Core business

An inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time

Contents

Foreword

1.1   In 1829, Sir Robert Peel, Home Secretary at the time and architect and founder of the modern police force, established the principles according to which policing was to be, and is still, carried out.

1.2   He did so in the then brightly burning light of public anxiety about the setting up of any police force. Citizens of the United Kingdom had observed how in France, at the time of the revolution, a militaristic police force had been established and used by the executive government as an instrument of oppression of the people, to be feared. They did not like what they saw. And yet the levels of crime had reached proportions which were overwhelming the ordinary citizen, and required a more effective regime for its suppression.

1.3   In this country, for longer than records can show, citizens have had a shared and common obligation to pursue and apprehend offenders, and to bring them before a court of justice. Public order, safety and security required no less. Over time, those obligations – which have never disappeared – have come to be discharged predominantly by a professional, full-time police service. However, the character of citizens policing themselves, under the authority of published laws to which they have given their consent (through Parliament), has been maintained. In that respect, Peel emphasised that:

> *"Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence."*

1.4   Peel's first purpose and principle for his citizen police force was not the apprehension of offenders, but the prevention of crime and disorder. He recognised that the greatest public benefit in relation to crime and its consequences is in the success of measures to prevent its occurrence. It is the least expensive thing that the police can do, because it saves people from becoming victims, whether in their persons or their property. Crime prevention remains today the primary purpose of the police. In that respect, nothing has changed. Yet, in too many respects, crime prevention receives in policing a priority which is beneath that of apprehending offenders. This report explains why this must be changed, and why crime prevention needs to be restored in the mind of every police officer to his highest purpose.

1.5   Much else in the world of policing has changed, and changed very considerably. As the volume of more familiar types of crime falls, modern technology provides offenders with new ways of committing crimes with what they believe to be less risk to themselves: less risk of physical apprehension in the act, and lower risk of detection. The police need to understand and adapt to these new methods and types of criminality, and to press into their own service the fullest capacity which modern technology provides to them. This report discusses important aspects of how technology is and is not being properly developed and used by and for the police.

1.6   Policing is more complex than ever before. The expectations of the public for the highest practicable level of safety and protection, and the most assiduous pursuit of those who blight lives and steal, damage or destroy property, together with the greatest level of public scrutiny not only as to what the police do, but how they do it, mean that the demands on modern police officers are considerable.

1.7   Every safety-critical, asset-intensive service – public and private – needs to have a sound understanding of the condition, capacity, capability, serviceability, performance and security of supply of its assets. It also needs to know the nature and extent of the demands which will be placed on those assets, and how those demands may change over time. Policing is done predominantly by police officers at the lowest ranks of the service – constables, sergeants and inspectors – and they need and deserve high quality supervision and management. They need training which properly meets their needs. In 2005 and since, the former head of the Confederation of British Industry, Lord Jones of Birmingham, advised: "If you think training is expensive, try ignorance." In addition, police officers and staff need the tools to do the job efficiently and effectively. Those tools should always be designed with the needs of the user – frontline police officers and staff, and the public – as the predominant consideration.

1.8   The financial circumstances of the country have required considerable savings and efficiencies from public services, and the police have had to bear their share. This requires the costs of policing to be reduced and the productivity of police officers and staff to be increased. If crime is prevented, police officers and staff will have more time to concentrate on bringing offenders to justice. Crime prevention is therefore of very great importance.

1.9   The oxygen of effective policing is intelligence. "If only we knew what we know" is a familiar expression of frustration on the part of police officers. Information is useless if it cannot be found and used at the time and in the circumstances in which it is needed. And in policing, if it is

inaccessible to those who need it, great harm may occur which could and should have been prevented.

1.10   Despite this, in too many respects police forces have failed to embrace and exploit the capacities of modern technology, and have established information systems which even now lack necessary standards of interoperability. Steps are now being taken in this respect – and they are to be welcomed – but progress until now has been too slow, insular and isolationist. This must change urgently; for as long as these material shortcomings persist, lives are at risk.

1.11   England and Wales has 43 police forces. There are not, and never have been, 43 best ways of doing something. Whilst the roots and much of the practice of policing are local, and will remain so, police forces must collectively recognise that it is in the public interest that every force must understand and adopt best practice, to be applied in the most efficient and effective way in each police force area. In that respect, the recent establishment of the College of Policing, which will set common standards in many areas of policing, is a very positive step, and it is incumbent on every chief constable to ensure that the greatest quality of co-operation and assistance is given to the College.

1.12   Police forces are not in competition with one another. The public have the right to expect them to work together, to establish what works best in policing and apply it everywhere with urgency and vigour. Public safety and security demand no less.

Glossary

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
anti-social behaviour	behaviour by a person which causes or is likely to cause harassment alarm or distress to one or more other persons not of the same household as the person (defined in section 101 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011)
APCC	Association of Police and Crime Commissioners; the body which assists police and crime commissioners in relation to matters of common concern and relevance to more than one police area
ASB	anti-social behaviour
Association of Chief Police Officers	professional association of police officers of assistant chief constable rank and above, and their police staff equivalents, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; leads and co-ordinates operational policing nationally; a company limited by guarantee and a statutory consultee; its president is a full-time post under the Police Reform Act 2002
attended crimes	crimes (and incidents subsequently determined to be crimes) that are attended by police officers or members of police staff
British Transport Police	police force responsible for policing the railway network in Great Britain, including London Underground and most metro and light railway systems; it is a non-Home Office police force, funded by the railway industry
BTP	British Transport Police
call handler	worker (usually a member of police staff and not a police officer) who answers telephone calls from the public, determines the circumstances of the call, and decides what the initial response will be

call-handling centre	facility in each police force where call-handlers answer telephone calls from the public, determine the circumstances of the incident being reported, and decide what needs to be done by the police, and initiate or implement that response
chief officer	in police forces outside London: assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable; in the Metropolitan Police Service: commander, deputy assistant commissioner, assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner; in the City of London Police: commander, assistant commissioner and commissioner
collaboration	arrangement under which two or more parties work together in the interests of their greater efficiency or effectiveness in order to achieve common or complementary objectives; collaboration arrangements extend to co-operation between police forces and with other entities in the public, private and voluntary sectors; police forces and police and crime commissioners have statutory obligations in relation to collaboration under sections 22A to 23I of the Police Act 1996
College of Policing	professional body for policing in England and Wales, established to set standards of professional practice, accredit training providers, promote good practice based on evidence, provide support to police forces and others in connection with the protection of the public and the prevention of crime, and promote ethics, values and standards of integrity in policing; its powers to set standards have been conferred by the Police Act 1996 as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
community policing	see neighbourhood policing
community support officer	see police community support officer

community safety partnership	group of representatives who are from the 'responsible authorities', which are the police; local authorities; fire and rescue authorities; the probation service; and health services. The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer; they were set up under sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
control room	facility in each police force in which call-handlers answer telephone calls from the public, determine the circumstances of the incident, decide what needs to be done by the police, and initiate that initial response
corporate services	organisation-wide support services such as legal services and communications, which are often provided based on specialised knowledge, best practice, and technology to serve internal (and sometimes external) customers and business partners
crime categories	specific groups that bring together crimes of a similar nature; for example, there are a number of different categories of crimes of violence that depend on the severity of the violence used; these all fall within one general crime category of violence
crime record	record that must be made under the Home Office Counting Rules in the case of a report of a crime
crime-recording centre	facility in a police force dedicated to taking in reports of crime and recording them in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules
crime scene investigator	police staff who work alongside uniformed and plain-clothes police officers during the investigation of a crime to locate, record and recover evidence from crime scenes
Crime Survey for England and Wales	quarterly independent survey of crime commissioned by the Office for National Statistics, which collects information about people's experience of crime from several thousand households in England and Wales (formerly known as the British Crime Survey)

cyber-crime	offences committed by means of communications technology; these fall into one of two categories: new offences such as offences against computer systems and data, dealt with in the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (for example breaking into computer systems to steal data); and old offences committed using new technology, where networked computers and other devices are used to facilitate the commission of an offence (for example, the transfer of illegal images)
demand	in the context of this report, the amount of service that the public and other organisations require of the police; the police carry out a wide range of interventions in response to this demand including preventing disorder in towns and city centres, protecting vulnerable people and property, responding to crises, stopping crime and anti-social behaviour as it happens, and apprehending and bringing offenders to justice
desk-based investigation	response to a crime or incident that is not attended by police officers or other staff members; all enquiries are conducted by telephone
digital pathfinder initiative	initiative launched in 2013 by the Home Office, the College of Policing and the National Policing Information Business Area to ensure that the experience of forces which are more advanced in their use of digitisation is recorded and disseminated to those forces which are at a less advanced stage of their digital development
digitisation	conversion of information into a digital form so that it can be managed and disseminated more easily; digitisation also refers to the development of technology and processes which facilitate those actions
dip-sample	small, non-random sample of information; as such it is not statistically robust but is used as an information-gathering tool by inspectors
discretionary work	activity carried out by a police officer or member of staff that is self-generated, i.e. it is not in response to, or related to, a call for service or assistance made to the police force
file	in relation to a report of a crime, the termination of work on that matter
forensic evidence	evidence obtained by the application of scientific

	methods (for example, DNA evidence)
front line	those members of police forces who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law
governance	in the context of programme and project implementation, the logical, transparent, consistent and robust decision-making framework designed to ensure that programmes and projects are managed efficiently and effectively
he/him/his/she/her	the use of the masculine gender includes the feminine, and vice versa, unless the context otherwise requires
HOCR	Home Office Counting Rules
Home Office Counting Rules	rules in accordance with which crime data, which is required to be submitted to the Home Secretary under sections 44 and 45 of the Police Act 1996, must be collected. These set down how the police service in England and Wales must record crime, how crimes must be classified according to crime type and categories, whether and when to record crime, how many crimes to record in respect of a single incident and the regime for the re-classification of crimes as no-crimes; the HOCR specify all crime categories for each crime type including homicide, violence, sexual offences, robbery, burglary, vehicle offences, theft, arson and criminal damage, drugs offences, possession of weapons, public order offences, miscellaneous crimes against society, and fraud; the NCRS is part of the HOCR

HMIC Reference Group	regular forum in which representatives of the police service, policing institutions and government can engage with HMIC in order to share information on HMIC's programme of work and approach to inspections; inform HMIC's approach to the design and development of regular all-force inspections; test, in confidence, emerging HMIC inspection findings; and provide an opportunity to improve understanding of their respective points of view on matters of common interest or importance
HR	human resources
human resources	department responsible for the people in an organisation; its principal functions include: recruitment and hiring of new workers; their training and continuous professional development; and their benefits and performance
incident reports	reports received by the police of events requiring police attention; whether or not an incident report becomes a crime report is determined on the balance of probability that a notifiable offence has occurred (as set out in the Home Office Counting Rules); if an incident does not turn out to be a crime, it must still be logged on the force's incident recording system
integrated offender management	approach adopted by different public sector organisations (including local authorities, the police and the probation service) working together to manage persistent offenders who commit high levels of crime or cause damage and nuisance to communities
interoperability	capacity of systems to work together efficiently, and effectively in cases where the technology, processes or other characteristics of those systems are not the same as one another
IOM	integrated offender management
local policing team	team of police officers, PCSOs and police staff working in neighbourhoods to keep local communities safe; the teams often comprise neighbourhood policing teams and response teams, and sometimes investigation teams
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NAO	National Audit Office
National Audit	The National Audit Office (NAO) scrutinises public

Office	spending on behalf of Parliament so that central government and bodies can be held to account for the way they use public money and public service managers can be helped to improve performance and service delivery
National Decision Model	risk assessment framework, or decision-making process, adopted as a single national decision model for police in authorised professional practice, which has six elements to help police officers and staff make effective policing decisions
National Intelligence Model	a method of working based on the principles of problem-solving policing and the use of community and criminal intelligence
National Offender Management Service	an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice responsible for: the running of prison and probation services; rehabilitation services for prisoners leaving prison; ensuring support is available to stop people offending again; and managing private sector prisons and services such as the Prisoner Escort Service and electronic tagging in England and Wales
National Policing Improvement Agency	non-departmental public body established by the Police and Justice Act 2006 to support the police service and other criminal justice partners in reducing crime and maintaining order, acting as a central resource; it closed in October 2013
national policing lead	senior police officer in England and Wales with responsibility for leading the development of a particular area of policing
National Policing Vision 2016	set of objectives of the police service in England and Wales in relation to its development and use of modern digital technology by 2016; leadership in relation to these objectives has been transferred to the College of Policing
neighbourhood staff	officers and other staff members who work in designated neighbourhoods and are not ordinarily given duties elsewhere

neighbourhood policing	activities carried out by neighbourhood teams primarily focused on a community or a particular neighbourhood area, also known as community policing
neighbourhood policing team	team of police officers and PCSOs who predominantly patrol and are assigned to police a particular local community; teams often comprise specialist officers and staff with expertise in crime prevention, community safety, licensing, restorative justice and schools liaison
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NSPIS	National Strategy for Police Information Systems
National Strategy for Police Information Systems	strategy developed in the 1990s with the aim of ensuring that all forces in England and Wales use the same IT systems running the same national software applications; a number of contracts were issued for systems, for example to computerise the booking in, tracking and monitoring of individuals in custody, and associated case preparation of material required in court to facilitate prosecutions; systems for crime analysis and the provision of statistical information; and systems for command and control to help co-ordinate and manage police operations
Office for National Statistics	the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute for the UK; it is the executive body of the UK Statistics Authority, established by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007
ONS	Office for National Statistics
operational support	functions or departments in a police force which support police officers and staff in frontline roles, such as intelligence departments which provide assistance for investigations and scientific support which assist in relation to forensic evidence
PAC	Public Accounts Committee

partner agencies	public sector entities, such as those concerned with health, education, social services and the management of offenders, which from time to time work with the police to attain their common or complementary objectives
partnership	co-operative arrangement between two or more organisations, from any sector, who share responsibility and undertake to use their respective powers and resources to try to achieve a specified common objective
PCC	police and crime commissioner
PCSO	police community support officer
PDR	performance and development review
performance development review	assessment of an individual's work performance by his line manager, usually an officer or police staff manager of the immediately superior rank or grade
PEEL assessment	HMIC's police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) assessment; a new annual programme of all-force inspections that will report on how well each force in England and Wales provides value for money (efficiency), cuts crime (effectiveness), and provides a service that is legitimate in the eyes of the public (legitimacy)
place of safety	residential accommodation provided by a local social services authority under Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948; a hospital as defined by the Mental Health Act; a police station; an independent hospital or care home for mentally disordered persons; or any other suitable place the occupier of which is willing temporarily to receive the patient (defined in section 135(6) of the Mental Health Act 1983)
PNC	Police National Computer

police and crime plan	plan prepared by the police and crime commissioner which sets out his police and crime objectives, the policing which the police force is to provide, the financial and other resources which the police and crime commissioner will provide to the chief constable, the means by which the chief constable will report to the police and crime commissioner on the provision of policing, the means by which the chief constable's performance will be measured, and the crime and disorder reduction grants which the police and crime commissioner is to make, and the conditions to which such grants are to be made; the police and crime commissioner's police and crime objectives are his objectives for the policing of the area, the reduction in crime and disorder in the area, and the discharge by the police force of its national or international functions
police and crime commissioner	elected entity for a police area, established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, responsible for securing the maintenance of the police force for that area and securing that the police force is efficient and effective; holds the relevant chief constable to account for the policing of the area; establishes the budget and police and crime plan for the police force; appoints and may, after due process, remove the chief constable from office
police community support officer	uniformed non-warranted officer employed by a territorial police force or the British Transport Police in England and Wales; established by the Police Reform Act 2002
Police National Computer	computer system used by law enforcement agencies in the United Kingdom to store and provide information
police officer	individual with warranted powers of arrest, search and detention who, under the direction of his chief constable, is deployed to uphold the law, protect life and property, maintain and restore the Queen's peace, and pursue and bring offenders to justice
police station	police building which is wholly or mainly for the use of police officers and staff

Police Federation	national staff association established by the Police Act 1919 to represent the interests of police constables, sergeants and inspectors (including chief inspectors) in England and Wales
preventive policing	technique or practice in policing which is designed to prevent crime rather than react to crime after it has been committed
problem solving	process used in policing in which police forces systematically establish and analyse crime and disorder problems, develop specific responses to individual problems, and subsequently assess whether the responses have been successful
productivity	ratio of outputs against inputs
Public Accounts Committee	committee of the House of Commons which holds the government to account for its use of public money, looking in particular at whether expenditure by government departments represents value for money for the taxpayer; examines the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and such other accounts laid before Parliament as the Committee may think fit; focuses on value-for-money criteria which are based on economy, effectiveness and efficiency
RBPB	Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board
Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board	a board set up in 2010 at the request of the Home Secretary to develop proposals and actions to further reduce bureaucracy in the police service. The board was chaired by Chief Constable Chris Sims (West Midlands Police) and included representatives from ACPO, the Home Office, HMIC, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Police Federation and the College of Policing (taking over from the National Policing Improvement Agency). In January 2014, the RBPB handed over responsibility for this work to the College of Policing
response officer	uniformed police patrol officer whose primary role is to provide initial responses to calls to the police from the public
SARA	scanning, analysis, response and assessment
SARA model	process adopted by many police forces in undertaking problem-solving policing; the most commonly used

	model in police forces and comprises four broad stages: scanning, analysis, response and assessment; a cyclical process, it requires assessment on a continuing basis to determine whether or not the response is effective in resolving the issue
spending review	government process carried out by HM Treasury to set firm expenditure limits and, through public service agreements, establish the principal improvements that the public can expect from Government departments
SPR	Strategic Policing Requirement
staff association	association of employees or police officers that performs some of the functions of a trade union, such as representing its members in negotiations or other dealings with management on matters of pay, conditions of service or discipline, and that may have other social and professional purposes
stakeholder	person, group or organisation who is or may be affected by a force's actions or who has an influence on a force's actions
Strategic Policing Requirement	document issued by the Home Secretary under section 37A of the Police Act 1996 which sets out what, in her view, are national threats, and the appropriate national policing capabilities to counter those national threats; national threats are threats (actual or prospective) which are threats to national security, public safety, public order or public confidence of such gravity as to be of national importance, or threats which can be countered effectively or efficiently only by national policing capabilities; the national threats currently specified are terrorism, organised crime, public disorder, civil emergencies and large-scale cyber incidents
tasking and co-ordinating	structure used by forces to analyse a problem, obtain further information and direct officers or staff towards prevention, disruption or enforcement activity

Technical Advisory Group	group of representatives from the police sector consulted by HMIC before undertaking an inspection; provides technical advice on how best to gather data or other information relevant to the inspection
threat, harm and risk	policy adopted by police forces which details criteria by which the force will determine the level of response (including attendance) in relation to calls received from the public
value for money	economy, efficiency and effectiveness of a given activity
victim satisfaction	measurement of how content a victim is with the contact he has had with the police and the action the police have taken; this includes victims of burglary, vehicle crime and violent crime; the figures concerning victim satisfaction specify the percentage of victims who are satisfied with the service provided by the police
volume crime	high incidence crime: depending on the situation in a particular police area, this could include for example, vehicle crime, burglary or robbery
vulnerable	condition of a person who is in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability or risk of abuse or neglect
warranted officer	officer entitled to exercise police powers, for example, the power to arrest
workforce	in relation to an organisation, the people who are employed by that organisation; in the case of the police, it includes police officers, even though they are holders of the office of constable and therefore not employees of their police forces; it also includes police community support officers and police staff

Summary

Scope of this inspection

2.1   This report sets out HMIC's inspection findings about the effectiveness of policing activity in three important areas of police work: crime prevention; police response to incidents and crimes; and freeing up police time. HMIC has carried out its work on all three areas under one 'umbrella' programme. The findings are contained in this report.

2.2   There are obvious links between the three areas of work. The more time the police are able to free up, the more time they will have to focus on preventing crime. If crime prevention activities are successful, they will reduce demand for police attendance at crimes and incidents and this will result in further police time becoming available. Freeing up time will allow the police to provide a higher quality of service to the public, including when they do attend reports of crime. Improving the quality of the service during attendance (for example through the speedier identification of witnesses or collection of evidence) should lead to more effective investigations. This increases the likelihood of detecting crime and preventing repeat incidents. More effective investigations should lead to more successful prosecutions and convictions, which in turn should reduce repeat offending.

2.3   The police service continues to face significant financial challenges.[1] How forces respond to these challenges will depend on their efficiency and effectiveness in the three areas covered by this inspection: preventive policing, police attendance and freeing up police time. Forces must ensure that they are not reducing costs at the expense of the service they provide. At the heart of this is the need to ensure that police time is freed up to focus on those activities that will help reduce crime and thereby improve public satisfaction and confidence.

