governance committee structure. The structure was designed to ensure PSNI directs resources towards achieving the Chief Constable's Principles and the objectives as set out in the NIPB *Policing Plan*.

There are four key Programme Boards in PSNI, each co-chaired by two chief officers. The Boards are:

- Security and Serious Harm;
- Leadership and Training;
- Service Excellence; and
- Local Crime and Justice.

These four boards report to the Organisational Improvement Committee, which meets quarterly and is chaired by the DCC. This committee in turn reports to the Chief Constable's Forum (CCF).

The Audit and Risk Committee informs and advises CCF, and the Risk Demand and Resourcing Committee reports directly into the CCF. The CCF is chaired by the Chief Constable and meets monthly. The main objective of the CCF is to direct corporate policy and strategy and ensure the effective use of resources.

Strengths

- In early 2010 PSNI introduced a new electronic system designed to monitor performance, Performance Risk in Delivering Excellence (PRIDE), This has been developed to include the recording of corporate as well as lower level risks and the tracking of recommendations from internal and external inspection reports. The system was examined by HMIC and found to contain relevant performance information to District level and to be user friendly.
- NIPB have direct computer access to PRIDE, this enables immediate analysis of performance information.
- Districts and Departments have nominated single points of contact who are regularly in contact with the risk manager, they are provided with guidance and meet together on an annual basis for exchange of information and learning.

Work in progress

- The risk management process is beginning to be a key aspect of PSNI business planning and evidence from minutes of meetings demonstrates how risks are identified and mitigated.
- The PRIDE system allows all staff to see the risks and measures taken. As the risk management processes develop and become embedded PSNI might want to reflect and consider whether all risks and mitigation should be open to all staff to read.
- The new governance structure has been operating for several months and some areas of duplication have been found between some of the meetings ie CCF and the OIC. An internal review is being carried out on of the structure with a view to streamlining the different groups.

Areas for improvement

- Neither Finance or Human Resources are represented on Service Excellence, Local Crime and Justice or Protection from Serious Harm Boards. It is important to have such expertise on boards given the importance of the projects being managed in terms of people and cost.

- Approval for R4 was given by the CCF in September 2010. The decision was based on the findings of a pilot in E District and an outline estimate of costs for each of the three options presented to the Forum. R4 commenced before a detailed business case on the £1.4m cost had been written. The business case is still in draft form awaiting approval in December 2010. Although the commitment by PSNI to improve call management is quite clear and is a pressing need, there is an obvious risk in giving approval to projects of such a scale without fully understanding risks, costs and dependencies with other pieces of work.
- During the recent inspection of Customer Service, CJI NI and HMIC inspectors recommended the various Policing with the Community projects should be better co-ordinated using project management principles.
- PSNI does not have a dedicated programme management or project support office, whilst this will not resolve issues of ownership of projects it would ensure better co-ordination and more effective reporting procedures.
- Targets are not differentiated between Districts. This has the effect of some Districts not being allocated realistic targets – having either achieved them already in the financial year or too stretching to achieve them.
- There is no obvious performance framework to describe the varying levels of accountability. PRIDE is the tool that assists the performance drive but the benefit would be maximised if set alongside a framework to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach (see work in progress).

Collaboration

Unlike forces in the remainder of the UK, PSNI cannot take advantage of immediate support from other forces in times of extraordinary demand (because of its geographical position). Although this may prevent PSNI from fully exploiting collaborative opportunities such as shared services, there is evidence of the Service working closely with other forces and agencies. Some examples have already been provided earlier in this report (such as the joint Regional Intelligence Unit and work with the Security Service).

Geographically, the closest force to PSNI is the Garda Síochána. This relationship has been described as 'Excellent' by PSNI. One example of how co-operation is increasing is the development of a Cross Border Policing Strategy. The strategy is due to be launched in December 2010.

Training is another area where PSNI are working closely with other agencies. The Patten Report recommended the construction of a new Police College. This was developed, and in 2002 a proposal was made that Northern Ireland should have a joint college to train officers and staff from the police, fire and prison services. A site has been identified at Desertcreat, and an outline business case was submitted in December 2009. Funding for the project has yet to be agreed and a decision is unlikely until after budget settlements have been announced.

In preparation for the joint college, there is already work being done on a joint curriculum. This is being facilitated by Skills for Justice, and approximately 16 other programmes are being jointly worked on or delivered. These include:

- Joint incident command;
- Critical incident;
- CBRN joint training and exercise;
- Human rights;
- Diversity; and
- Road traffic collisions.

Joint training takes place with the Garda Síochána in areas including serious and organised crime investigation, close protection, and intelligence. PSNI as a National Centre has also run courses for other forces in many areas, including firearms, close protection, kidnap, firearms incident command, public order, and leadership and management development.

Despite the work listed above, there are probably more opportunities for joint training, either with other forces or with the wider public sector in Northern Ireland. PSNI does not have a dedicated senior lead to identify, co-ordinate and progress collaborative opportunities. To have such a nominated individual would be timely given the anticipated forthcoming pressures on funding.

Recommendation 6

PSNI designate a senior lead for collaboration to ensure all opportunities are identified and fully exploited.

Conclusions and recommendations

This report on the recent and current performance of PSNI establishes the strengths, work in progress and areas for improvement. HMIC recognises the extraordinary policing environment PSNI operates in, and the threat faced both by communities and by officers and staff within the Service. This notwithstanding, the Service can improve in a number of areas. The areas where the PSNI needs to make progress to either minimise risk or deliver a more immediate improvement in service are provided as recommendations.

HM Inspector of Constabulary will carry out a visit in June 2011 to monitor progress against the recommendations

Recommendations

HMIC recommends that PSNI:

Recommendation 1

Introduce a method to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, and take action to reduce repeat victimisation.

(Local Crime & Policing page 19)

Recommendation 2

As matter of some urgency, and with the support of the Home Office, introduce systems to electronically update arrest and conviction data, thereby minimising risk to communities and officers in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 23)

Recommendation 3

Ensure there is consistency in reporting information on the security situation and terrorist attacks.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 26)

Recommendation 4

Prepare an annual Public Order Threat and Risk assessment to understand the overall level of demand and resources required.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 29)

Recommendation 5

Accelerate work with other forces and partners to ensure effective contingencies are in place to cater for extraordinary demand including Public Order and Counter Terrorism trained officers and resources.

(Protection from Serious Harm page 30)

Recommendation 6

Designate a senior lead for collaboration to ensure all opportunities are identified and fully exploited.

(Value for Money page 34)