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[1] See *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge*, HMIC, London, July 2014. Available on www.hmic.gov.uk

How HMIC undertook this inspection

2.4   In conducting this inspection, HMIC gathered evidence through:

   - the identification, examination and assessment of primary documents from forces, including policies, guidance and plans and other documentation relevant to the areas under scrutiny;

   - interviews with people experienced in these areas of activity and police officers and staff within each of the 43 forces of England and Wales;[2]

   - an in-force reality-testing programme within each of the 43 forces of England and Wales, to examine, check and validate documentation, procedures and practices;

   - liaison with ACPO, APCC and the HMIC Reference Group;

   - liaison with relevant professionals and specialists in particular areas of police business, such as the Technical Advisory Group; and

   - a public survey and a number of focus groups (conducted by independent companies) about public expectations of police attendance and preventive policing activity.

2.5   More detail about how we approached the inspection is provided in the terms of reference, which is available on the HMIC website at www.hmic.gov.uk. The data that underpins the findings in each force are published on the HMIC website (see Annex A for more details and links to the information).

Recommendations

2.6   A number of recommendations are made in this report on the basis of the findings of this inspection. HMIC acknowledges that there are cost implications, whether actual or opportunity costs (or staff costs), in implementing recommendations. With the exception of costs which are associated with some of the recommendations relating to technology systems, the other recommendations relate to the core business of the police service and should therefore be met from within existing budgets. HMIC will review progress made on these recommendations within the

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[2] British Transport Police was inspected as part of this programme of work, but as the force differs in its structure and its services from the 43 Home Office forces, HMIC's findings in relation to it are not included in this report. A separate report that looks exclusively at the British Transport Police will be published in due course

next 12 months as part of its new annual all-force assessments called Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL).

Preventive policing

2.7   Crime prevention is the primary purpose of the police service. Preventing crime is the responsibility of all police officers and police staff in a force.

2.8   It is obvious, but worth remembering, that prevention is better than a cure in this area, both from the point of view of those who would otherwise become victims of crime and from that of society as a whole. What may be less obvious is the significant contribution which crime prevention can make to reduce the costs not just of policing but of the criminal justice system as a whole. Therefore, it is vital that forces give crime prevention the attention and resources it deserves.

2.9   At present, the police service does not have a nationally-agreed crime prevention strategy. Neither do forces have standard definitions or operating procedures setting out how preventive policing should be carried out. The police service is aware of these gaps in policing and work is underway at the national level to fill them. Developing a national strategy will emphasise the importance of crime prevention and should provide much-needed reassurance to the public that the police service has a coherent plan to 'get on the front foot' in tackling crime.

2.10   In the absence of a national crime prevention strategy, HMIC looked for evidence of individual force-level strategic plans. We found that only ten forces had a specific crime and anti-social behaviour prevention strategy which was either currently in place or ready for introduction in 2014/15, although having no strategic plan does not mean that a force is not doing any preventive policing work.

2.11   If there is no preventive policing strategy, a force should still be able to articulate its crime prevention work. The extent to which forces referred to preventive work in their local operational plans was variable. HMIC found that in some forces, officers and staff were less clear about the work they were undertaking to prevent crime, or how that work was managed.

2.12   The inspection found that, in general, forces are able to demonstrate good examples of long term projects to prevent crime in connection with regular, predictable events. Examples include preventing vulnerable groups of people, such as student communities, being targeted by criminals, and measures taken in response to anticipated increases in alcohol-related crime in some towns and cities on particular evenings or in connection with particular events.

Recommendation 1

Not later than 31 March 2015, the police service, through the national policing lead for crime prevention, should establish and implement a national preventive policing strategy and framework.

Recommendation 2

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces' planning documents should contain clear and specific provisions about the measures forces will take in relation to crime prevention, in accordance with the published national preventive policing strategy and framework and in discharge of chief constables' duties under section 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to have regard to the police and crime plans of their police and crime commissioners.

2.13   Despite the work that has been carried out by academics, central and local government, the voluntary sector and the police service in recent decades on effectively tackling crime through a structured problem-solving approach, HMIC found that preventive policing remains unstructured in approximately half of all forces. For example, HMIC found that 19 forces did not have a database to assist with problem-solving. Of those forces that did have a database, even fewer were using these regularly to track the progress of particular cases. Moreover, only 12 forces had processes in place to establish and disseminate good practice throughout the force.

2.14   Overall, HMIC judged that only six forces were regularly and effectively using a database to aid problem-solving and address community issues, which included information-sharing, evaluation of problems and their causes, and sharing good practice with partner agencies. It is simply not acceptable in the second decade of the 21st century that tried and tested analytical tools of this type are not being used routinely in all forces; and that the knowledge of what works is not being applied more systematically to tackle local crime problems.

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2015, every force that does not have an adequate, force-wide problem-solving database should develop and start making use of one, to record, monitor and manage its neighbourhood problem-solving cases.

Recommendation 4

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they are using their databases to track the progress and evaluate the success of actions taken in relation to each neighbourhood problem-solving case recorded on the database.

Recommendation 5

By 31 March 2015, each force should ensure that it is able to disseminate information and share good practice from its database throughout the force, as well as to local authorities and other relevant organisations involved in community-based preventive policing or crime prevention.

2.15   For preventive policing to be effective, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour, forces must be able to identify those individuals who are repeat victims, i.e. people who have reported anti-social behaviour previously. That is because a person who has reported anti-social behaviour on previous occasions is more likely to be vulnerable to future incidents. HMIC was disappointed to find that there is no national definition of what constitutes a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour; that one force did not even have an agreed definition of this at a force level; and that 11 forces were unable to establish the extent to which victims of anti-social behaviour had been victims previously.

2.16   Other issues in relation to the identification of vulnerable and repeat victims were identified during this inspection. A recommendation regarding the adoption, across the police service, of common definitions for vulnerable and repeat victims is included (Recommendation 11 later in this report).

Recommendation 6

By 20 October 2014, the one force which has not already done so should adopt a sound force-level definition of a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour.

Recommendation 7

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that their records clearly establish whether victims of crime and anti-social behaviour fall within the applicable definition of 'repeat victim', and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that when repeat victims call the police, the force's call-handlers have the means to establish immediately that the caller is a repeat victim.

2.17   Public survey work carried out for HMIC established that 40 percent of those who had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour remembered being given crime prevention advice (paragraph 4.6). However, half of respondents stated that they could not remember being given, or had not been given, such information. Opportunities to communicate important crime prevention messages to victims are being missed. This must change.

2.18   All officers and staff have a role to play in helping prevent crime. But officers in some roles do not recognise the contribution they can make. Instead they see crime prevention as principally the preserve of dedicated crime prevention officers and PCSOs in neighbourhood patrol teams.

2.19   This is particularly problematic given that many forces have recently restructured or reduced their number of dedicated crime prevention officers.

2.20   Failure to ensure that all officers and staff play a role in crime prevention may result from a lack of crime prevention training. Preventive training, other than initial recruit training, is the exception rather than the rule, and the training that is provided generally is confined to neighbourhood officers and PCSOs.

2.21   Investment in training should help ensure that all officers and staff understand both (a) the value of using every appropriate opportunity to engage with the public and victims, and (b) how to do so effectively.

Recommendation 8

> **Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should provide and periodically refresh basic crime prevention training for officers and staff who come into contact with the public.**

2.22   The measurement and evaluation of crime prevention and disruption projects needs to be improved. Forces need to make material improvements in their methods not only how they measure what they do, but also how they evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. They need to establish what works and what does not work and collect and disseminate the resulting information both within the force and between forces.

2.23   HMIC found that daily management of crime and allocation of officers and staff to carry out preventive and disruption activity in the light of new information and intelligence are good in the main. However, forces make little use of information that is then collected about the prevention or disruption activities which they have carried out. In particular, there is inadequate assessment currently by forces of the success of prevention or disruption tactics employed by them.

Recommendation 9

> **By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that crime prevention or disruption activity carried out is systematically recorded and subsequently evaluated to determine the effectiveness of tactics being employed.**

Police attendance

2.24   The way in which the police respond to calls from the public is changing. In particular, it is no longer the policy of many forces to attend all reports of crimes or incidents, and our inspection found that the police response which the public can expect to receive varies significantly between force areas.

2.25   We found four forces with a policy of attending all reports of crimes and incidents and a further two forces with a policy of attending all reports of crimes. The remaining 37 forces have a policy in which the call-handler makes an assessment (known in the majority of forces as a threat, harm and risk assessment) as to whether to attend an incident or to deal with in another way (such as over the telephone).

2.26   This variation in policies across forces means that members of the public will receive different responses from the police for the same types of incident or crime depending upon where they live.

2.27   The criteria used in a threat, harm and risk assessment were broadly similar across all forces with this policy. In general terms, these included consideration of: the seriousness of the crime or incident; the characteristics of the victim or caller (e.g. whether vulnerable or whether a repeat victim); and evidential matters (e.g. whether evidence might be lost if police did not attend the scene). Twenty-two of the forces adopting a 'threat, harm and risk' approach also stipulate that police should always attend certain categories of crime and incident.

2.28   The level of training provided to call-handling staff on what constituted threat, harm and risk was variable. As a result, HMIC found that in 12 forces, the staff in the call-handling centre were unable consistently to describe what constituted 'threat, harm and risk'. In some cases, views differed even within the same call-handling centre. In addition, in seven of these forces HMIC found that there were no clear criteria set by the force to assess the level of threat, harm and risk.

2.29   Similarly, HMIC found that 17 forces are failing consistently to identify vulnerable callers as a result of shortcomings in the call-handling and/or record-keeping process. It is important for forces to establish at the point of initial contact whether a caller or victim is vulnerable, particularly where forces have adopted a 'threat, harm and risk' policy, because the level of vulnerability will inform the decision about whether anyone attends the incident or influence the level of service they receive.

Recommendation 10

Not later than 31 March 2015, those forces using a threat, harm and risk policy, that have not yet done so, should provide call-handlers with specific, sound and comprehensible criteria against which they can assess threat, harm and risk.

Recommendation 11

Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to establish as mandatory professional standards, service-wide definitions of vulnerable persons and repeat victims.

Recommendation 12

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that call-handlers are following the correct procedures to identify callers as vulnerable or repeat victims.

2.30   The recording of crime or incident reports by the public, and the police response to them, is a vital first step towards protecting victims and solving crimes. Proper record-keeping enables police forces to understand how they are deploying their officers and staff, and whether or not such deployments are effective.

2.31   One effective method of recording reports of crimes and incidents by the public is to use a system known as the 'command and control system'. This is an incident management system which allows the force to establish easily whether police attended the crime or not. All forces use this system to record reports of crime to some extent. However, 18 forces used this type of system to record all initial reports of crime and then subsequently record the crime on their crime recording systems.

2.32   The remaining 25 forces, to varying degrees, record some (but not all) reports of crime directly onto their crime recording systems. Crime recording systems are not designed to record officer and staff deployments, and only six of these 25 forces were able to establish the proportion of directly-recorded crimes that they attend.

2.33   As a result, 19 forces were unable to provide information in relation to the proportion of crimes that they attended during the 12 months to 30 November 2013. This is a matter of significant concern.

2.34   Similarly, HMIC was disappointed to find that 26 forces are unable accurately to distinguish either in their command and control incident systems or in their crime recording records between their attendance to burglaries of people's homes and burglaries of other buildings. Twenty-seven forces were unable accurately to distinguish in their records their attendance to reports of theft of motor vehicles and 28 forces were unable to distinguish their attendance to theft from motor vehicles.

2.35   Further, during HMIC's inspection many forces admitted that they are not recording accurately on their command and control systems their attendance at crimes and incidents.

2.36   This is simply not good enough. Forces cannot possibly accurately assess the service they are providing to victims, neither can they understand the demands being placed upon the force, if they lack basic information about the numbers and types of crimes attended by officers and staff.

Recommendation 13

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place adequate systems and processes to enable the accurate recording and monitoring of the deployment and attendance of officers and staff in response to all crime and incidents reported to them.

Recommendation 14

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that they have the ability efficiently and promptly to differentiate in their records their attendance to specific crime types, such as between burglary dwellings and burglary of other buildings.

Recommendation 15

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should establish and operate adequate processes for checking whether attendance data are accurate, including dip-sampling records.

2.37   Attendance information from the forces which were able to provide these data indicates a large variation in overall attendance rates[3], from 39 percent to 100 percent[4], with an average of 79 percent. The data from forces able to provide a full picture indicates that police attendance to reports of burglary dwellings ranged from 93 percent to 100 percent, with an average attendance rate of 98 percent. The information returned by forces indicates a notable variation in attendance at both theft of a motor vehicle crime and theft from a motor vehicle. In the forces able to provide the data, attendance to theft of a motor vehicle ranged from 33 percent in one force to 99 percent in another. For theft from a motor vehicle, this

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[3] That is, the number of crimes attended as a percentage of all reports of crimes.

[4] These percentages are rounded. Although Cleveland Police was shown at 100 percent attendance at all crime, the actual figure is 99.5 percent. The force is unable to identify vehicle crimes separately on its command and control system, so it is unable accurately to establish its attendance rate in relation to this crime type, hence the difference in attendance at all crime and vehicle crime.

range increased from seven percent in one force to 98 percent in another.

2.38   There is insufficient national data reliably to assess whether a relationship exists between attendance at crimes and victim satisfaction or detection rates. Further work needs to be carried out in this area in order to provide a better understanding of the principal factors in improving both victim satisfaction and detection rates.

Recommendation 16

By 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to carry out research to understand the relationship between the proportion of crimes attended and the corresponding detection rates and levels of victim satisfaction.

2.39   The primary role of police community support officers (PCSOs) is that of reassurance and engagement with their local community. In carrying out the inspection, HMIC established that 17 forces were deploying their PCSOs to incidents, or requiring them to investigate crimes, beyond their role profile and training.

2.40   All forces provide some kind of appointment system for victims of crime, either through appointments at a police station or through appointments for officers and staff to visit the victims at their homes. HMIC sees the value in this approach for both the police and victim. However, HMIC was provided with a number of examples where appointments were being made for the convenience of the police, or when the incident could and should have been dealt with immediately. The use of appointment systems in these ways is neither appropriate nor acceptable.

Recommendation 17

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that PCSOs are not being used to respond to incidents and crimes beyond their role profiles, in respect of which they have no powers, or for which they have not received appropriate levels of training.

Recommendation 18

By 31 December 2014, all forces should produce clear guidance for officers and staff on what kinds of crimes and incidents need to be dealt with immediately and are not appropriate for resolution by way of appointment.

Recommendation 19

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that where crimes or incidents are being dealt with by appointment, these are, to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, made for the convenience of

the victim(s); and that appointments are never used in cases requiring immediate attendance.

2.41   An area of particular concern is that of a 'desk-based' investigation, where forces decide to deal with a crime over the telephone without any attendance at the scene (and without any face-to-face contact with the victim). While such an investigation, if properly carried out, may be a cost-effective way of dealing with a report of a crime, it is important that: (a) reports are investigated rather than simply being 'filed' (i.e. the case papers are put away and no further investigative action is taken; in other words, the matter is closed); (b) appropriately trained personnel carry out the investigation; (c) opportunities to preserve or collect evidence are not lost; and (d) the overall aim of crime prevention (including the prosecution of offenders) is not subordinated to administrative convenience.

2.42   In 37 forces, HMIC found that some reports of crimes are deemed suitable for being dealt with over the telephone. In these forces, the initial report is normally assessed by a call-handler and if the crime is believed to be appropriate for desk-based investigation, such investigation will be carried out by either a crime management unit or dedicated telephone investigation unit, or the report will be directly recorded by the call-handler.

2.43   HMIC established that while most forces have provided training to call-handlers in relation to the National Decision Model and the force 'threat, harm and risk' policy, these staff in the main did not have any investigative training or experience. Similarly, in the crime management units and telephone investigation units HMIC visited (which were run by a mixture of police officers and police staff), HMIC found the level of training and experience varied across forces.

2.44   HMIC concluded that the current system of desk-based investigations is failing to serve the public properly in a number of important respects. All too often, 'desk-based investigation' appears to mean little (or nothing) more than recording a crime without taking further action. Call-handlers generally lack the training and expertise to carry out these investigations. Training and expertise of staff in crime management units and telephone investigation units is patchy. This is unacceptable.

Recommendation 20

> **Not later than 30 September 2015, all forces should ensure their officers and staff involved in investigation of crime over the telephone in call-handling centres, crime management units and telephone investigation units have received appropriate investigative training.**

2.45   Where crimes were not attended, HMIC found a wide disparity in the quality of investigations and their supervision. The time (if any) devoted to investigating reports of crime was also variable. All too often, the only action taken on a report was to file it. In this context, 'filing' means recording the reported crime or incident but taking no further investigative or other action.

2.46   In 13 forces, HMIC found that many of the crime reports examined[5] had little or no documented evidence of any investigative plans in relation to non-attended crime types and all too often little evidence of independent supervisory assessment of them. Frequently, these crimes had been filed on the same day that they were reported.

2.47   Our inspection also identified that for some reports of volume crime (such as vehicle crime, criminal damage and burglaries of properties other than a dwelling); a trend is emerging of asking victims in effect to carry out the investigation themselves. This was evident in some of the forces that were operating a threat, harm and risk policy in relation to attendance. Victims are asked a series of questions to assess the risk of evidence being lost and to establish the likelihood of the crime being solved. These questions include whether there is any CCTV coverage of the area, any potential fingerprint evidence and whether the victim knows if there are any witnesses to the crime. If the victim does not know the answer to these questions, HMIC observed in some forces that they are asked to speak to neighbours, check for CCTV or view second-hand sales websites to see if their stolen property is being advertised for sale. Many of these crimes are recorded and filed on the very day of the initial report with no further apparent contact with the victim. HMIC finds this expectation by these forces that the victim should investigate his own crime both surprising and a matter of material concern. The police have been given powers and resources to investigate crime by the public, and there should be no expectation on the part of the police that an inversion of that responsibility is acceptable.

2.48   HMIC therefore considers that many forces currently are using desk-based investigations in a way that means that unless there is very obvious forensic, witness or CCTV evidence available (and the victim or caller is aware of this at the time the report is made) the crime is likely to be filed the same day without further investigation. In addition to not providing an adequate service to the victim, opportunities are being lost to establish factors from these crimes that can contribute to a

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[5] A small sample of crime files was examined in each force, including at least 50 unattended crime reports. The results therefore are indicative only.

comprehensive picture and better understanding of crime in an area, enabling a more informed crime prevention response to be devised.

Recommendation 21

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that all crime reports have investigation plans that are being properly updated and supervised, whether these are for crimes that have been attended or those being resolved by desk-based investigation.

Recommendation 22

By 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place and be operating adequate systems which ensure that all crime reports are appropriately investigated before being filed.

2.49   A related issue is the use of PCSOs to attend reports of crimes or incidents which are assessed as suitable for desk-based investigation.

2.50   HMIC found that in some cases of desk-based investigation, crime management unit and telephone investigation unit staff had asked a neighbourhood officer or PCSO to visit the location of a crime and, in some cases, to investigate the crime. HMIC is clear that forces should ensure that a PCSO's primary function remains a reassurance role, not an investigative one.

2.51   HMIC does not recommend the use of PCSOs to investigate crimes; we do see a clear reassurance, crime prevention and deterrent role for them. With basic preventive training, PCSOs would be better equipped to conduct follow-up reassurance patrol and provide victims and neighbours with crime prevention advice to help prevent future crimes being committed. This work fits well with the role of PCSOs of engaging with their local community, providing a high-profile deterrent and reassurance patrol and building trust and confidence in their community.

2.52   Recommendation 8 already makes reference to crime prevention training being provided to officers and police staff that come into contact with the public. Clearly, PCSOs fit within this category of police staff.

2.53   An important aspect of crime prevention is bringing those who commit offences to justice as quickly as possible, to deter them and to prevent further crimes being committed. Every police force needs an organised and methodical way to bring offenders swiftly to justice. This lies at the heart of effective policing.

2.54   The inspection examined the arrangements in forces to deal with those offenders whose criminal activity is believed to cause most harm to the local communities. This is known among forces and their partners as the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme and involves the police

working with partner agencies to tackle the issues that have contributed to their offending. The intensity of the level of management that offenders receive relates directly to the level of risk that they are assessed as posing.

2.55 In 28 forces, we found good arrangements, with regular scheduled meetings between the appropriate representatives from the relevant organisations. HMIC found that these meetings were well organised with a clear focus. Decisions about changes in the level of risk associated with offenders were documented and activities were tracked and regularly reviewed.

2.56 In 15 forces, we assessed that the IOM structures were not as effective as they could be. HMIC found that collectively these forces had a lack of strategy, standard operating procedures and poor integration of systems, leading to unclear IOM assessment processes and responsibility for action in relation to individual offenders.

Recommendation 23

By 31 December 2014, those forces with ineffective Integrated Offender Management arrangements should conduct reviews of their shortcomings to establish the improvements which should be made. In each case, not later than 1 April 2015 the force should have drawn up an adequate improvement plan and made substantial progress in its implementation.

2.57 Our inspection examined forces' systems and procedures for dealing with named suspects and wanted persons. HMIC found that in18 forces there were clear and effective procedures for managing and monitoring progress towards the arrest or interview of suspects. The remaining 25 forces were unable to provide evidence of focused, effective systems for actively pursuing all suspects.

2.58 As part of our inspection, HMIC asked forces to provide information on three types of people who were wanted for arrest or interview by the force: people named as suspects in connection with a crime; suspects who had been bailed from a police station and failed to return; and suspects whose details had been circulated as "wanted" nationally on the police national computer system (PNC). It is a matter of extreme concern that some forces were not able to provide the data requested on these points. Timely and effective pursuit of named and wanted suspects should be core business for the police.

Recommendation 24

By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that they have adequate systems in place to record (a) the number of open

unsolved crimes being investigated in relation to which there is a named suspect; (b) the number of people within their areas who have failed to answer police bail; and (c) the numbers of suspects about whom details have been circulated on the PNC.

Recommendation 25

> **By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that effective monitoring procedures and systems are in place to enable police managers to track the progress being made with named suspects and ensure they are being pursued as quickly as possible.**

Freeing up police time

2.59 The police need to continue to find ways of freeing up police time if they are to make the reductions in their budgets required by the government's austerity programme while also improving the service they provide to the public. In a time of continuing austerity and with further pressure on police budgets to come, forces need to put more effort into developing the means to assess how their most valuable assets – officers and staff – spend their time. This is to make sure that they are being used as efficiently and effectively as possible to provide a better service to the public.

2.60 The starting point in considering this topic is a simple one: in order to make meaningful progress in freeing up police officers' and police staff time, forces must first understand how, and how effectively, that time is being used currently.

2.61 Similarly, once officers' time has been freed up it is essential that forces are able to say how, and how effectively, that extra time has been used, by whom, and to what end. There is, to put it bluntly, no point in saving time only for that extra time to be, at worst, wasted or, at best, unaccounted for at the end of the process.

2.62 Forces have responded to the challenge of austerity through combinations of reorganisation and restructuring. To a greater or lesser extent, forces have had a focus on keeping a visible presence in communities, whether through using uniformed officers or PCSOs on the beat.

2.63 Forces' work to free up police time and ensure the way they work is more efficient is being carried out against the background of changing demand. Forces need to deploy their officers and staff as effectively as possible to deal with the issues and problems that matter most to local communities by, for example, preventing and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and bringing offenders to justice.

2.64   In order to do this, forces need to have a better understanding of all the demands they face. This includes being able to establish how different incidents and crime types carry different resourcing implications (e.g. the number of staff or officers deployed and for how long) and costs. Work is being carried out currently by the College of Policing to develop a better understanding of the way that forces provide their services to the public, including an examination of the nature and extent of demands on police resources. This work includes assessing the work already carried out by forces to build a picture of demand locally, analysis of incident data from the last five years in four representative forces and working with one force to understand non-reactive demand, i.e. activity that is generated by officers and staff themselves.

2.65   All forces have the means to record information allowing them to assess demand at a basic level (for example, the number of telephone calls received or incidents logged). But HMIC found that few forces are carrying out the necessary detailed analysis of the nature of this demand.

2.66   However, HMIC did find some encouraging work in a small number of forces that are examining how demand is changing over time. These forces have started to look at the time taken to complete different activities and are using specialist software that calculates the average time it takes to deal with responding to incidents, crimes and other calls for service. In addition, some forces are using consultants to assist in their understanding of demand. For example, in July 2014, West Midlands Police announced a five-year contract with a consultancy company to restructure the force and develop a new way of operating to meet demand in a better way.

2.67   HMIC found that forces varied in their understanding of the demands they faced. They did not have a common approach to how they try and understand that demand. While most forces had a good grasp of the calls for service they receive, a disturbingly high proportion of them did not understand the full range of the demand they face including the workloads and activities undertaken by officers and staff. This lack of information meant that planning – including planning of how police officers and staff should be deployed – was not as efficient as it could and should be.

2.68   A full and detailed understanding of demand is necessary to ensure that policing is efficient but to have that understanding requires a sophisticated assessment of the performance and effectiveness of all of the officers and staff in a force. Care is needed when police forces use performance measurement tools and techniques. Broad measures of crime (or their associated activities) take no account of the relative seriousness of the crimes, nor of the quality of the investigation carried out or the level of service provided to the public. It is important, therefore,

that performance measures are used purely for information, not used as outcomes to be pursued for their own sakes.

2.69 It is the responsibility of police leaders to ensure their officers and staff concentrate on those activities that matter most to delivering a quality policing service to the public, not those that are easiest to count. However, the use of appropriately valued performance measures will enable forces to understand how officers and staff fill their days. While officers and staff often will be very busy, forces need to know whether the activity being carried out by them is the right activity in terms of ensuring that objectives are met in the most efficient way.

2.70 An important element in understanding how officers and staff spend their time lies in using appropriate performance assessments, which make clear what is expected of each officer and member of staff. Such assessments need to ensure that each officer, and each member of staff, understands how success will be measured in relation to their role. This will also provide forces with a clearer understanding of the demands placed upon their staff and whether their resources are distributed appropriately.

2.71 HMIC identified 17 forces that had some form of performance assessments in place for the majority of their staff which was understood by their workforces. However, the majority of forces – 26 in total – had only basic management information available. This information did not provide officers and staff with a clear understanding of how they were being measured or assessed. While some officers and staff in these forces were completing 'productivity' sheets manually to record some aspects of their daily or weekly activity, there was no consistency in how they were being used.

Recommendation 26

All forces should work with the College of Policing to support its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the demand which the police service faces. Forces should understand what proportion of demand is generated internally and externally, and the amounts of time taken in the performance of different tasks. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 27

All forces should progress work to gain a better understanding of the demands they face locally, and be prepared to provide this to the College of Policing to establish good practice in this respect. All forces should inform HMIC of their progress on this matter through their annual force management statements.

Recommendation 28

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they have the means to assess and better understand the workloads of their staff, and that officers and staff understand what is expected of them and how they will be assessed.

Recommendation 29

All forces should work with the College of Policing to continue with its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the nature and extent of the workload and activities of the police service. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

2.72 As a general rule, a member of police staff of similar grade operating in the same environment will cost about a third less than a police officer. If opportunities exist to use police staff crime investigators and response support staff to carry out operational and administrative tasks that are normally carried out by response officers, this would increase the availability of response officers for front-line patrol and tasks requiring police powers.

2.73 HMIC found that 25 forces are reviewing which tasks across the organisation require the warranted powers of a police officer.

Recommendation 30

By 31 March 2015, those forces that have not already done so should conduct a review of the tasks currently being carried out by their police officers to establish which activities do not require warranted police powers and could be carried out by police staff.

2.74 The inspection also raised a number of specific issues relating to particular areas of extra demand which were seen by officers and PCSOs as falling outside core police responsibilities. In particular, officers and PCSOs raised concerns about additional demands relating (a) to members of the public with mental health problems; and (b) to non-crime related incidents involving injuries or illness. HMIC acknowledges the work currently being carried out by the College of Policing and forces on these points.

2.75 **Mental health problems**. The police may find themselves called to deal with people who may be thought to represent risks to themselves or others. Police officers, who are not normally specialists in dealing with mental health problems, will seek to ensure that the person in question is passed into the care of the appropriate local health or social services agency. However, this can be a time-consuming process which removes

officers and staff from other incidents which may be more suitable for police attendance.

2.76 A number of forces have started pilot programmes with mental health workers, which often involve them accompanying officers on patrol. The early indications are positive. More detail is included on these schemes from paragraph 6.56.

2.77 **Ambulance calls**. A second concern expressed by frontline officers and PCSOs in some areas related to their attendance at non-crime incidents involving injured or sick members of the public. Normally, such incidents would also require attendance by the ambulance service. We were told that the slow response by the ambulance service in some cases means that the police have to remain with sick or injured individuals for some considerable time while awaiting the arrival of an ambulance. Officers attending such incidents cannot be deployed elsewhere.

2.78 In response to this problem, a number of forces are working with the ambulance service to ensure that the obligations of each service are understood and to monitor attendance to incidents. This appears to be having a positive effect.

Recommendation 31

By 31 March 2015, those forces without a mental health triage programme should carry out analysis to assess whether adopting such a programme would be cost-effective and beneficial in their particular areas. Where the analysis indicates this would be positive, all forces should work with their local mental health trusts to introduce such a programme by 1 September 2015.

Recommendation 32

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress its work into how mental health cases and ambulance provision can be better managed. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

2.79 HMIC considered how the police service, like many other organisations, is trying to make efficiency savings by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.

2.80 Pilot projects in a number of areas (for example, changes to officers' appraisal systems) indicate that there is a significant amount of time that can be freed up, although this has not been quantified clearly. HMIC found that while most forces are undertaking some work to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, there are significant variations in the progress made between forces. Moreover, only a few forces were able to provide specific evidence of time saved.

2.81 The inability of forces to quantify the savings in time they are making by reducing bureaucracy must call into question whether they are making planning decisions, including the allocation of officers and staff, with all the relevant information. The danger is that the extent of the efficiencies they are making will not be properly quantified and exploited to provide a better service to the public.

Recommendation 33

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress the work it has taken over from the Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board to establish opportunities where savings can be made. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 34

By 31 March 2015, every force should introduce a local bureaucracy reduction programme with a plan for quantifiable efficiency savings.

Recommendation 35

By 31 March 2015, all forces should begin monitoring how much officer and staff time has been freed up by the policies they have put in place to reduce bureaucracy, and establish how the force has used the extra time.

2.82 Effective policing requires the best obtainable quality information to be accessible to police officers and staff when and where they need it. Technology is a critically important means of providing them with that information, and the police service must intensify its efforts to ensure that the capacity and power of modern technology are made fully available in the prevention of and fight against crime and disorder.

2.83 In the design of systems, the needs of the user should be paramount. In the case of the police, users are front-line police officers and staff; they are also the public, on whom the police rely for their co-operation and the provision of information. In too many respects, procurement of ICT systems by the police has paid insufficient attention to the needs of the user, and this must change. In these respects, the capacity and capability of the Government Digital Service and its associated agencies should be used to the fullest practicable extent.

2.84 Being able to keep response and neighbourhood officers and staff on patrol on the frontline through the greater use of technology, removing the need for them return to a police station, for example, to confirm a person's identity, or complete paperwork, is one sign of a modern, efficient and effective police force. It can also be a more convenient way for the public to give the police information and for them to receive

information from the police, for example through the use of apps, rather than visiting a police station. It is reasonable to assume that the easier it is for the public to communicate with the police, the more likely they will be to do so.

2.85   The ability of police forces efficiently to share information between themselves and with others concerned in crime prevention and criminal justice remains a matter of considerable concern. In a world where multiple operational interfaces perpetuate – and may even intensify – complexity and lack of interoperability, it is essential that these difficulties are kept to the irreducible minimum. While there is no prospect of a single national police IT system being developed – and a single system is not needed – greater interoperability could be achieved if the various police ICT networks were brought together in one network of networks allowing information to be transmitted and received more easily between systems.

2.86   The concept of open standards is crucial to ensuring interoperability between systems and in facilitating a national information strategy. So far, two open standards have been published by the Home Office. However, they are not mandatory standards issued under the Home Secretary's powers to make regulations as to standards of police equipment, including IT software and hardware, on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness for one or more police forces in England and Wales[6]. If the open standards that have been published are not adopted, or if further difficulties with interoperability materialise, serious consideration should promptly be given to the use of the Home Secretary's powers.

2.87   HMIC is very concerned that, overall, the history of providing the police service with ICT that meets its needs, including the critical ability of different systems to convey and gain access to information and intelligence, has been poor.

2.88   There are a number of reasons for these deficiencies including (a) the current situation in which the Police ICT Company has been established but is not yet fully operational, and (b) the absence of a national police information strategy implemented through modern technology. None of this inspires confidence that lessons of the past, particularly those relating to the need for clear governance and responsibility for implementation, have been learned.

[6] Police Act 1996, s.53

2.89   It is encouraging that all forces have agreed to use new technology to work in a more digital way by 2016. It must be hoped that this will change the way in which the public obtains information and services from the police, and transforms the way that the police service and its partners in the criminal justice system work together.

2.90   HMIC found good examples of initiatives that, if adopted and adapted as necessary by all forces, should lead to increased levels of efficiency. For example, 15 forces stated that they are currently using or testing Livelink, video technology that enables officers to give evidence at court from a police station. In Kent, where Livelink is used, the force estimates that not having to attend court saves the force around 20,000 hours of officer time each year.

2.91   However, the inspection found significant variations in how well forces are making progress in using technology. For example, it is disappointing that video and telephone-conferencing, which hardly qualifies as new technology, is not used more widely across the police service for routine business. Making better use of this would enable staff, particularly managers, to contribute to meetings without the need for time-consuming travel, and this in turn would free up time to be used for core police functions.

2.92   Many forces are operating out-of-date technology which is ill-suited to modern crime fighting. This is damaging for the service the public receives. It is also seriously damaging to officer and staff morale.

2.93   Officers are often required to operate devices that are out-of-date and do not enable them to be as efficient as they want and need to be when dealing with offenders who themselves may have long since upgraded to more modern technology. More sophisticated criminal endeavour will not slow down to allow the police service to catch up. It is essential that the advances of the forces with the best technology are adopted and then improved upon by all, so that all 43 police forces work more than ever as one police service.

2.94   In short, the availability of modern ICT across all forces that enables police officers and staff to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively is frustratingly illusive, and will likely remain so in the absence of a national police information strategy (which must include a sound plan for interoperability of police ICT systems) and a clear and effective means to ensure it is carried out.

Recommendation 36

   By 1 September 2015, all forces should conduct a review into their use of video and telephone conferencing and ensure that it is being used wherever appropriate.

Recommendation 37

> By 1 September 2015, all forces should have in place, and thereafter implement to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, a sufficient and costed plan to progress the development of mobile technology which prioritises the requirements of frontline officers and staff, and to achieve the objectives of the National Policing Vision 2016.

Recommendation 38

> By 31 March 2015, the police service should establish sound arrangements for its co-operation with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the College of Policing and (to the extent necessary) the Home Office to establish a national police information strategy which facilitates the most efficient and economical steps to ensure the greatest practicable accessibility of information (including its transmission and receipt) by police officers and others in or concerned with the criminal justice system.

Recommendation 39

> With immediate effect, all forces should ensure that all ICT systems which they acquire or upgrade should comply with the highest practicable standards of interoperability.

Recommendation 40

> With immediate effect, all forces should review their ICT design and procurement arrangements and ensure that every appropriate opportunity for efficiency and economy in ICT design and procurement which is provided by centrally-provided or centrally-co-ordinated agencies is taken.

Preventive policing

3.1 Crime prevention is a primary purpose and function of the police, and the responsibility of all police officers and staff in a force. A preventive ethos should be at the heart of what the police do. In relation to crime prevention, this inspection has focused exclusively on the role of the police. It should, however, be acknowledged that crime prevention is not just a police function; it is also a responsibility of government (central and local), other public sector and voluntary sector agencies, and of every citizen.

3.2 The causes of crime include social dysfunction, failings by parents and communities, disintegration of deference and respect for authority, misuse of alcohol and drugs and, sometimes, just plain greed.

3.3 Prevention is far better than cure in policing and criminal justice. Effective preventive policing reduces harm for both the victims (and potential victims) of crime but also for society as a whole. Prevention can also lead to cost savings, both for the police themselves and in the wider criminal justice system, with virtually all of the costs of the criminal justice system incurred downstream of the commission of the offence. It is therefore vital that the police get upstream of offences and that preventing crime is given the attention and resources required.[7]

Scope of HMIC's inspection

3.4 Preventive policing and crime prevention do not simply involve preventing crime by improving physical security measures. Rather, they involve a broader approach which includes understanding why crimes are committed and why certain individuals may be more likely to commit crime or are more vulnerable to crime than others, as well as taking action to prevent or disrupt future offences.

3.5 Preventive policing can include educating potential victims about risks; making crime more difficult to commit by reducing the opportunities and through physical security measures; police activities to disrupt the planning and commission of crime by individuals or organised groups of offenders; and making crime less attractive through an increased likelihood of detection and prosecution. A preventive approach can also

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[7] See *State of Policing: The annual assessment of policing in England and Wales*, HMIC, London, March 2014. Available on www.hmic.gov.uk

include investigating crimes which are committed and bringing the offenders swiftly to justice, which may have both a deterrent effect on other potential offenders and prevent particular offenders from committing further offences.

3.6   HMIC's inspection into preventive policing in the 43 forces therefore looked for evidence of the following:

- a clearly articulated preventive approach in the way forces plan their policing activity (see paragraphs 3.9 to 3.16 below);

- effective management of predictable crime problems, such as alcohol-related violence in town centres on certain nights (see paragraphs 3.17 to 3.20 below);

- clear structures at force and local levels to manage and measure preventive activity, including strategies for how good practice can be identified and disseminated (see paragraphs 3.32 to 3.41 below);

- a clear understanding by staff of their preventive role, including the need to take every opportunity to educate victims and communities (see paragraphs 3.45 to 3.60 below); and

- an appropriate and effective response to unpredicted increases in crime (see paragraphs 3.61 to 3.68 below).

National strategy

3.7   As a preliminary point, HMIC notes that the police service of England and Wales does not have currently a national strategy on preventive policing. This has led to inconsistencies in how the 43 forces approach crime prevention. The national lead for crime prevention in the police service is planning to address this by developing a national preventive policing framework, which would include:

- a nationally agreed definition of crime prevention;

- a national crime prevention plan, which would ensure prevention is understood and accepted by all, as well as providing a template for force strategies;

- national guidance, standards and operating procedures. This would ensure consistency across forces and create links between policing activities at the neighbourhood, force, regional and national levels; and

- evidence-based analysis of 'what works' that could be used to inform preventive policing policies, ensuring that the planning of

force activity is as effective as possible, and that staff are appropriately trained.

3.8   A national strategy of this kind – with clear definitions and operating standards – should be of great benefit to forces and ensure a common understanding across England and Wales in relation to preventive policing. However, at the time of publication of this report, chief constables across England and Wales had not decided formally and collectively to undertake this work, nor had they established any timescales for starting work or completing work to develop a national strategy.

Recommendation 1

Not later than 31 March 2015, the police service, through the national policing lead for crime prevention, should establish and implement a national preventive policing strategy and framework.

Planning and governance

3.9   To establish whether forces adopted a preventive approach in the way they plan their activities, HMIC looked for clear references to this preventive approach in forces' plans and principal policy and operational documents. We also investigated whether forces had 'standalone' (i.e. discrete) long-term prevention strategies in place.

Standalone strategies

3.10   At the time of the inspection, HMIC found that six forces had standalone crime and anti-social behaviour prevention strategies. A further four forces had these documents in draft format, to be implemented in 2014/15.

3.11   Standalone crime prevention strategies can be effective in focusing forces' attention on the actions needed to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Standalone strategies that set out clear standards and operating procedures can provide staff and the public with clarity about what the force wants to do and how it intends to do it. They also provide a link between the police and crime commissioner's police and crime plan[8] and the plans that forces develop to reduce and prevent specific types of crime in their areas.

[8] Each police and crime commissioner sets out a police and crime plan for his force on an annual basis. This sets the priorities and objectives for the chief constable for the following year.

3.12   The police and crime commissioner (PCC) for each force has a duty to secure an efficient and effective police force through;

- setting the priorities for policing;

- deciding the budget for the force; and

- holding the chief constable to account.

3.13   Each PCC must produce a police and crime plan that includes setting out the policing objectives, the policing that is to be provided in the area and the how the performance of the force will be measured. The police and crime plan, the associated priorities and the measurement criteria, together constitute the primary way that chief constables, and therefore forces, are assessed and held to account.

3.14   As part of the inspection, the police and crime plan for each force was reviewed in respect of its treatment of and emphasis on crime prevention, in order to establish the way in which police and crime commissioners consider that crime prevention is most important, so setting the principal priorities for their police forces. It is unsurprising that all police and crime plans contain material about crime prevention, although of course there were difference in their formats and levels of detail. Police and crime commissioners are concerned both with policing – and crime prevention and the maintenance of order are the primary purposes of the police – and crime more widely. Police and crime commissioners naturally take crime prevention very seriously. Examples of these objectives include emphasis on measures to reduce offending, increase visible patrols and enhance the protection of vulnerable persons. Under section 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, chief constables must have regard to their police and crime commissioners' police and crime plans, and to any guidance given to them by the Home Secretary about how that duty is to be complied with.

3.15   While a standalone crime prevention strategy is certainly no guarantee of success, it does demonstrate that the force has at least considered the role of preventive policing in determining its priorities. Although the absence of a standalone strategy does not mean that a force is not undertaking any preventive activity, its absence did mean that in some forces staff were less clear about objectives and activities to achieve prevention goals.

3.16   HMIC found that the extent to which forces include references to crime prevention and prevention activity in their operational planning and policy documents is variable. While all forces made references to the need to reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, those references were more obvious in some forces than in others. HMIC recognises that to be successful in crime prevention, more is required by forces than

simply articulating its ambitions and activity on crime prevention in planning documents. However, its inclusion highlights the importance of crime prevention to staff and the public and encourages a conscious monitoring by the force of progress made.

Recommendation 2

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces' planning documents should contain clear and specific provisions about the measures forces will take in relation to crime prevention, in accordance with the published national preventive policing strategy and framework and in discharge of chief constables' duties under section 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to have regard to the police and crime plans of their police and crime commissioners.

Prevention activity

Predictable crime and crime targeted at vulnerable groups

3.17 HMIC found specific examples of preventive activity being carried out by all 43 forces. All forces have a long-term approach to both (a) regular, previously experienced crime problems and (b) crime problems which they can predict. Examples of these "predictable" types of crime include crimes that are targeted against certain vulnerable groups, such as student communities, and anticipated increases in alcohol-related crime in some towns and cities on particular evenings or at particular events.

3.18 All forces were able to provide examples of how they establish these kinds of crimes and have put measures in place to address them. The crimes are analysed to determine the factors which would lead to their occurring. Forces consider:

   (a) what factors contribute to making certain **individuals** vulnerable (or more vulnerable than others) to crime;

   (b) what are the characteristics of the **offender**, or the way that he carried out the crime, that may help identify him, his patterns of offending behaviour, or where he may commit future crimes; and

   (c) what was it about the physical characteristics of the **location** or environment that made it more vulnerable to this crime?

3.19 Often, this analysis uses information from other organisations such as local authorities to verify or support evidence. Forces are then able to construct plans which try to prevent further crimes from occurring. All forces were able to provide evidence of the use of such local initiatives and operations to prevent further crimes. These initiatives and operations involved both the police and other organisations. The most common examples of schemes provided to the inspection team were:

- **Plans to tackle burglary and other crimes, where the majority of the victims are students in higher education.** Some forces with large student communities were able to provide evidence to the inspection team of longstanding schemes showing clear preventive elements. These include raising awareness of the risks to new students (and their guardians) as they prepare for university or college, during 'Freshers' Week' at the start of a new academic year, free security marking of student property, and the issue of torches and personal attack alarms. Over a number of years, forces have developed effective ways of raising awareness of crime and vulnerability to crime with students, the education authorities and other agencies. They have influenced higher education establishments, local authorities and private sector businesses to improve the physical security at accommodation (both university-owned and privately-owned) used by students.

- **Plans to address alcohol-related violent crime in and around towns and cities on particular evenings of the week or event dates.** Some forces provided evidence of regular planning for alcohol-related crime, and it is clear that these plans have been developing for many years. Preventive work seen by the inspection team included education campaigns directed at groups who have been identified as vulnerable, and therefore potential victims, or as potential offenders. Significant work has been completed by many forces with local authorities and the licensing trade to improve physical features of locations that have experienced problems previously. For example, specific conditions imposed on venues; training for door staff; the use of plastic bottles in place of glass; and improved lighting and CCTV in areas of increased risk. Forces also provided evidence of planning to provide additional officers and staff at relevant times, often including extra early evening patrols in high visibility jackets to reassure the public and provide a visual deterrent.

Case study

Leicestershire Police has a well-developed approach to policing the night-time economy, particularly within Leicester City. This involves a range of activity based around themes including:

- prevention, such as establishing safer routes in and out of the city;

- education, including working with schools to improve awareness among young people;

- enforcement, for example through the use of drinks banning orders and test purchase operations focusing on alcohol sales to people under 18;

- communication and engagement, such as the use of social media; and

- confidence and reassurance, for example through promotion of safety in the night-time economy through local schemes promoting well-run premises.

3.20   HMIC found that these kinds of initiatives were well developed and formed part of the planning and activity of all forces. This demonstrates the ability of all forces to incorporate effective preventive policing into their activities and planning.

Working with other organisations

3.21   HMIC found that all forces work with a wide variety of other organisations, primarily across the public sector, with education and health service providers for example, but also in the voluntary and private sector, such as with the licensing trade. Community safety partnership work between the police and local authorities has developed over the last two decades and there are some excellent examples of well-established arrangements in place. These have contributed to the reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour achieved in local neighbourhoods across England and Wales.

3.22   It is imperative that the police do their utmost to prevent crime from occurring in the first place but, should it occur, the service must ensure that it meets the needs of the victim, especially in cases where the victim or community may be considered vulnerable. Crime and anti-social behaviour can have a devastating effect on the victim and community. It is, therefore, crucial that the initial police response to a report of a crime includes appropriate support for the victims and communities to prevent further offences and reduce the risk of individuals becoming victims of crime in the future.

3.23   Victim Support is the primary non-police organisation that provides support for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales. The charity, which was established in 1974, has over 1,400 staff and more than 4,300 volunteers. Victim Support provides help to victims and their families following the commission of a crime, including practical crime prevention security advice, accessing other support services as well as supporting witnesses at court during prosecution cases. During 2012/13, Victim Support offered support to more than one million victims of crime and helped over 204,000 people as they gave evidence at criminal trials.

3.24   A relatively recent development to raise awareness and meet the needs of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour has been through the establishment of the role of Victims' Commissioner, in 2010. The current Commissioner, Baroness Newlove, took up the post in March 2013.

3.25   The role of the Victims' Commissioner is to promote the interests of victims and witnesses and encourage good practice in their treatment. The Commissioner is currently working to ensure that feedback gathered from victims of crime influences improvements in the criminal justice process.

3.26   HMIC found the extent to which forces engage with partner organisations and agencies to assess levels of risk, particularly the levels of risk to vulnerable individuals and groups, has also increased in recent years. The police and these other organisations are sharing information and this is being used to direct resources towards ensuring vulnerable people and communities are safe, or to prevent further crimes from being committed.

3.27   In addition, many forces are now working with local authorities and other organisations to establish how they can provide appropriate support to those individuals and families who are well-known to the police and other agencies and consistently require public service interventions and resources. In particular, this work often involves working with children and young adults to influence their behaviour to reduce the risk of their being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour in the future. Examples of this work includes children involved in 'low-level' offending, truancy and anti-social behaviour and families with a history of domestic abuse.

3.28   A number of forces and their partner agencies are working with voluntary sector organisations such as the Early Intervention Foundation. This charity, launched in April 2013, was established by a consortium of like-minded organisations with the aim of addressing the root causes of social disadvantage.

3.29   The work of the Foundation[9] focuses on three main areas;

- Assessment of the evidence on 'what works' – to determine both the best early interventions available and their relative value for money;

- Advice on the best practical evidence-based measures, and how to carry them out effectively, to have the greatest beneficial effect on the lives of children and families; and

- Advocacy of early intervention as a serious alternative to expensive and often ineffective later intervention.

[9] The most recent Early Intervention Foundation reports are: *Early intervention in domestic violence and abuse*, Early Intervention Foundation, March 2014, and *Social impact bonds and early intervention*, Early Intervention Foundation, March 2014

3.30 The Foundation provides support to police forces, police and crime commissioners, local authorities and other interested parties by providing practical advice and support on the early intervention process. There are currently 20 initiatives taking place (called 'pioneering places') across England and Wales, where the Foundation is working with the police and other agencies to support and develop them in the early intervention process.

3.31 The details of the arrangements that forces have with their partner agencies and the voluntary sector are beyond the scope of the inspection and have, therefore, not been assessed. However, they illustrate the recognition that preventing crime effectively is certainly not the sole preserve and obligation of the police.

Neighbourhood preventive policing – problem-solving

3.32 The development of the neighbourhood policing model for the police in England and Wales in the 1990s saw the introduction of a problem-solving ethos, to try to establish and address the root cause of a problem and prevent further problems or crimes. This was primarily a community preventive policing tool, intended for use by local policing teams to resolve neighbourhood issues. These problems, generally quality of life issues such as reports of nuisance, vandalism or anti-social behaviour, would often be raised by the public with their local officer at community meetings. While the police will respond to individual reports of crime and anti-social behaviour, the problem-solving approach was specifically developed to resolve repeated instances of crimes or anti-social behaviour with similar characteristics. This approach can be used equally well to address an increase in car crime in a neighbourhood as it can to resolve or reduce reports of persistent anti-social behaviour.

3.33 The College of Policing notes[10] that there are a number of different problem-solving models that have developed. SARA is the most commonly used model in police forces and comprises four broad stages; Scanning; Analysis; Response; and Assessment. Officers and staff based in neighbourhoods received problem-solving training and forces were encouraged to develop their own databases to record these problem cases and track activity and assess progress.

3.34 The SARA model is a cyclical process; it requires assessment on a continuing basis to determine whether or not the response is effective in resolving the issue. The way in which it works is:

[10] See *The effects of problem-oriented policing on crime and disorder*, The Campbell Collaboration, July 2008

- through scanning, the police establish a pattern of repeated reports of crimes or anti-social behaviour, with similar characteristics, in a particular area. This scanning may occur through examining crime and incident records, through information from another agency, or through police engagement with the community;

- detailed analysis would then be carried out of the 'where, when, why and how' the problems are taking place to establish the root cause, or causes. This might include factors such as that the crime occurs in a secluded location with poor lighting, or in properties with inadequate security which the offender knows they can easily breach without alerting others;

- understanding the issues that allow the problem to occur in the first instance, or reoccur, enables the police to develop an effective *response* to resolve it. This may include increased police patrols; using officers in plain clothes to try and catch the person committing further crimes and officers and staff in uniform giving crime prevention advice and reassuring the community. In addition, other agencies, such as the local authority, can often assist in the response through increased security at the location, such as improving street lighting or cutting down hedges which prevent offenders from being easily seen; and

- regularly assessing the response is important to determine the effectiveness of the problem-solving approach and the tactics being used. This assessment may include overall measures, such as a reduction in the number of incidents or crimes reported, or an assessment of the effectiveness of specific tactics, such as the amount of intelligence or arrests made by plain clothes officers as opposed to uniform staff. This regular assessment of the problem enables the response to be modified, as and when necessary. In addition, the use of clear measurement in the assessment can provide valuable information when evaluating tactics used to establish good practice that can be adopted for similar situations.

3.35 During the inspection, HMIC identified two main issues which determined how forces are able to provide evidence that they are effectively using a problem-solving approach to support preventive policing efforts. These are:

- the existence and effective use of a force-wide, searchable database to aid problem-solving; and

- analysis and evaluation that identifies good practice to be shared with others.

3.36 A problem-solving database provides the force with the ability to keep accurate records of problems identified and monitor the police work carried out to resolve them. This is particularly important in the assessment phase of problem-solving, as the ability to track policing activity and measure progress, enables officers and staff to adjust tactics in the response when necessary. In addition, a problem-solving database provides evidence of the effectiveness of tactics, which can be adopted as good practice by others, including partner agencies, when similar issues arise. HMIC found that only 24 forces have a corporate force-wide database that can be researched to aid problem-solving. The remainder of forces have no consistent way of recording this policing activity.

3.37 The inspection teams examined a small sample of cases in each force that had a database to look for evidence of regular activity on the database. The inspection found that while there was evidence of activity in relation to most cases (for example, officer patrol time was recorded), the use of clear measures to track the progress being made with each case, or how effective particular activities had been, was rarely apparent. Similarly, HMIC found few examples of where forces had evaluated the success or otherwise of problem-solving plans.

3.38 Further, HMIC found examples in 12 forces of good practice being identified and being shared within the organisation so that staff across the force could build upon and learn from it.

Case study

In Durham Constabulary, each neighbourhood team records problem-solving information and activity on the problem-solving database which is accessible and searchable by all staff. Response teams also carry a minimum of two problem-solving plans each and are held to account for progress on these on a monthly basis. Each plan has a complete history of actions carried out and the tactics that have proved successful.

The force actively encourages sharing of good practice across, both the force and with partner agencies. This is achieved in a number of ways including; monthly peer review meetings, problem-solving master -classes led by the chief constable, and force awards presented annually to officers and staff for problem-solving excellence.

3.39 Local authorities and other organisations, such as housing providers, often play a critical part in solving community-based problems. However, in relation to most forces, these organisations were often unable to access and contribute to the problem-solving database. This limits their contribution and inhibits the police's ability to share good practice.

3.40 Overall, HMIC judged that there was clear evidence in six forces of the effective use of a database to aid in problem-solving crime and anti-

social behaviour issues and to address community issues. These forces all provided clear evidence of:

- a single database for problem-solving cases to be recorded across the force;

- relevant staff having access to the database and regular and consistent use of the database;

- evaluation of problem-solving activities being conducted and sharing across the force 'what works' on a structured basis; and

- partner organisations having access to the database, with partners involved in assessment and evaluation of problem-solving issues, including the use of problem-solving co-ordinators and master classes to reinforce good practice and understanding.

3.41 HMIC therefore considers that current practice on using a problem-solving approach demonstrates a missed opportunity for effective neighbourhood preventive policing by the majority of forces. The College of Policing could support forces in this regard, through the identification, collation and dissemination of good practice of problem-solving cases.

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2015, every force that does not have an adequate, force-wide problem-solving database should develop and start making use of one, to record, monitor and manage its neighbourhood problem-solving cases.

Recommendation 4

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they are using their databases to track the progress and evaluate the success of actions taken in relation to each neighbourhood problem-solving case recorded on the database.

Recommendation 5

By 31 March 2015, each force should ensure that it is able to disseminate information and share good practice from its database throughout the force, as well as to local authorities and other relevant organisations involved in community-based preventive policing or crime prevention.

Problem-solving anti-social behaviour

3.42 In order to carry out effective preventive policing in relation to anti-social behaviour, it is important for forces to be able to identify those people who are repeat victims i.e., people who have reported anti-social

behaviour previously. This is because a person who has reported anti-social behaviour on previous occasions is more likely to be vulnerable to future incidents[11]. HMIC therefore asked forces to provide their definition of what constitutes a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour and to provide details of the proportion of victims, in the previous 12 months, who were repeat victims.

3.43   HMIC was concerned to find that one force did not have an agreed force definition of a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour and that 11 forces were unable to establish the extent to which victims of anti-social behaviour in their force had previously been victims.

3.44   In addition, HMIC found there was no agreed police service-wide definition of what constitutes a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour. Other issues in relation to the identification of repeat victims of other crimes and incidents were found during this inspection. A recommendation regarding the adoption, across the police service, of common definitions of what constitute vulnerable and repeat victims is included (in Recommendation 11 later in this report). The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 contains a provision for a 'community trigger' in sections 104 and 105. This gives victims and communities the right, in specified circumstances, to require a review of a complaint about anti-social behaviour. Such a review brings together the public authorities concerned to take a co-ordinated approach to review the response which was initially given to the anti-social behaviour in question, and, if appropriate, to make recommendations for further action. A review must be undertaken where three complaints have been made in a six-month period and no action has been taken. Relevant bodies, the local police force being one, must establish a procedure for these reviews. Without a service-wide definition for a repeat victim it will be difficult to implement this new legislation when it comes into force on 20 October 2014.

Recommendation 6

By 20 October 2014, the one force which has not already done so should adopt a sound force-level definition of a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour.

Recommendation 7

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[11] HMIC has previously reported on this important issue in *Anti-social behaviour: Stop the rot,* HMIC, London, September 2010 and *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*, HMIC, London, March 2014

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that their records clearly establish whether victims of crime and anti-social behaviour fall within the applicable definition of 'repeat victim', and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that when repeat victims call the police, the force's call-handlers have the means to establish immediately that the caller is a repeat victim.

Crime prevention – advising the public

Dedicated crime prevention staff

3.45   Every force has a number of dedicated crime prevention advisers. These advisers are members of the force who have received specialist training in crime prevention. The primary responsibilities of such staff in all forces are to:

- advise on and co-ordinate crime prevention projects in response to increases in crime at either a local or force level (depending upon their role);

- provide specialist crime prevention advice to victims of crime, including individual victims of crime and employees of businesses that have been targeted, as well as advising on the security of business premises following a crime; and

- respond to requests from the public for advice about how they can increase the security of their property or home or prevent themselves from becoming victims of crime.

3.46   Most forces also provide specialist crime prevention advice on a wider basis, through the planning process, for example in the design of new or existing communities, buildings, roads and car parks. In some forces, these members of staff are called architectural liaison advisers. HMIC found that the architectural liaison adviser role is clear, and is focused on providing specialist crime prevention advice in the planning and design of buildings and infrastructure in their area.

Case study

Greater Manchester Police have a Design for Security unit. This is the part of the crime prevention unit who are trained in crime prevention techniques and 'designing out crime'. The team provides advice on the likely effect of crime on planning applications made to Greater Manchester local authorities. This ensures that potential changes in crime levels are fully considered at the outset of each new development.

3.47   During the inspection, HMIC spoke to the crime prevention and architectural liaison staff in each force.

3.48 HMIC found that the role of crime prevention advisers in many forces had become more focused on providing corporate support and advice and less on working with local communities. Some officers and staff believed that this change to have been particularly notable within the last four years as reductions in resourcing levels had led many forces to reduce the number of dedicated advisers.

3.49 HMIC found that many forces have restructured or reduced their dedicated crime prevention resource, with some now having as few as two members of staff to service their whole force area. Crime prevention advisers in a number of forces raised concerns about how their role had changed as the size of crime prevention units had reduced. Although crime prevention advisers remain engaged in developing and advising on crime prevention initiatives, through the local and force level tasking and co-ordinating processes, they have less time than previously to provide individual prevention advice to victims of crime or members of the public who wish to check or increase their security measures.

3.50 This concern appears to be mirrored by the results of an independent survey carried out with the public as part of this inspection (paragraph 4.6 to 4.33). As part of the survey, respondents who had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour were asked whether they had been given any crime prevention advice. Forty-four percent of those who had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour could remember being informed by the police about things they could do to help lower the risk of being a victim again. However, 50percent of victims were certain that the police had not provided them with this kind of advice or information.

3.51 HMIC is concerned therefore that unless other staff are trained and able to provide crime prevention advice, the reduced capacity of crime prevention advisers in forces presents a risk that victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, and the public more generally, will be less likely to receive crime prevention advice which addresses their own particular circumstances unless forces find other ways of effectively communicating such advice.

Training

3.52 As we have already stated, crime prevention is the primary purpose of the police and it is the responsibility of all police officers and staff in a force. All staff that come into contact with the public have an opportunity to help prevent them becoming victims of crime in the future. In particular, it seems likely that members of the public who have experienced crime very recently are more likely to heed advice or invest in security measures to prevent themselves becoming victims of crime again.

3.53   Basic crime prevention advice need not be technical, nor does it require extensive training, but the opportunities to influence and inform the public are significant. These arise at a number of stages, including at the point of first contact with the member of the public or victim (usually within the call-handling centre) and at the point of contact with officers and patrols attending to or dealing with victims of crime. However, from our discussions in focus groups of police officers and staff and observations in call-handling centres, it appears that often these opportunities are not exploited in the most effective way**.**

3.54   For example, HMIC was provided with evidence in forces of preventive patrols being carried out by officers and PCSOs in neighbourhoods that had experienced increases in a particular crime type. Officers and staff in these patrols were required to hand out or deliver leaflets containing crime prevention advice in the immediate vicinity of previous crimes. However, HMIC established that in the main this activity was conducted without the benefit of personal preventive advice being provided along with the leaflets. Providing this advice to residents would enable them to take specific action to protect themselves or their property.

3.55   During its inspection, HMIC identified two main obstacles that were preventing forces from taking advantage effectively of opportunities to advise the public: first, the attitude of officers and staff to crime prevention, and secondly, their lack of crime prevention training.

3.56   During interviews and focus groups with officers and staff, HMIC established that many either do not think that crime prevention is part of their role, or are not aware of the potential opportunities to educate and advise the public. In one force, HMIC staff were told by detectives in one criminal investigation department (CID) that: "prevention is not a concern for the CID; it is a job for neighbourhood teams".

3.57   In relation to training, other than brief training for new officer and PCSO recruits, HMIC found that little formal preventive policing training has been provided in forces to those officers and staff who interact on a routine basis with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.58   HMIC found that only ten forces were providing formal crime prevention training, although most of the training taking place in these forces was only being delivered to neighbourhood officers and PCSOs. One force had taken a positive step and provided a two-day crime prevention training programme to neighbourhood officers and PCSOs which has already trained 500 staff. This training was clearly appreciated by staff. HMIC is concerned not to see more evidence of a structured approach to carrying out crime prevention training in forces.

3.59   All forces would benefit from a formalised crime prevention training programme. This training should provide officers and staff who come into

contact with the public with sufficient basic crime prevention knowledge to enable them to establish and take opportunities to give basic crime prevention advice to members of the public where appropriate. Further reference is made to crime prevention training later in this report (at paragraph 4.108), which relates to a structured crime prevention course currently being provided by the College of Policing to PCSOs in two forces. The development of crime prevention training would benefit from consultation with and the engagement of the national policing lead for crime prevention and the College of Policing, to provide a national structure, which forces could then adapt to suit their local context.

3.60 Although there will be a cost implication to this, investment in training of this kind has the potential to reduce future demand and may therefore be cost effective.

Recommendation 8

Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should provide and periodically refresh basic crime prevention training for officers and staff who come into contact with the public.

Responding to unexpected increases in crime

3.61 HMIC found that daily management meetings are held in each force, both at a force level and within each local policing area, allowing senior managers to react to new information. In addition, a meeting is held either weekly or fortnightly, to direct and co-ordinate activity of planned operations, including directing specialist officers or staff to those issues and problems that most affect force priorities. While the daily meeting provides an opportunity to react to overnight intelligence or developments, the fortnightly meeting allows the force to analyse trends and patterns in offences, develop intelligence and identify potential suspects. This enables the force to carry out planned operations and the deployment of officers and staff to focus on problem areas.

Tasking and co-ordinating arrangements at a local level

3.62 HMIC attended a local (and where possible a force-level) daily management meeting in each force area. This provided an indication as to how well a force understood the issues it faced. It also demonstrated the force's ability to respond to new information and target its activities (including prevention, disruption and enforcement activities) accordingly.

3.63 In 38 forces, the purpose of the daily management meeting was clear and the meeting itself was well managed. It was attended by officers and

staff at an appropriate level who understood their role within it. The meetings included the following elements:

- a structured agenda was followed and the chair was clear in his directions and deployments of specific resources;

- crimes and incidents were reviewed, but there was also consideration of additional, new intelligence, recent stop and search results and crime pattern analysis to direct preventive activity for the next 24 hours;

- the meeting directed activity towards high-priority outstanding named suspects and checking conditions of those on bail;

- additional resources were identified for deployment if required;

- actions and tasks were recorded and reviewed; and

- some forces had more than one meeting to respond dynamically to changes in intelligence during the day.

Case study

In Avon and Somerset, the constabulary has three levels of tasking and coordinating meetings – its two-tiered daily management meetings are both local and constabulary-wide, examining crime and disorder over the previous 24 hours to tackle issues anticipated in the day ahead; a fortnightly tasking meeting reviews the last 14 days and directs action for the next two weeks by reviewing a calendar of expected events; and a monthly, constabulary-wide meeting, which is the focus for testing a more predictive approach to analysis, involving all commanders.

The daily meetings are well-structured. They consider new information and intelligence, and provide clear tasks in relation to issues such as pursuing named suspects, as well as directing preventative patrol to vulnerable areas. In addition, further preventative measures are put in place such as checking records of second-hand dealers and PCSOs providing property marking kits to residents and developing neighbourhood watch networks. Data is collected on patrol activity and compared against the police and crime plan priorities at the performance monitoring meeting.

3.64 In five forces, HMIC judged the daily meeting made little difference to police activity. While not all of these forces displayed the same characteristics, the inspection team identified that the main issues included that:

- the meeting structure was not formalised across the force or was not managed consistently at local and force level;

- the meeting concentrated on reviewing crimes rather than focusing on anticipating future crimes or criminal activity;

- there was little consideration of, or there was a delay in accessing, intelligence to inform the deployment of resources; and

- there was limited evidence of the deployment and review of specialist or local resources.

3.65 The value of the daily meetings in these forces would be improved if they adopted a more structured approach to allocating tasks to staff at both force and local levels, and if they increased their use of review mechanisms to check the results of that activity.

3.66 Across all forces, the inspection found that, generally, work was allocated to staff on a day-to-day basis based on new information and intelligence

as it became available, such as information on areas to patrol or potential suspects to look for. However, the measurement of such police activity carried out and the evaluation of any effect that it had on improving policing was lacking in many forces.

3.67   HMIC found that more effective forces used systematic methods for officers and staff to record the result of the work allocated to them. This consisted of a return sheet (usually electronic) for each operation, which officers and staff used to record the activity such as stop searches carried out and arrests made. In some forces, this also included the number of hours of patrol carried out in a particular area. This allows forces to track its policing activity and tactics and the effect that this has on levels of crime in the area.

Case study

The City of London Police electronically records the numbers of hours that officers and PCSOs work and which hours are spent on preventive patrol. In addition, records are kept of relevant police activities carried out by the staff during that time, such as stop and search, arrests and intelligence reports, and any results of such activities. The force reports that it undertakes in the region of 1,600 hours of preventive patrol each month at iconic sites across the force area.

3.68   HMIC found that little use is made by the majority of forces of the information that was being collected, such as that described in the case study above. This information was rarely linked to any assessment of the tactics employed in the operation to evaluate either the effectiveness of the tactics or the success of the operation. Forces need to become smarter at not only measuring what they do, but also evaluating operations and initiatives to find out, in a range of different situations, what works and what does not.

Recommendation 9

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that crime prevention or disruption activity carried out is systematically recorded and subsequently evaluated to determine the effectiveness of tactics being employed.

Police attendance

4.1 The public contact the police for a wide range of reasons, not just to report crime. For example, the public may contact the police to report the following: anti-social behaviour; harassment or abuse; suspicious behaviour; traffic-related problems or events (including road traffic accidents); and injury, illness or other causes for concern about a person's mental or physical wellbeing. The public may also contact the police for advice, including advice on crime prevention.

4.2 According to provisional data for 2013/14, around two-thirds of incidents recorded on forces' command and control systems are not crime or related to anti-social behaviour, and include incidents where the primary responsibility lies outside the police service.

4.3 However this is of concern for the police service because of the demands they place on it. This is discussed later in this report.

4.4 Not all contact from the public will require police attendance. There is no consistent national policy determining when forces will send officers or staff to attend a report of a crime or incident, and (as set out further below) the proportion of crimes and incidents attended by each force can vary significantly.

4.5 In conducting its inspection into police attendance, HMIC investigated the following:

- Public expectations about police attendance at a crime or incident (see paragraphs 4.6 to 4.33 below);

- Forces' policies on attendance in response to reports from the public (see paragraphs 4.34 to 4.57 below);

- How forces record their attendance in response to crimes and incidents (see 4.58 to 4.65 below);

- What proportion of all reported crime and particular types of crime forces are attending (see paragraphs 4.66 to 4.77 below);

- Which staff or officers forces are sending to attend crimes and incidents (see paragraphs 4.78 to 4.87 below);

- How attendance by police to a crime or incident relates to victims' satisfaction in how crimes or incidents they have reported have been handled; and

- How investigation strategy and practice varies according to whether the crime in question is attended or not (see paragraphs 4.90 to 4.104 below).

What the public thinks

4.6   As part of its inspection, HMIC commissioned two independent research companies to undertake both quantitative and qualitative research with members of the public across England and Wales. The objective of this research was to find out how the public expect the police to respond to a range of crimes and incidents.

4.7   The research took the form of:

- an online survey, conducted by YouGov, a market research agency, which was completed by 19,404 people and explored their expectations of how the police would respond to a number of different crime and anti-social behaviour scenarios; and

- focus group research, conducted by Duckfoot Ltd, with a total of 45 participants representing rural and urban areas from across England and Wales, which sought to examine these expectations in more detail.

4.8   As the survey was based on a sample of online users, it cannot be taken as representative of the population as a whole. However, it does give an indication of the expectations among this group.

Survey

4.9   The survey was conducted during March 2014 and was completed by a total of 19,404 adults aged 18 and over living in England and Wales. Responses were received from at least 375 people in each of the 42 police force areas (the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service are both included within the survey of the London area). The survey asked respondents about the nature of the police response they would expect, and the time within which they would expect the police to respond, in relation to particular types of crimes and incidents.

Nature of police response

4.10   The survey presented respondents with the 14 scenarios described below and asked them to indicate the response they would expect from the police in each case.

Label	Scenario
Bike	You find that the padlock on your garage has been forced open and your expensive bicycle has been stolen. You see a discarded screwdriver and there are footmarks on the floor which you suspect belong to the thief.
Dog	You are a victim of a minor assault after you ask a dog owner not to allow their dog to foul the street, but are left uninjured.
Car	You get up in the morning to find your car bonnet has been badly scratched with the name of a football team.
Car2	You get up in the morning to find your car bonnet has been badly scratched with the name of a football team, but you believe the area your car is parked in is covered by a neighbour's CCTV camera.
Youth	Groups of local youths regularly congregate nearby your home. They are not committing any crimes but are occasionally noisy and boisterous. They do not intimidate passers-by and are not otherwise problematic.
Phone	You got off a train 15 minutes ago and find that your mobile phone has been stolen from your pocket.
Woman	You hear repeated shouting and a female screaming 'stop' in a neighbouring flat. This has been going on for several hours and it has now gone quiet.
Burgled	You come back to your house and find it has been burgled.
Daughter	Your daughter is being harassed by school friends about her current relationship.
Mental health	Your housemate, who unfortunately suffers from mental health issues, has taken an overdose. Paramedics have attended and assessed that he needs to go to hospital. He is refusing to go with them.
Neglect	You become concerned about the living conditions of a five-year old child in the flat above you but he is not in imminent danger. The child appears neglected by his mother and is very unhappy.
Shed	You wake up one morning and find that the lock securing your shed/garage has been forced and the door is open. It appears that someone has been inside but nothing is missing
Petrol	You own a petrol station and a car has just left without paying for its fuel though you are uncertain as to whether this is by mistake or done deliberately.
Rat run	Every morning during term-time you are annoyed at how your street is used as a 'rat run' for the local primary school. It took you 15 minutes to get out of your street this morning and you have had enough.

4.11   The graph below shows the way in which respondents expected the
police to deal with the various scenarios:

Scenario	Face to face by a police officer	Telephone by officer or police staff	Neither	Not sure
Burgled	81%	15%		3%
Bike	74%	20%		4%
Woman	54%	34%	5%	7%
Car2	52%	37%	5%	6%
Dog	50%	29%	14%	7%
Mental health	41%	16%	31%	13%
Car	40%	43%	10%	7%
Neglect	39%	31%	21%	9%
Petrol	34%	50%	7%	8%
Shed	30%	43%	21%	7%
Phone	24%	52%	16%	7%
Youth	16%	24%	51%	9%
Daughter	16%	14%	59%	10%
Ratrun	12%	25%	54%	9%

■ Face to face by a police officer   ■ Telephone by officer or police staff   ■ Neither   ■ Not sure

4.12   Unsurprisingly, respondents had different expectations of the police
depending on the nature of crime or incident concerned. The way they
expected the police to respond when dealing with non-crime scenarios[12]
was different from how they expected the police to respond to a report of
a crime. Forty-one percent of respondents expected face-to-face contact
with the police about the person experiencing mental health problems, 31
percent did not expect the police to deal with it and a further 13 percent
were unsure. Fewer than half of all respondents expected the police to
deal, either face-to-face or over the telephone, with the groups of local
youths congregating nearby, the daughter being harassed by school
friends or traffic congestion in the street caused by cars going to the local
primary school. Only 16 percent or fewer expected face-to-face contact
with the police to deal with these situations.

4.13   By contrast, in relation to reports of crimes, respondents' expectations
that the police would deal with the matter either face-to-face or over the

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[12] 'Mental health', 'youth', 'daughter' and 'ratrun'.

telephone was much higher, ranging from 70percent in the case of potential child neglect to 96 percent for the house burglary.

4.14   The highest expectations of face-to-face contact were in relation to the house burglary and the cycle theft from a garage, where around three-quarters of respondents expected face-to-face contact. Fifteen percent and 20percent respectively expected these situations to be dealt with over the telephone.

4.15   At least half of respondents expected face-to-face contact about the suspected domestic abuse incident, the minor assault and the damage to the car with potential CCTV evidence.[13] Approximately a third of respondents expected these crimes to be dealt with over the telephone.

4.16   Expectations that police would attend were increased where some evidence, such as CCTV coverage, was available. For example, 40percent of those surveyed expected the police to deal with damage to their vehicle face-to-face, but this increased to 52 percent where CCTV evidence might be available.

4.17   Expectations of face-to-face contact with the police for reports of crime were relatively low compared to other situations where the shed was broken into with nothing missing (30 percent), the car drove off without paying for fuel (34 percent) and the mobile phone was stolen (24 percent). In each of these cases, as with the damage to the car, a higher proportion of respondents expected these crimes to be dealt with over the telephone.

Time for police response

4.18   In addition to asking respondents how they would expect the police to respond to each scenario, the survey asked how long they felt it should take for the police to respond to the various incidents. Again, the results varied according to the nature of the incident and between different respondents.

Focus groups

4.19   The focus group research allowed respondents to consider their expectations of police responses to particular scenarios in more depth, in particular assessing whether their attitudes to police attendance changed when they were provided with more information about the nature of incidents involved and who could be attending.

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[13] 'Woman'; 'Dog'; and 'Car2' respectively

Use of police time and resources

4.20   When focus group members were asked to consider the best use of police time, they immediately identified the importance they placed on the visible presence of the police in the community. They took into account the many demands on police time, for example: preventing crime in the community; protecting the public from harm; and pursuing criminals. The majority of participants believed that the police act with respect for the communities they serve and there was sympathetic recognition that they had a difficult, and in some cases life-threatening job to do:

> *"They're trying their best. They're doing their job. The problem is too big for them to handle: there's no youth club, there's nothing to do. The kids, they haven't got jobs."*

> Male, 20s, East London

4.21   The research established that there was a general confidence among focus group participants that the police were making reasonably good use of the resources they had at their disposal. However, many focus group members acknowledged that this perception was based on limited personal experience and a lack of understanding of the police service generally, including what resources their local forces had available. Those who had experienced little or no contact with police found it more difficult to make an informed judgment on these matters. While those with less experience of the police or contact with them appeared to be more optimistic than those with more personal experience of police contact, overall the majority of focus group members felt confident that the police were doing a good job with limited resources available.

4.22   Those respondents who considered that they lived in a community with low levels of crime tended to assume that the police were focusing time and resources where they were needed most, primarily in geographic areas of high crime. This led respondents in such communities to feel more confident the police were making best use of their time.

> *"Maybe the fact that we all feel safe is an indication that they're doing something well."*

> Female, 40s, West London

> *"I do have confidence in our police force; I know they can't be everywhere at once."*

> Male, 20s, Norfolk

4.23   Those living in urban areas with higher crime rates felt more able to comment on the use of police time based on personal experience and a general observation of their local police force's presence in the

community. The research established that people's opinion of the best use of police time was for police to be present and visible on the streets – the "*bobby on the beat*".

4.24 Similarly, there was an assumption by many in the focus groups that unless a police officer was involved, a 'proper' case would not be opened. The respondents also tended to assume that if an officer attended, that they had taken on responsibility for seeing the case through to arrest or resolution.

> *"I think you need an official police constable so that the force knows that there's evidence for a case to be made."*

> Female, 50s, Greater Manchester

> *"If it's serious enough to call the police, you'd want a police officer. There was an incident outside where I worked and they couldn't do anything. There's no police on the street like when I was young. There's none around anymore except on a big occasion like the rugby."*

> Female, 40s, West London

Who should be responding?

4.25 In order to investigate respondents' views as to the appropriate person to respond to different types of incidents, the focus groups were asked the following open question:

> *'Who in the police force should attend and respond to different kinds of crime, anti-social behaviour and other incidents, in your neighbourhood?'*

4.26 The responses of the majority of focus group members indicated that in most circumstances a police officer was considered to be the appropriate person to attend. This was based on the opinion that it is only police officers who have sufficient authority effectively to resolve incidents. Focus group members generally considered the power of arrest to be essential to an officer's ability to respond and resolve a problem, and most participants were aware that PCSOs lacked this power. This appeared to contribute to a lack of confidence in PCSOs, which in turn contributed to a lack of confidence in how police are using their resources in this respect.

> *"That's all we got in my village (PCSOs), so we don't have a police presence as such at all."*

> Male, 60s, Norfolk

"So why do we have community police and not just normal police? Because they can't arrest anyone."

Female, 40s, Norfolk

4.27 Focus group members also were presented with a list of potential incidents and asked to indicate who they felt would be required to deal effectively with each. Participants felt that only a police constable could respond to effectively:

- Child missing from home

- Serious car crash

- Domestic violence – in the home

- Fight in the street

- Assault

- House burglary

- Motor vehicle theft

- Youths causing nuisance in the street.

The following incidents, by contrast, were identified as being suitable for a PCSO as a first response:

- Making off without payment from a shop/garage

- Minor traffic incident

- Lost purse or wallet

- Child lost at the shopping centre

- Shoplifting by minor.

4.28 The research showed that members of police staff (other than officers) were not at the forefront of people's minds when it came to resolving problems. However, when participants gained more information about the different roles within policing, they became more open to personnel other than a police officer responding to some incidents.

4.29 Some participants were open to the idea of police staff with specialist training being the primary person to attend a crime scene, such as a burglary, but only in cases where the criminal had long left the scene. With further questioning, participants also began to envisage situations where they considered it would be appropriate for a PCSO to attend, for

example in welfare incidents, rowdy (but not violent) anti-social behaviour, or to take statements after a burglary.

Public views on crime prevention

4.30   Focus group participants expressed a desire for the police to be a visible front-line presence to prevent crime and protect the community. They took the view that it was a good use of police time to have officers in the community to act as a deterrent. This was because they would have a good knowledge of the local area and those who live there. During discussion, members expressed the view that while the presence of officers was not a guaranteed safeguard, it was an effective use of resources for officers to be located as near as possible to potential trouble spots.

4.31   The online survey asked whether respondents were aware of any police-led crime prevention initiatives in their local area and, if they had been the victim of crime in the last two years, whether they could remember being given any crime prevention advice.

4.32   A fifth of respondents were aware of some police-led initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area. This awareness is higher among older age groups; 23 percent of over-55 year olds compared with 13 percent of the 25-34 year old group were aware of police schemes.

4.33   Fifteen percent of the respondents considered themselves to have been the victim of a crime that they had reported in the last two years. This was significantly more common among younger people: 18 percent of 18-24 year olds compared with 11 percent of the over-55 year old group identified themselves as recent victims of crime. Forty percent of those who had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour could remember being informed by the police about things that they could do to help lower the risk of becoming a victim again. However, half (50percent) of the respondents to this question were certain that the police had not provided them with this kind of information. This confirms to HMIC that opportunities to inform and influence the public are being missed. The recommendation for forces to provide training to staff who routinely come into contact with the public should go some way to addressing this gap.

Forces' policies on attendance

4.34   There are significant variations in the way forces approach police attendance respond to calls from the public. Some forces aim to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, although these forces are in the minority. Most forces assess the crimes or incidents reported to them and decide, on the basis of set criteria, whether an officer will attend or whether the matter will be dealt with over the telephone. Two-thirds of

forces which have adopted this approach also stipulate that they should attend always certain categories of crime, which are local priorities.

4.35   The variation between forces' policies means that a member of the public will receive a different response from the police for the same type of incident or crime, depending upon where they live.

Attend-all policies

4.36   The inspection identified four forces with a policy stating that they will attend every report of a crime or incident, whether that attendance is by a police officer, a PCSO or a crime scene investigator. In addition, a further two forces have a policy to attend all reports of crime. In these six forces, we found that officers and staff, both within the call-handling environment and those responsible for responding to crimes and incidents, were very clear that where a police response was deemed necessary, by the caller or the public, someone would attend.

Attendance policies based on threat, harm and risk

4.37   In 37 forces, the inspection found that the decision to attend a crime or incident is based on the perceived level of threat, harm and risk to the victim, caller or community. In these forces, the call-handler initially receiving the call is required to make a decision based on information provided at that time about the level of risk in the incident being reported. This decision is made on the basis of specific criteria which assess the level of risk involved. Although forces have different names for these policies, for ease of reference in this report, they will be referred to as threat, harm and risk policies.

4.38   The assessment criteria for threat, harm and risk policies, although not exactly the same across all of these forces, were broadly similar and usually included the following:

- whether the crime or incident was serious in nature (for example, was a serious injury caused or likely to be caused, or did the crime involve significant loss of, or damage to, property);

- whether the circumstances indicated that the victim or caller was vulnerable;

- whether the victim had been a victim of crime previously; and

- whether there was potential evidence relating to a crime that might be lost if the scene was not attended.

4.39   The assessment is used by forces operating a threat, harm and risk policy to make a decision on whether the crime or incident will (a) be attended, (b) be dealt with over the telephone, or (c) be dealt with by another organisation. In cases where the police decide that it is not

necessary to attend the crime or incident, details are recorded on the force incident recording system or the crime recording system, either by a member of staff in the call-handling centre, or by a crime management or telephone investigation unit.

4.40   In 22 of the 37 forces employing this type of policy, the force also had established particular local priorities in terms of certain crimes or incidents which it had decided should always be attended by the police. Similarly, some forces had a caveat to the general policy that where the member of the public requested police attendance, they would deploy a patrol.

Consultation with stakeholders

4.41   Just one of the 37 forces which operates a threat, harm and risk approach to responding to crimes and incidents said that they had consulted the public specifically on this subject. HMIC would not expect forces to consult the public on every change in policy. However, it does expect that forces would take public expectations into account when considering a policy that directly affects the level of service provided to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, such as changing from attending reports of crime and incidents to dealing with them over the telephone.

Training and criteria

4.42   In all forces with a threat, harm and risk policy, the expectation by the force was that the call-handlers would make decisions using the National Decision Model (NDM). Some training on this, either computer-based or classroom-based, had been provided by all forces. However, HMIC established that the level of training provided to call-handling staff on what constituted threat, harm and risk was variable. As a result, call-handlers' understanding of these assessments was also variable.

4.43   HMIC judged that in 12 forces, the staff in the call-handling centre were unable to describe consistently what constituted threat, harm and risk. In some cases, views differed even within the same call-handling centre. In addition, in seven of these forces HMIC found that there were no clear criteria set by the force to assess the level of threat, harm and risk. This left call-handlers making judgments based on their own views and experience without any overarching framework to ensure objectivity or consistency.

Recommendation 10

Not later than 31 March 2015, those forces using a threat, harm and risk policy, that have not yet done so, should provide call-handlers with specific, sound and comprehensible criteria against which they can assess threat, harm and risk.

Incident performance monitoring and checking mechanisms

4.44 All forces had some form of quality assurance system in place within their call-handling centres. These consisted primarily of supervisors listening to a small number of calls received by each member of staff each month. HMIC established that the main focus of this check is to assess the professionalism and politeness of the call-handler and whether any resulting incident had been categorised correctly, but it did not entail considering whether there had been correct assessment of threat, harm and risk. While the professionalism of staff is important, this kind of review appears to be missing an important opportunity to assess call-handlers' understanding and identification of threat, harm and risk levels.

Vulnerable or repeat victims

4.45 It is important for forces to be able to establish at the point of initial contact whether a caller or victim is vulnerable, either as an individual or because he or she is part of a vulnerable community. This is particularly important for forces which have adopted a threat, harm and risk policy, as the level of vulnerability will inform the decision as to whether someone attends the incident, or whether an additional level of service, such as additional support or referral to other services is to be provided by the force.

Case study

Research was conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2013 about how satisfied victims of crime were with the treatment they received. This research included an assessment of the satisfaction levels of those victims who considered that they were vulnerable. When the victim considered that the force had established that they were vulnerable and catered for their needs, satisfaction with the service provided stood at 89 percent. When the victim did not consider that the force had established that they were vulnerable, this dropped to 51 percent.

Establishing vulnerability

4.46 There are a number of methods used by forces to indicate whether a caller is a repeat victim or is vulnerable. These include automatic 'flags' (computer notifications) on the command and control system indicating to the operator that the caller has been previously assessed by the force as vulnerable, or that the name, location or telephone number provided has been logged on the system on a previous occasion. A number of command and control systems have 'drop-down' prompts when a particular incident or crime is reported, which lead the call-handler through a series of questions to assess the vulnerability of the caller. In

addition, call-handlers are expected to identify vulnerable and repeat callers through their initial questioning.

4.47   During the inspection, HMIC spent time observing staff in call-handling centres to assess how well forces identify vulnerable and repeat callers. The inspection concluded that 17 forces were failing consistently to identify these callers. There were a number of reasons for this, including the following:

- call-handlers deliberately bypassing automatic drop-down menus;

- forces indicating a person is vulnerable by typing in a general text field, rather than creating a flag, which prevents future calls being automatically identified; and

- call-handlers failing to question callers about whether they considered themselves to be vulnerable.

4.48   There is no agreed national definition in policing of what constitutes a 'vulnerable' person, and while a standard definition exists for 'repeat victim;[14]' forces have adapted this and define it differently across a variety of categories of crime and anti-social behaviour. This is unhelpful and leads to confusion among staff and inconsistencies in the service provided to the public.

4.49   The College of Policing currently is undertaking work in relation to repeat victims and vulnerable victims in the context of domestic abuse. It is recommended that this work is widened to consider and standardise these terms on behalf of the service.

Recommendation 11

Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to establish as mandatory professional standards, service-wide definitions of vulnerable persons and repeat victims.

Recommendation 12

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that call-handlers are following the correct procedures to identify callers as vulnerable or repeat victims.

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[14] A person who has been the victim of crime within a rolling 12 month period

Deploying officers or staff to crimes based on threat, harm and risk

4.50   During its observations of call-handling staff, HMIC established that there were significant variations among forces that were operating a threat, harm and risk policy in the approach to police attendance at different types of crime.

4.51   In all forces, call-handlers were clear that where the reported crime was one they considered to fall within the more serious types of crime (such as the burglary of dwellings, robberies and serious assaults), an officer or member of staff should be sent to attend.

4.52   However, the same approach was not followed with crimes considered to be less serious, such as vehicle crime, burglaries of other types of buildings and criminal damage. Where reports of these types of crime were made, call-handlers in all forces with a threat harm and risk policy asked the caller a number of what appeared to be standard questions apparently intended to assess the risk of evidence being lost and to establish the likelihood of the crime being solved. These questions, although not exactly the same in every force included: "are there any witnesses?", "is there CCTV in the area?" and "is there any potential fingerprint evidence?" Where there was no obvious indication of available evidence, or the caller was unaware of such evidence, the crime was usually dealt with over the telephone.

4.53   These questions amount to the call-handling staff in these forces asking the victims to conduct an assessment of the crime scene that ordinarily would be carried out by the police when they attended a report of a crime.

4.54   The difference in these circumstances is that the victim will not have had investigative training and the call-handler is unlikely to have had investigative training. A police officer or member of staff (such as a crime scene investigator) has not only received training about what to look for and what to ask at crime scenes, but also has developed significantly those skills through their own experience of attending many reports of crime. This personal assessment of the crime scene would provide:

- an improved understanding of the way in which the crime was committed; often criminals commit crimes in a certain way or steal only certain items, which offers increased opportunities to link crimes and identify the offender;[15]

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[15] *Criminal Investigation*, Berg, B.L., August 2007

- a search of the scene for clues and forensic opportunities, including the route used by the offender, and any discarded property;

- opportunity to speak to neighbours and passers-by for potential witness information; and

- an insight into why the victim was selected and provide that individual, and his neighbours, with specific advice to help prevent him becoming a victim of crime in the future.

4.55 HMIC established that while in all forces, call-handling staff asked victims questions to establish whether there were witnesses or forensic evidence, the inspection team observed call handlers in a number of forces encouraging victims to carry out enquiries themselves; in other words to conduct their own initial investigations. This included suggesting that victims ask neighbours if they had seen anything, that they check for CCTV in the area and that they research well-known second-hand sales websites to see if their stolen property was advertised for sale. Victims were then provided with a crime reference number and asked to re-contact the force if they discovered any new information or evidence. Placing the responsibility for the investigation entirely on the victim is completely inappropriate. In addition to not providing an adequate service to the victim, opportunities are being lost to establish characteristics of these crimes that could contribute to a comprehensive picture and better understanding of crime in an area, enabling a more informed crime prevention response to be devised.

4.56 Where crimes were dealt with over the telephone in this manner, HMIC found examples of crimes being recorded, closed and filed the same day, sometimes within minutes of the initial report. After the crime was filed, HMIC found that, in the vast majority of cases, there was no further contact made with the victim. This expectation by forces that the victim should investigate his own crime, coupled with the swiftness with which reports of this kind are being closed, is both surprising and a matter of significant concern. In relation to this, HMIC draws attention to the following:

- call-handling staff are not trained investigators, nor have the vast majority had any experience in the investigation of crimes or the assessment of crime scenes; and

- in many forces operating this desk-based investigation policy, HMIC did not observe any apparent consideration of the seriousness of the crime in question (for example, in the case of a theft, the value of the property stolen or damaged), nor any consideration of whether the crime might be linked or similar to other crimes, as part of a series.

4.57 HMIC concludes that, in many cases, in forces operating the desk-based investigation policy, victims of crime are not being provided with even a basic level of investigation by the police. The likelihood of a crime report being pursued further than simply recording it, appears to be based on the extent of the victim's immediate knowledge of the existence of any witness, forensic or CCTV evidence. This is unacceptable.

What crimes do forces attend?

How attendance is recorded

4.58 HMIC asked forces to establish the number of crimes and certain other incident types (such as anti-social behaviour and missing-from-home reports) reported by the public for the 12-month period ending 30 November 2013. We also asked each force to indicate to us those crimes and incidents they had attended, either by sending an officer or other member of staff, or through a scheduled appointment at the victim's home or other location such as a police station. For those incidents that were not attended by an officer or staff member, we asked forces to indicate whether the incident had been dealt with over the telephone.

4.59 There are broadly two ways in which police forces record reports of a crime and attendance in response to such reports:

- **Through both the command and control system and the crime recording system**: when a report of a crime is received by the force, an incident log is created on the command and control system. If someone is sent to attend the matter, a record of this is made on the incident log. Once the report of the crime is confirmed and more details are known, it is recorded on the force crime recording system.

- **Through the crime recording system only**: in some forces, where the decision is made that a report of a crime will be dealt with over the telephone rather than being attended by an officer, the crime is recorded directly onto the force crime recording system, without a command and control incident log being created.

4.60 All forces have a command and control system, but only some forces choose to log all reported crimes on it, with the rest only logging those crimes they attend at the time they are reported.

4.61 Command and control systems can be used to record the activities carried out by the police in relation to each incident, including the deployment of resources, and to record the way in which incidents were resolved. This system has a search facility allowing forces to establish whether the incident was attended or not by police.

4.62 Force crime recording systems, by contrast, were not developed to record whether or not a crime was attended. Thus, where a report is entered into the crime recording system only, it is difficult to obtain information as to whether an officer or member of staff subsequently has attended in response to the report. This means that the force may be unable to establish accurately all of the crimes attended.

4.63 Where forces were recording some crimes directly on to their crime recording system (without creating an incident log), HMIC asked that they establish the number of crimes that were directly recorded in this way, and, where possible, whether any of these were attended subsequently by the police.

4.64 The inspection found the ability of forces to provide data on the extent of their attendance to reports of crime or incidents varied according to the systems they have in place. The extent to which forces were able to provide this information can be categorised into three groups:

How forces record crimes and their attendance	Police forces operating this system
Record all crimes via the command and control system first. These forces can monitor accurately their attendance in response to crimes.	Cleveland, Durham, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Sussex, Warwickshire
Record some crime directly on to the crime recording system without entering them on the command and control system first: there are two subcategories:	
1. Forces using this approach who know (a) how many crimes are directly recorded in this way and (b) how many of these crimes they attend. These forces are able to monitor accurately their attendance in response to crimes.	Avon and Somerset, City of London, Cumbria, Dorset, Dyfed Powys, Greater Manchester
2. Forces using this approach who either know (a) how many crimes are directly recorded in this way but do not know how many of these crimes they attend, or (b) do not know how many crimes are directly recorded in this way nor how many of these crimes they attend. These forces are unable to monitor accurately their attendance in response to crimes.	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Lincolnshire, North Wales, Northamptonshire, South Yorkshire, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Mercia, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Wiltshire

4.65 This table shows that almost half of all forces (19 forces in the last subcategory above) did not know how many reports of crimes they had attended. HMIC finds this a matter of considerable concern. It is impossible for forces to assess the quality of service they are providing to

victims, let alone understand the demands being placed upon the force, if they do not know which crimes they attend.
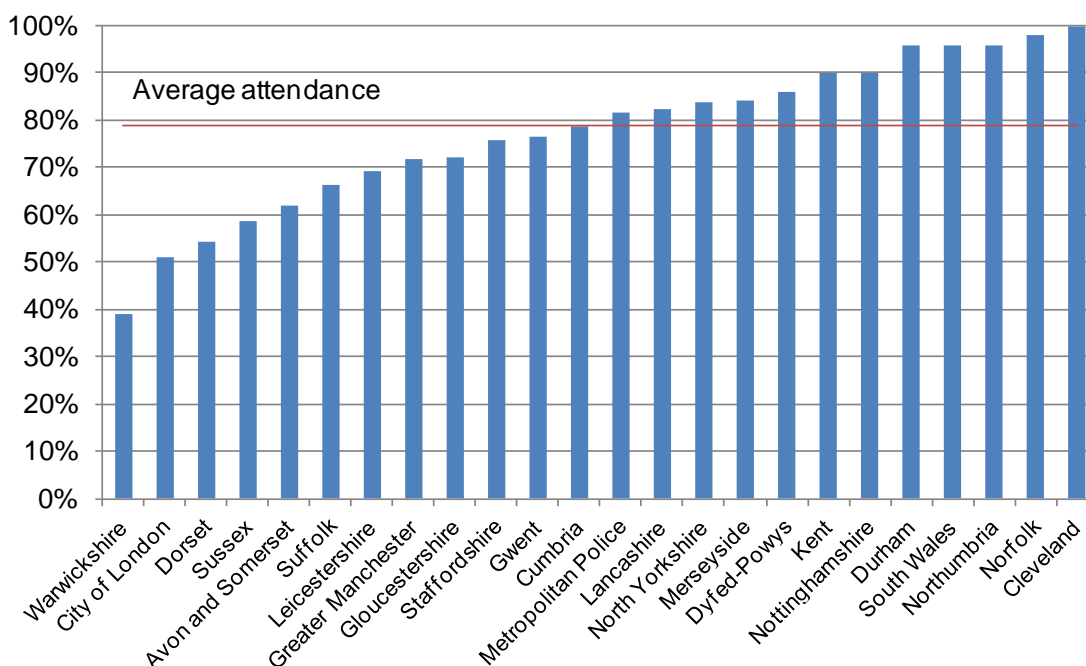
Recommendation 13

> **Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place adequate systems and processes to enable the accurate recording and monitoring of the deployment and attendance of officers and staff in response to all crime and incidents reported to them.**

Data on forces' attendance

4.66   Using data from the 24 forces which could provide information on police attendance to crimes and incidents, the charts that follow provide an indication of the range of police attendance in response to reports of crimes by police forces.

All crime[16]

Attendance rate to all incidents closed as crimes and directly recorded crime – 12 Months to 30 November 2013

Average rate may not be representative of total England and Wales average.

4.67   This chart shows a significant variation in police attendance in response to all reports of crime. Attendance ranged from 39 percent to 100

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[16] The unique nature of the City of London Police means that many victims reporting crimes will live in the Greater London area or elsewhere and the chart does not accurately reflect their true attendance rate.

percent,[17] with an average of 79 percent. Six forces had an attendance rate of over 90 percent, although four of these had a policy to attend all reports of crime.

4.68   In an attempt to provide comparative information on attendance rates to different types of crime, HMIC conducted a further examination on force attendance rates in response to reports of burglary and vehicle crime.
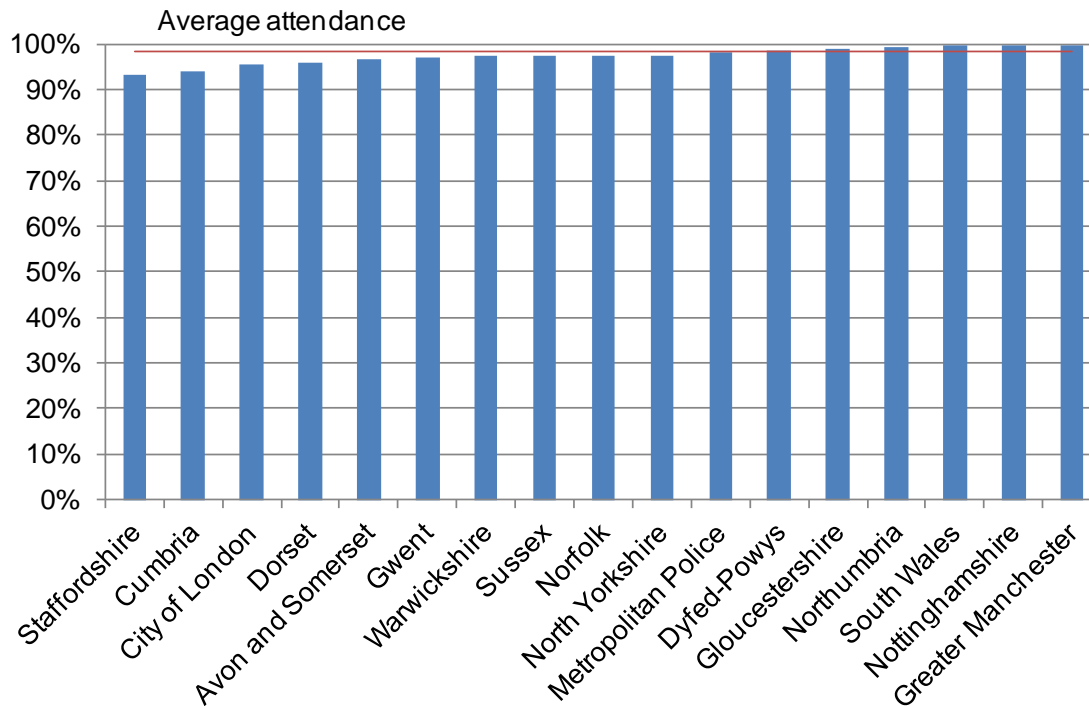
Burglary

4.69   When reports of burglary are recorded as a crime by the police, a distinction is made between a burglary of someone's home (classified as a 'burglary dwelling') and a burglary of a different type of building, such as commercial premises, shops or garden sheds (classified as 'burglary of a building other than a dwelling').

4.70   In requesting the data for this inspection, HMIC had intended to analyse and present the comparative attendance rates of all forces to reports of dwelling burglaries. This is a crime that can have devastating effects on the victim and one which HMIC would have expected not only that the police attend, but also that each force would understand its attendance rate in relation to this type of crime.

4.71   Therefore HMIC was concerned to find that in addition to the 19 forces that were unable to provide their attendance rates, a further seven forces were unable to distinguish between their attendance at reports of burglary at a dwelling and other burglaries. This means that 26 forces, more than half of all police forces in England and Wales, cannot monitor routinely their attendance at burglaries of people's houses.

4.72   The chart below indicates the attendance rates of the 17 forces[18] that were able to provide the data in relation to reports of burglary dwellings, either recorded on the command and control system or those directly recorded as a crime. It shows that the attendance rate ranges from 93 percent to 100 percent, with an average attendance rate of 98 percent across the forces that provided data.

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[17] All percentages are rounded.

[18] Only the forces able to provide all their attendance data are shown. In addition Cleveland, Durham, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Merseyside and Suffolk were unable to provide data on how many incidents closed as burglary dwelling were attended.

Attendance rate to all incidents closed as burglary dwelling and directly recorded burglary dwelling – 12 Months to 30 November 2013

Average rate may not be representative of total England and Wales average.

4.73   The chart below indicates the range in attendance rates in relation to reports of burglary of a building other than a dwelling, based on the 17 forces that were able to provide the data. The chart shows a much greater variation in attendance than for reports of burglary dwellings, ranging from 36 percent to 99 percent, with an average attendance rate for those 17 forces of 83 percent.
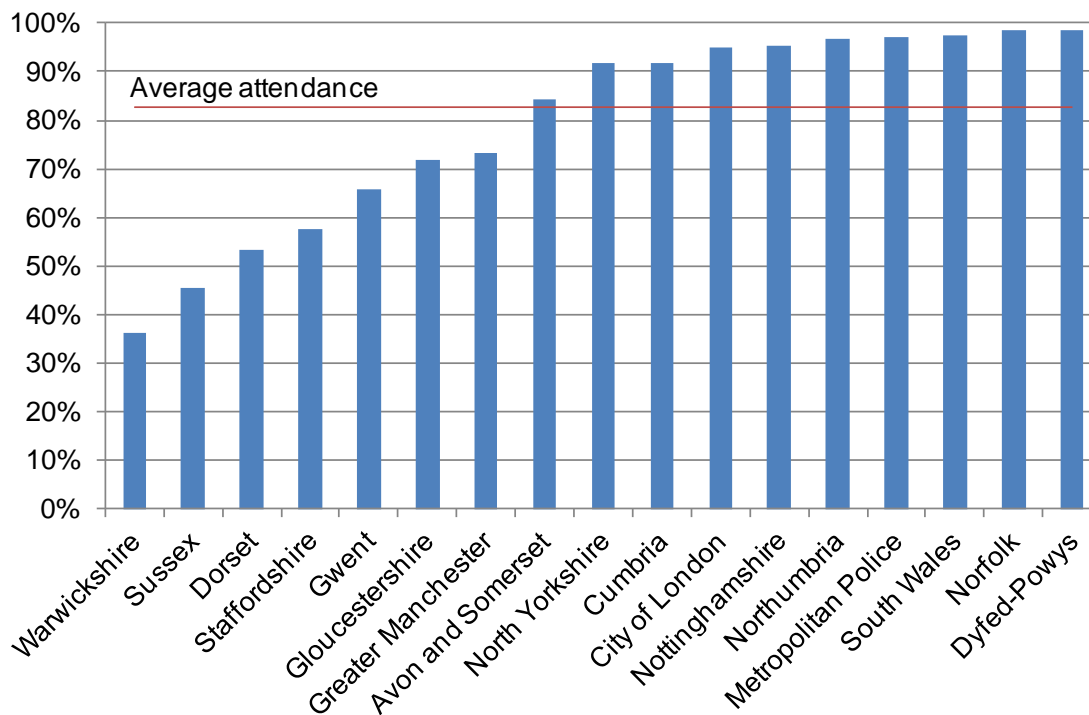
Attendance rate to all incidents closed as burglary other and directly recorded burglary other - 12 Months to 30 November 2013

Average rate may not be representative of total England and Wales average.

Vehicle crime

4.74 The category of vehicle crime includes the crime of theft of a motor vehicle and also the crime of stealing something from within, or on, a motor vehicle. However, HMIC found once more that in addition to the 19 forces unable to establish their attendance rates to reports of crimes, a further eight forces were unable to identify their attendance to theft of motor vehicles and a further nine forces were unable to identify their attendance at incidents of theft from motor vehicles.
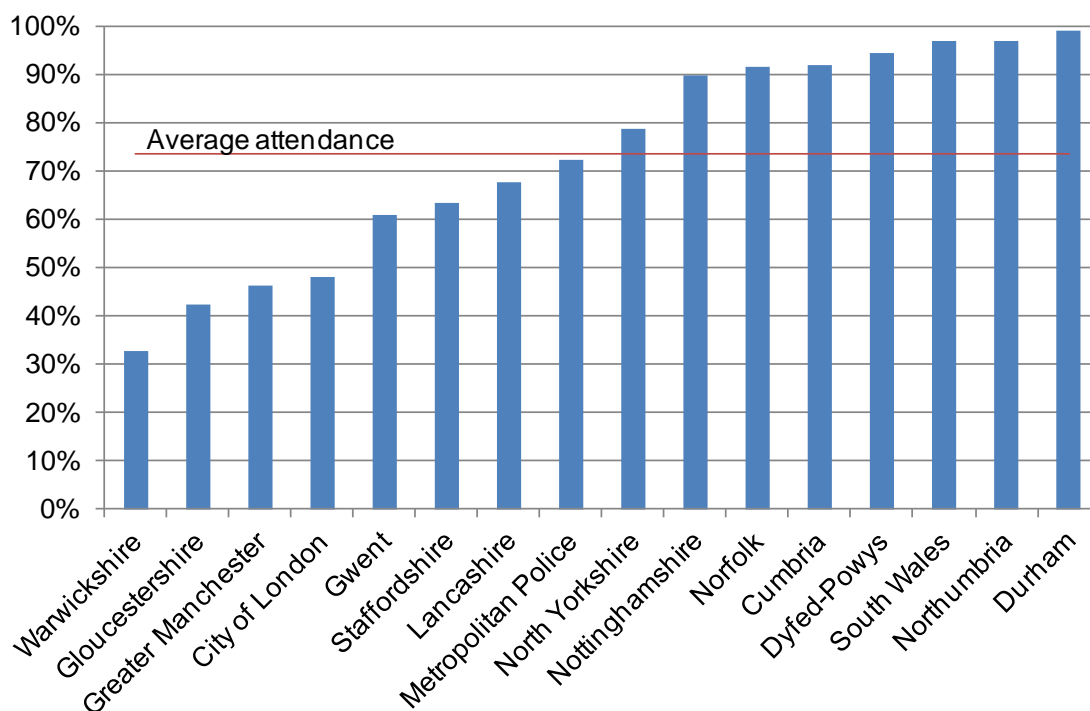
4.75 The following two charts indicate the attendance levels of the 16 forces[19] able to provide the attendance data to HMIC for theft of a motor vehicle and the 15[20] forces able to provide attendance data for theft from a motor vehicle. There is a significant variation in the level of attendance in response to reports of these types of crime, with less than one in every

[19] Only forces able to provide complete attendance data are shown. In addition, Avon and Somerset, Cleveland, Dorset, Kent, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Suffolk and Sussex were unable to provide data on how many incidents which were closed as a theft of motor vehicle were attended by police.

[20] Only forces able to provide complete attendance data are shown. In addition Avon and Somerset, Cleveland, Dorset, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Suffolk and Sussex were unable to provide data on how many incidents closed as theft from vehicle were attended.

ten reports of theft from motor vehicles being attended by one force, to almost all reports in other forces.

Attendance rate to all incidents closed as theft of vehicle and directly recorded theft of vehicle

Attendance rate to all incidents closed as theft from vehicle and directly recorded theft from vehicle

Average rates may not be representative of total England and Wales average.

4.76   The inspection established that reports of vehicle crime are often dealt with over the telephone by forces that operate a threat, harm and risk

approach to attendance. This may account for the significant range in attendance by forces indicated in the chart.

Recommendation 14

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that they have the ability efficiently and promptly to differentiate in their records their attendance to specific crime types, such as between burglary dwellings and burglary of other buildings.

Comment on data provided by forces

4.77   During the inspection, many forces told HMIC that there may be some inaccuracies in their recording on their command and control systems of attendance in response to crimes. Although we found some evidence of dip sampling to check attendance in response to reports of crime, we did not find forces methodically checking whether attendance had taken place or not in relation to all incidents. There needs to be a greater level of accuracy and consistency in the recording and monitoring of these incidents. Without this, forces will not be able to understand which crimes and incidents they attend, how this affects the quality of service provided, and the demands on their resources generally.

Recommendation 15

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should establish and operate adequate processes for checking whether attendance data are accurate, including dip-sampling records.

Attendance, victim satisfaction and detection

4.78   There is insufficient national data to assess reliably whether a relationship exists between attendance at crimes and victim satisfaction or detection rates. While attending a particular crime may have an effect both on the chances of detecting it and on the victim's satisfaction with the service provided by the police, more work needs to be carried out in this area to understand better the principal factors in improving both victim satisfaction and detection rates.

Recommendation 16

By 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to carry out research to understand the relationship between the proportion of crimes attended and the corresponding detection rates and levels of victim satisfaction.

Case study

In April 2012, the Metropolitan Police Service changed its approach to attendance in response to reports of crime. From this date, the force stated that where the victim of a crime requested face-to-face contact with the police, they would attend. Previously, many of these crime reports would have been dealt over the telephone.

Prior to April 2012, only 25 percent of reports of theft of and from motor vehicles were attended by the Metropolitan Police Service. The effects of the change in the attendance policy were significant. By June 2013, the attendance rate to reports of vehicle crime had increased to 65 percent, indicating a desire by the public for face-to-face contact with the police. In addition, there was an increase in the level of overall victim satisfaction in relation to these crimes, from 60percent in April 2012 to 70percent in June 2013. The change in attendance policy was implemented as one component part of an initiative to improve victim satisfaction, so it was not possible to establish the full extent to which the increased attendance had an impact upon the victim satisfaction rate.

Who attends crimes and incidents?

4.79 All forces had an identified group of officers, referred to in this report as 'response officers', used for their initial response to most incidents.

4.80 Response officers normally respond to and deal with the majority of incidents reported to a force which are determined to require police attendance. Neighbourhood officers and PCSOs may also attend and deal with incidents although they tend to respond mainly to issues within their own neighbourhood areas.

4.81 Forces also had arrangements for more specialist officers and staff, such as armed response and roads policing officers, to support response teams when the demand placed on response officers was particularly high. Although the principal role of these units is a specialist policing activity, they can be made available for other non-specialist work when not fulfilling their primary remit.

4.82 All forces had a systematic way of establishing the type of officer or staff member to be sent to an incident: for routine incidents, this was usually response and neighbourhood staff; local detectives would respond to reports of certain crimes such as burglary or robbery; and specialist detectives would be sent for other specific crime types, such as rape, child abuse and domestic violence. These were clearly laid out in policies, and call-handling staff in forces understood the priority and responsibilities of each role.

PCSOs

4.83   PCSOs were introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 as non-warranted members of staff. They were given limited powers, such as directing traffic, and were intended to provide a visible uniformed presence to support the dedicated neighbourhood policing teams within forces.

4.84   Since then, those limited powers have been extended (see below) and many forces have come to rely upon PCSOs to contribute increasingly to policing local neighbourhoods across England and Wales. As at the end of March 2014, there were 13,066 PCSOs in the police forces of England and Wales, accounting for approximately 6 percent of the police workforce.

4.85   PCSOs do not have the powers of arrest that a constable has, although they do have other powers and some limited powers to enter property and detain people. All PCSOs receive a minimum set of standard powers, such as issuing fixed penalty notices for certain offences or powers to enter premises, as well as additional powers, such as those to deal with local by-laws or enforcing some licensing offences that may be conferred upon them locally by the chief constable.

4.86   During the inspection, HMIC found that in all forces PCSOs were sent regularly to certain incidents relating to anti-social behaviour and other neighbourhood problems; this was in keeping with their role profile and training. In 26 forces, when an incident was reported which was beyond the training of PCSOs, or required powers beyond those possessed by PCSOs, a police officer would attend, deal with the incident and complete any related tasks.

4.87   However, in 17 forces the inspection team found evidence of PCSOs being sent to incidents beyond their role or training, such as to incidents or reports of crimes which they were then required to investigate. It would appear, therefore, that in these forces PCSOs are being drawn into a response style of policing – that is, being used to respond to general calls for service from the public – rather than being used in the visible, community reassurance role for which they were intended. This is inappropriate.

Recommendation 17

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that PCSOs are not being used to respond to incidents and crimes beyond their role profiles, in respect of which they have no powers, or for which they have not received appropriate levels of training.

Appointments

4.88   All forces provide some kind of appointment system for victims of crime, either through arrangements to meet them at a police station or for officers to visit the victims at their homes. HMIC acknowledges the value in this approach for both the police and victim. It gives the police an opportunity to plan their work, and avoids taking officers away from front-line policing services. It also allows victims to be seen at times convenient to them.

4.89   HMIC was provided with a number of examples where appointments were being made for the convenience of the police, when the incident could and should have been dealt with immediately. An example of this was a man walking into a police station to report having been assaulted. Despite there being obvious opportunities to gather evidence immediately, both from the victim and from the crime scene, an appointment was made to see him at his home some days later.

Recommendation 18

By 31 December 2014, all forces should produce clear guidance for officers and staff on what kinds of crimes and incidents need to be dealt with immediately and are not appropriate for resolution by way of appointment.

Recommendation 19

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that where crimes or incidents are being dealt with by appointment, these are, to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, made for the convenience of the victim(s); and that appointments are never used in cases requiring immediate attendance.

Investigating crime

4.90   The level of investigation being carried out by forces is relevant to the efficacy of preventive policing, and thus to this inspection. HMIC was also interested, from a police attendance perspective, in whether there were differences between what was expected of, and actually carried out for, investigations depending on whether the crime or incident in question had been attended or not.

4.91   To conduct this element of its investigation HMIC:

- spoke to front-line officers and staff and their supervisors to find out what level of training had been provided to them;

- looked at how staff recorded both completed and ongoing investigative activity (for example, by means of an investigation plan); and

- visited crime management departments and spoke to the staff responsible for recording crime.

4.92   In addition, HMIC examined a small sample of different types of crimes across all forces, including samples of crimes that had been attended and those that had not. HMIC was looking for evidence of an investigation plan, whether the officer or member of staff conducting the investigation was trained appropriately, and whether there was evidence of appropriate monitoring by supervisors.

Attended crimes

4.93   HMIC spoke to the officers and staff responsible for responding to reports of crime. We found that, in general and across all forces, these officers and staff were clear about the type of activities and tasks that they should be undertaking routinely when they respond to a report of a crime. These include, for example: assessing the crime scene; identifying potential witnesses and suspects; assessing what evidence may be available (including CCTV and forensic evidence); and keeping the victim updated on the progress of the investigation.

4.94   Officers and staff in all forces told us that where police had attended an incident, an investigation plan should be recorded on the crime record. Supervisors were aware of their responsibilities to monitor and guide their staff and to ensure that crime reports are investigated by their staff.

4.95   In the vast majority of crime files HMIC examined, where a crime had been attended, there was evidence that the scene had been assessed and potential investigative opportunities had been recorded on the crime record or the command and control incident log. HMIC also found that these records were being updated to record which activities had been completed.

4.96   As described earlier (paragraph 4.37 onwards), in 37 forces HMIC found that a proportion of crimes recorded by the force were dealt with over the telephone. In these forces, the initial report from the member of the public is received within the call-handling centre and assessed by a call-handler. In most forces, if the crime is believed to be appropriate for desk-based investigation this will be carried out by a crime management unit or a dedicated telephone investigation unit. Alternatively, the crime

will be directly recorded as a crime by the call-handler. There are 16 forces that directly record crimes onto their crime recording system without first making a record of it on their command and control incident recording system. The proportion of crimes that they directly recorded in the 12 months to November 2013 ranged from 1 percent to 53 percent of the total of all their crimes recorded.

Crimes investigated without any police attendance

4.97　HMIC established that while most forces have provided training to call-handlers in relation to the National Decision Model and the force threat, harm and risk policy, these staff did not in the main have any investigative training or experience. This is despite the fact that they are responsible for deciding how a reported crime will be dealt with. Similarly, in the crime management units and telephone investigation units that HMIC visited (which were run by a mixture of police officers and police staff), HMIC found the level of training and experience varied across forces.

Recommendation 20

Not later than 30 September 2015, all forces should ensure their officers and staff involved in investigation of crime over the telephone in call-handling centres, crime management units and telephone investigation units have received appropriate investigative training.

Dip-sampled crimes

4.98　HMIC undertook a small dip-sample of 100 crime reports in each force, both attended and non-attended crime,[21] including:

- burglary of a private dwelling;

- burglary of a building other than a dwelling;

- assault;

[21] This sample of crimes, selected at random from crimes reported during November 2013, included at least 50 crimes which had not been attended (other than in those forces which had a policy to attend all reports of crime)

- theft from motor vehicle; and

- criminal damage.

4.99 The crime reports were examined for:

- evidence of an investigation plan to establish lines of enquiry completed and those yet to be taken;

- evidence of supervisors checking the reports and police activity in relation to the crime investigation; and

- evidence of how quickly the crime was filed from the date it was created.

4.100 In cases of burglaries of private dwellings, more serious assaults and robberies, HMIC found the majority of crime reports examined contained evidence of investigation plans and comments from supervisors. In relation to these crimes, all forces stated that, other than in exceptional circumstances, they would expect these crimes to be attended and dealt with either by a detective or by a member of a dedicated crime team.

4.101 For other types of volume crime (vehicle crime, burglary of buildings other than a dwelling and criminal damage), HMIC found a much wider disparity in the quality of investigations, supervision and the length of time for which these crimes were investigated before they were filed. In many forces, these less serious crime types were the ones that were more likely to be dealt with over the telephone.

4.102 In these categories of crime reports (primarily those crimes not attended by police), HMIC found 13 forces where the investigation plan, progress or supervisory guidance was unsatisfactory. In around half of cases examined in these forces, we found little or no evidence of any investigative plans and little evidence of independent supervision of them.. In most cases, the crime reports examined had been filed within a few days with no evidence of further contact with the victim. In approximately half the cases examined in these forces, they had been filed within 24 hours of being reported.

4.103 HMIC acknowledges its research was conducted on a relatively small sample of crimes. However, the crime reports indicate a lack of thoroughness in desk-based investigation. In far too many cases, HMIC found little evidence of anything more than a cursory examination of the prospects for gathering evidence.

4.104 HMIC accepts that for some crime reports there may not be any obvious evidence that would allow the police to detect a crime at the time it is reported. In these cases, desk-based investigation might be appropriate. However, many forces currently are using desk-based investigations in a

way that means unless there is very obvious forensic, witness or CCTV evidence available and the victim or caller is aware of these at the time the report is made, the crime will be recorded and most likely be filed the same day.

Recommendation 21

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that all crime reports have investigation plans that are being properly updated and supervised, whether these are for crimes that have been attended or those being resolved by desk-based investigation.

Recommendation 22

By 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place and be operating adequate systems which ensure that all crime reports are appropriately investigated before being filed.

Subsequent attendance in desk-based investigations

4.105 Crime management unit and telephone investigation unit supervisors reported to HMIC that there were occasions when they had asked a neighbourhood officer or PCSO to visit the location of a reported crime that previously had been assessed as appropriate for desk-based investigation. Some also reported asking PCSOs to make follow-up visits with victims. Most forces were unable to provide details of the extent of these occurrences. As these visits were being requested using the crime recording system (rather than the command and control system), only three forces were able to tell us how many crimes had been attended subsequently by an officer or PCSO. It has not been possible therefore to develop a clear picture of this practice.

4.106 HMIC is clear that forces should ensure that the PCSO's primary function remains focused on reassurance, not investigation. However, we do see an opportunity for forces to enhance the crime prevention aspect of the role.

4.107 Initial training to PCSOs is provided differently across the service, although there will be a limited reference to crime prevention within it, in line with national guidance. Although a small number of forces indicated that they had invested in additional crime prevention training for some of their PCSOs, the vast majority have not.

4.108 The College of Policing has developed a three-day course, 'Problem-solving and home security surveying', which specifically focuses on developing crime prevention skills for PCSOs and other community staff. The College, conscious that training in this area previously has been unstructured and fragmented across the service, sees this course as an

opportunity to standardise crime prevention training for officers and staff in neighbourhood teams.

4.109 The course has been designed so that it can be provided in-force to up to 20 staff at a time to help to keep down costs. At the time of inspection, the College had provided this training to some PCSOs in two forces, although they had received enquiries from a number of other forces.

With additional preventive training, PCSOs would be better equipped to conduct follow-up reassurance patrol and provide victims and neighbours with crime prevention advice to help prevent future crimes being committed. This work fits well with the role of PCSOs of engaging with their local community, providing a high-profile deterrent and reassurance patrol, and building trust and confidence in their community.

4.110 Recommendation 8 already makes reference to crime prevention training being provided to officers and police staff that come into contact with the public. Clearly, this includes forces providing crime prevention training for their PCSOs.

Managing offenders and suspects

4.111 In conducting its inspection into the management of offenders and suspects, HMIC examined how forces ensure that they have:

- effective management of those offenders most likely to cause harm to communities (see paragraphs 4.112 to 4.118 below); and

- clear systems and processes in place to identify, manage and pursue suspects and wanted persons (see paragraphs 4.119 to 4.132 below).

Integrated offender management

4.112 Research[22] shows that it is a small number of offenders who commit a high proportion of crime. Effectively managing these offenders therefore forms an important part of preventive policing.

4.113 More often than not these offenders are drug-dependent, have been in prison and have an unsettled or chaotic lifestyle with little or no prospect of employment.[23] Police forces and other public sector agencies such as

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[22] *Crime, persistent offenders and the justice gap*, Centre for Crime and Criminal Justice Research, Garside R, 2004
[23] *Working with offenders: A guide to concepts and practices*, White R and Graham H, 2013, Page 38

local authorities and the National Offender Management Service use a nationally recognised scheme to ensure that those offenders whose crimes cause most damage and harm to communities are managed in a coordinated way. This is known as the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme.

4.114 This structure allows the police and other local agencies to work together on the management of offenders. Integrated offender management approaches differ slightly from force to force, reflecting local priorities, but there are common principles. These include:

- all partners (both criminal justice and non-criminal justice agencies) work together, focusing on offenders, not offences;

- all partners are involved in planning, decision-making and funding decisions;

- offenders are provided with a clear understanding of what is expected of them;

- better use of existing programmes, such as drugs intervention programmes and the use of community justice; and

- offenders that are considered to be at high risk of causing serious harm to the community and/or re-offending are assessed for inclusion on the scheme.

4.115 The inspection found that in all forces there are structures in place with dedicated staff to manage these offenders. Each force has ways that the police and their partners can identify those offenders who are likely to be most harmful to the community, though these differ slightly from force to force.

4.116 The intensity of the level of management that offenders receive relates directly to the level of risk that they pose. IOMs work with offenders to tackle the problems that have contributed to their offending, such as drugs and alcohol addiction, homelessness and unemployment. The IOM agencies undertake regular reviews to assess how offenders on the scheme are responding to it. These reviews consider the available information from each agency, such as the results of drugs tests or information that the individual may be committing crime, to determine the level of risk that person poses, and the level of management or intervention required.

4.117 In 28 forces, we found that there are regular scheduled meetings between the appropriate representatives from the relevant organisations, including (as a minimum) police, probation and housing providers. In all of these forces, the chair of these meetings is either a member of the police or of the National Offender Management Service. HMIC found that

these meetings were well organised and had a clear focus. Decisions about changes in the level of risk associated with offenders were documented and activities were tracked and reviewed regularly.

4.118 In 15 forces, we established that the IOM structures were not as effective as they could be. The forces in question did not all have the same problems and shortcomings which prevented them from being more effective. However, the problems included:

- lack of strategy or policy to provide clarity about working arrangements;

- poor IT systems or an inability to integrate with other IT systems, including sharing information with other agencies;

- outdated or weak processes for nominating offenders for intervention, or determining the level of risk they represent;

- poor caseload management; and

- limited performance information or a lack of analysis to establish the success or otherwise of the scheme.

Recommendation 23

By 31 December 2014, those forces with ineffective Integrated Offender Management arrangements should conduct reviews of their shortcomings to establish the improvements which should be made. In each case, not later than 1 April 2015 the force should have drawn up an adequate improvement plan and made substantial progress in its implementation.

Managing suspects and wanted persons

4.119 Another important aspect of crime prevention is bringing to justice promptly those who commit offences. This helps prevent them from continuing to offend and deters them from reoffending in the future. Every police force needs an organised and methodical way to bring suspects and wanted persons swiftly to justice because:

- offenders rarely commit just one offence, and so while they are at liberty they are likely to be continuing to commit crime;

- victim and public confidence is likely to be damaged if those people established by the police as being responsible for crimes are not swiftly arrested and tried; and

- the longer the delays in arresting individuals, the more likely it is that witnesses' recall of evidence will fade and the prospects of conviction will be diminished.

4.120 As part of its inspection, HMIC asked forces to tell us the number of people they had established as wanted for arrest or interview where the action was recorded as outstanding at the beginning of June 2014. We asked forces to provide information on three types of people wanted for arrest or interview by the force:

- **named suspects**: the number of open, unsolved crimes being investigated by the force, where a suspect for the crime is named but has not yet been arrested or interviewed;

- those who have **failed to answer police bail**: the number of suspects being investigated whom the force has bailed from a police station to come back at a later date while further enquiries are being made, and who have failed to answer that bail; and

- those who have **been circulated as wanted on the police national computer (PNC)**: the number of people wanted for a criminal offence about which the force has circulated details on the PNC. This process enables other forces to arrest those individuals should they come into contact with them.

4.121 HMIC was extremely concerned to find that a number of forces were unable to provide some of the data requested. Questioning suspects and arresting those people who should not be at liberty is core business for the police. HMIC would have expected this information to be used on a daily basis by managers at all levels, as well as senior leaders, to track progress to ensure suspects are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Recommendation 24

By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that they have adequate systems in place to record (a) the number of open unsolved crimes being investigated in relation to which there is a named suspect; (b) the number of people within their areas who have failed to answer police bail; and (c) the numbers of suspects about whom details have been circulated on the PNC.

4.122 Only 32 forces were able to provide HMIC with information on the number of suspects named as responsible for a crime and whom the force had not yet arrested or interviewed. The 11 forces that did not provide the information cited the inability of the force IT systems to identify accurately those suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed, as the reason for not providing the information.

4.123 The information received from forces showed the huge range in the number of named suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed in the 32 forces that were able to provide the data. Collectively, they had over 30,000 suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed, ranging from 29

suspects outstanding in one force to over 6,000 in another. However, not all forces were able to provide data for the same time period. In particular, the count of suspects includes those related to crimes counted for 2013/14, and suspects counted from previous years. In many cases, forces also use different definitions and have different policies.

4.124 Only 34 forces were able to provide the information on the numbers of suspects being investigated who had been bailed from a police station for further enquiries and who had failed to answer that bail. The number of suspects failing to answer their police bail amounted to over 9,500 cases across the 34 forces. Difficulty with extracting the data from the IT system was the main reason cited by the nine forces that did not provide the information.

4.125 The data in relation to suspects noted on the PNC as being wanted are provided to forces by the PNC data centre at Hendon, London. Each force is required to update the PNC with any alteration in the wanted status of a person, and retains responsibility for maintaining the original crime file, and for monitoring and progressing activity to find the suspect. Information provided to HMIC from PNC at Hendon indicated that on 1 April 2014 there were 26,998 suspects circulated on the PNC nationally as wanted by police forces in England and Wales.

Named suspects

4.126 During the inspection, HMIC looked at forces' systems and procedures for dealing with named suspects who were wanted for questioning in relation to open investigations. These individuals will have been identified as a suspect in connection with a crime, usually through information provided by a witness or another person who knows the suspect. Alternatively, there may have been other evidence that indicated that the suspect was at the scene, such as CCTV, fingerprint or DNA evidence.

4.127 Also, as part of the inspection HMIC randomly selected and examined from each force ten files in relation to people who had been named as a suspect for a crime but had yet to be arrested or interviewed. In addition, the inspection team examined ten files of individuals identified by the force as being wanted for a crime whose details had been circulated on the PNC. In many cases, the second group of individuals were those who were believed to have left the force area or even the country. All files were selected at random and accordingly included people wanted for offences that dated back over many months or years.

4.128 HMIC looked for evidence of regular activity and review, including checking and guidance by supervisors, to establish whether the individual was still wanted for the crime and that efforts were being made to locate him.

4.129 HMIC established that 18 forces have strong systems and processes in this respect. They had a clear grip on managing named suspects and offenders yet to be arrested or interviewed, and shared a number of similar characteristics. These were that:

- high-risk offenders and those wanted for priority crimes, such as house burglaries and robberies, were designated as high priority;

- an organised allocation and review process was employed, either through a dedicated team focusing on these priority crimes or working in specific units;

- suspects identified through fingerprints or DNA at a crime scene were usually progressed very quickly;

- the daily management meetings in each of the local policing areas were used to allocate officers and staff to find and arrest wanted persons;

- timely briefings were given to patrol staff in relation to those offenders considered the highest priority; and

- there was a management structure that regularly and systematically reviewed progress in the case of each named suspect. In the more effective forces, this was done at both local and force levels.

4.130 In 25 forces, there were inadequate systems and procedures in place to monitor or check progress in relation to finding suspects. This number includes those forces that were unable to establish accurately the number of named suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed by the force. This included those forces where the dip-samples of named suspect or suspects circulated on PNC were unsatisfactory in at least six of the cases examined. Although a small sample, this is indicative of ineffective monitoring systems.

4.131 All of these forces had systems to take appropriate and timely action in relation to high-priority suspects, such as those whose fingerprints or DNA had been found at the scene of a burglary dwelling. However, none could provide evidence of clear systems and processes actively to pursue all the suspects that had yet to be arrested or interviewed by their force for any type of crime, whether or not they had been identified through forensic, witness or CCTV evidence.

4.132 In 12 of these forces, the forces' files in relation to named suspects and the corresponding PNC files were unsatisfactory in at least six of the 20 files examined, in that they showed little or no evidence of either a recent update in relation to finding the suspect, or there was insufficient evidence of supervisory activity. The lack of effective systems in some

forces to monitor progress of such a basic part of police work is a matter of considerable concern.

Recommendation 25

By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that effective monitoring procedures and systems are in place to enable police managers to track the progress being made with named suspects and ensure they are being pursued as quickly as possible.

Time

4.133 Since 2010/11, the police service budget has been significantly reduced. Between March 2011 and March 2014 police officer numbers have reduced by 8 percent, staff by 13 percent and PCSOs by 17 percent. At the same time, while overall recorded crime continues to fall, the nature of the demands placed on the police service is changing. For example, there have been, and continue to be, increases in the number of crimes being carried out through modern technology and the internet (known as cyber-crime). This is where criminals use computers to help them commit crimes that would have been committed previously without the benefit of such technology, for example fraud and theft, or where they commit new crimes that were not possible before, such as an attack on government online services using malicious software.

4.134 Research shows that cyber-crime is significantly under-reported, and of those reported to Action Fraud,[24] just 18 percent are passed to police forces.[25] This means that police forces do not have sufficient information to establish and understand the threats, harm and risk associated with cyber-crime, which means that they are not in a position to deal with it effectively.

4.135 There are also increased requirements on forces to provide some aspects of policing at a national level, which requires forces to train specialist officers and staff over and above their local needs. In July 2012, the Home Secretary published the Strategic Policing Requirement, which sets out her view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The particular threats referred to as the national threats in this report are; terrorism; civil emergencies; organised

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[24] Since April 2013, Action Fraud has received all reports of fraud and computer misuse offences from the public and businesses on behalf of police forces. These are screened for opportunities to investigate and also used in prevention and disruption activity.

[25] National Fraud Intelligence Bureau throughput statistics; nine months to 31 December 2013.

crime; public order threats; and large-scale cyber incidents. HMIC is undertaking a programme of inspections[26] to assess the preparedness of forces in relation to these threats.

4.136 Many police forces also reported to HMIC that they are experiencing local changes in demand, such as an increase in the requirement to respond to incidents involving people with mental health needs. Police involvement in the subsequent care of some of those individuals while they have their health needs assessed can be time consuming for police officers and staff.[27]

4.137 However, an appreciation of the demands placed on a force by anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder, and other calls for service and reports of incidents, is only one aspect of understanding demand. A simple count of the number of calls received takes no account of the complexity of the incidents being reported, or the subsequent time and effort which is required to deal with them. While most forces are aware of their external demand in numerical terms, few understand the time and resource commitments required to deal with different types of incidents and crimes. This is a matter of material concern.

4.138 In addition to understanding their external demand, forces also need to know the extent to which policing activities are being carried out by their officers and staff. This includes those that are self-generated, namely those activities that are not as a result of a call for service, such as responding to the analysis of intelligence or proactive work which police officers and staff have the remit to do or carry out on their own initiative. A sound and detailed understanding of this workload and these activities should have a substantial influence on forces' decisions on deployment of officers, staff and other assets, and provide opportunities to streamline processes.

4.139 It is therefore extremely important that police forces fully understand all of these matters to ensure that best use is being made of police time. In this inspection, HMIC examined the following:

- How well police forces understand and record the demand they face (see paragraphs 4.140 to 6.35 below);

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[26] Inspections undertaken to date are set out in: *Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement*, HMIC, London, April 2014, and *Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how forces in England and Wales deal with threats of a large-scale cyber incident*, HMIC, London, July 2014. Both available from www.hmic.gov.uk

[27]*A criminal use of police cells? The use of police custody as a place of safety for people with mental health needs*, HMIC, London, June 2013. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk

- What forces are doing, or could do, to free up police officer time, whether by changes within the force or through working with other organisations (see paragraphs 6.48 to 6.67 below);

- What is being done, or could be done, to reduce bureaucracy and increase efficiency (see paragraphs 6.68 to 6.76 below); and

- How technology is and could be used by forces to improve the service forces provide and the efficiency with which they operate (see paragraphs 6.81 to 6.141 below).

Demand

Work by the College of Policing

4.140 In this period of continuing austerity, it is important that forces fully understand the demands that are placed upon them. This will allow them to make the right decisions about the level of service they provide and how to provide it.

4.141 The College of Policing currently is carrying out work to help the police to understand better the nature and extent of demands on police resources and how they may have changed.

4.142 The College has carried out four main strands of work to help understand 'typical demand' and to get closer to being able to understand 'total demand', although the picture cannot ever be completely definitive in statistical terms given the variation in the type and sources of data. The four strands of work are:

- drawing together existing sources of data and information, available nationally, that can be used to estimate different aspects of demand;

- drawing on existing force analyses to understand better particular demand pressures;

- obtaining incident data from four forces for the last five years to explore using these data to understand the changing nature of demand on the service; and

- developing a method to estimate the extent of proactive non-statutory activity which is not picked up through traditional data sources but can reduce reactive demand. The College is working with one force in particular on this strand of its work.

4.143 Twenty-three forces responded to the College's request for information about what they have done to analyse and measure demand. Thirteen of them provided some numerical data to support their responses. Some of

these forces have specifically examined subjects such as the demands on the units in police forces that are responsible for protecting vulnerable people or for dealing with sex offenders. In addition, many forces have provided information about the demands placed on them as a result of responding to incidents involving people with mental health problems.

4.144 In this respect, the level of detail forces were able to provide to the College varied from force to force. This variation is consistent with the variations HMIC found in forces' ability to provide information on their understanding of demand during this inspection. It is therefore apparent that the extent to which police forces in England and Wales understand the demands they face is variable, that greater focus is needed in this area. The work on demand analysis and building the evidence base being carried out by the College is, and will continue to be, of great importance.

4.145 The College has carried out an interim assessment of the information collected through the four strands of work. Although no firm decisions had been taken about the progress of the work as this report was published, a number of areas of work had been identified for further development. These include:

- building as detailed as possible a picture of police demand, to be produced in autumn 2014, based on the data collected, acknowledging there are gaps in the data;

- undertaking further work to distinguish between what the College calls 'public demand', which concerns responding to calls for service from the public and ''protective demand', which is described as including the more proactive work the police undertake mainly in relation to safeguarding the public, in particular, vulnerable people;

- developing a better understanding of demand through police involvement in high risk areas such as vulnerability and safeguarding and police activity in preventing crime; and

- examining areas such as public protest and roads policing as well as developing an improved understanding, of mental health, serious crime and counter-terrorism.

4.146 The College currently is exploring how best to achieve a number of aspects of this work and is developing a prioritised programme of work for autumn 2014.

4.147 In future, HMIC intends to report the extent to which each force understands the demands that it faces through the publication of individual force management statements. The Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions[28] (2012) recommended that HMIC should establish a national template for a force management statement, to be published by each force with its annual report. (Force management statements are modelled on the network statements which European law requires many regulated monopoly providers of safety-critical essential public services to prepare and publish every year.) The recommendation stated that each statement should contain data on:

- projected demands on the force in the short, medium and long terms;

- plans for meeting these demands, including financial plans; and

- steps the force intends to take to improve efficiency and economy with which it will maintain and develop its workforce and other assets, and discharge its functions to the public.

The statement should also report on performance in the last year against projections made for that year in the previous force management statement. Each force management statement will contain substantial (if not all) the information which the force should already have if it is managed well. It is therefore not an additional bureaucratic burden; rather, it will simplify and streamline the information which each force routinely prepares for reporting and accountability purposes, and should substantially reduce the burden on forces of preparing information for *ad hoc* purposes.

4.148 At the moment, HMIC is developing a template for force management statements, in consultation with forces, the Home Office, local policing bodies, the College of Policing and others. The objective is for these statements to provide a significant amount of the factual information that will underpin future inspections carried out by HMIC as part of the new 'PEEL[29]' assessment arrangements, thereby reducing the demands on forces as the force management statement matures.

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[28] *Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions,* Cmnd 8024, 2012

[29] The new HMIC inspection arrangements, commencing September 2014, will be called Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy assessments, or PEEL assessments

Forces' current understanding of demand

4.149 HMIC looked for evidence that forces understood the demands placed on them and the relative workloads of their officers and staff. If forces understand the overall demand they face, they will be able to deploy their officers and staff more efficiently and effectively and focus their activities more appropriately.

4.150 In addition, in order for forces to free up more officer and staff time, they need to know what an average working day for a police officer or member of police staff involves (though of course this will vary across the different roles and functions within a force). Forces should understand what work their officers and staff do as a result of external demands such as responding to calls from the public and investigating crimes. However, forces also need to know how much time their officers and staff have available to do things proactively rather than reactively, such as preventive patrol, searches and arrests and the resources needed to protect the public and in particular vulnerable people.

Recording demand

4.151 All forces record some information with the objective of enabling them to understand and measure the demand they face. In general, this information includes:

- the number of telephone calls received by the force, including those answered and those not;

- the number of incidents recorded on their command and control systems;

- the importance of incidents recorded on command and control systems (for example, urgent, priority or scheduled);[30]

- the number of crimes recorded (broken down into different categories) and the numbers of those crimes that are detected subsequently;

- the number of arrests made and the number of people brought into custody suites;

- the number of people charged or bailed;

- the number of prosecution cases; and

- the number of people dealt with in other ways, for example by the issue of a penalty notice for disorder.[31]

4.152 All forces are able to establish and use these data. Forces were also able to establish how the reports of incidents and crimes were distributed by reference to both the time and the location of the report. Forces use this information to plan how many people they will require to carry out particular tasks, for example, how many people will be needed to run call-handling centres and custody suites at different times of day (or on different days of the week). Forces also use this information to work out the number of response officers, neighbourhood officers and PCSOs needed in a particular geographic area at particular times. Where these demands are known and can be predicted, determining how many officers and staff are required is relatively straightforward.

[30] The way in which police forces classify incidents reported by the public will determine the level of urgency with which they will respond
[31] A form of immediate financial punishment used by police to deal with low-level offending, such as being drunk and disorderly, retail theft and minor criminal damage
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4.153 However, to understand more fully the demands placed upon them, forces need to be able to establish the different amounts of time (and therefore costs) associated with different crimes and incidents. For example, a report of a theft from a motor vehicle and a report of a serious assault are both recorded as a single crime, but an investigation into a serious assault is likely to take significantly more time and effort on the part of the police. HMIC found little consistency in the ways in which forces are trying to understand this aspect of demand. In addition, understanding the time and resource implications takes no account of the quality of service provided.

Case study

In August 2013, Avon and Somerset took a snapshot of the constabulary and over a 24-hour period collected all the information available relating to incidents, crimes, front-counter activity, letters and social media. This was supported by call monitoring in the call-handling centre and activity analysis of officers and staff. A consultancy company was used to verify and assess the information. This resulted in a much clearer understanding of the typical demands being placed upon the organisation. This information has informed the development of the way in which the constabulary is to operate in the future.

4.154 Ten forces are making appreciable progress in relation to understanding their demand more fully. These forces are assessing and analysing how different types of incidents and demands are changing over time. Some of these forces have begun to look at how long it takes to complete particular activities. No force has completed this work, but those forces that have started work on this were able to display a good understanding of the demands placed upon them. They were also able to establish more clearly the ways in which they need to respond to meet those demands.

Case study

West Midlands Police carried out an exercise called 'A week in the life' which reviewed the work of response officers in a typical week and analysed their activities. A pie chart indicating what activity was carried out by officers and a 'map' of the systems and processes involved was produced for each of the activities. Work was carried out to establish, understand and reduce the things that hindered the provision of a good service. Changes were made and the difference in officer availability was assessed six months later. Patrol time, that is, the time when an officer was not busy and available to respond to calls, had risen from an average of three and a half hours to five and a quarter hours, per officer per shift.

4.155 Few forces have adopted the structured approach to examine and analyse how they can free up time demonstrated in the case studies

above and even fewer are assessing or measuring the benefits of any changes made.

4.156 Many of these forces that are making progress in understanding their demand are using specialist software which estimates the average time it takes to respond to an incident or crime, or to carry out other activities. This will enable forces to have a much clearer view of what tasks occupy their time and allow them to understand how the time of their officers and staff is divided between reactive and proactive tasks. They will then be able to plan how they respond to the demands they face more effectively.

4.157 In July 2014, West Midlands Police announced a five-year contract with a consultancy company to restructure the force and develop a new way of working to better meet demand. The £25m contract with the company is to be focused on developing more efficient ways of working, including the introduction and development of technological solutions. The force anticipates spending an estimated £100m on technology as part of the five-year programme. The initial focus of the work will be to examine the demands upon the force to inform the development of a new operating model.

4.158 HMIC found that forces that had a less well-defined understanding of demand typically have no independent way to obtain and verify data, weak links between analysis and an agreed or refreshed resourcing model and a reliance on historic data, with no account taken of new demands, such as cyber-crime or emerging community needs.

4.159 While forces need to know what resources are required to provide services locally, also they are required to have a certain number of specialist officers and staff available to fulfil national policing commitments. This strategic policing requirement[32] requires all forces to be able to provide specially-trained resources to support another force, or to deal with a national incident relating to public order, counter- terrorism, organised crime, civil emergencies or a national cyber incident. The College of Policing is currently working with chief constables to establish the necessary capabilities required for forces to respond to these requirements. This is another aspect of demand and there is a need to establish sound plans that include the forces' contribution to the regional and national policing requirement.

Recommendation 26

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[32] *Strategic Policing Requirement*, HM Government, July 2012

All forces should work with the College of Policing to support its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the demand which the police service faces. Forces should understand what proportion of demand is generated internally and externally, and the amounts of time taken in the performance of different tasks. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 27

All forces should progress work to gain a better understanding of the demands they face locally, and be prepared to provide this to the College of Policing to establish good practice in this respect. All forces should inform HMIC of their progress on this matter through their annual force management statements.

Monitoring workforce performance

4.160 A full and detailed understanding of demand is necessary to ensure efficient and effective policing, but to have that understanding requires a means of assessing the performance and effectiveness of all officers and staff in a force.

4.161 Care is needed when police forces use performance measurement tools and techniques. Broad measures of crime (or the associated activities) take no proper account of the relative seriousness of the offence, nor of the quality of the investigation carried out or the level of service provided to the public. In addition, measurement of crime-related activities alone does not reflect many of the other things the police do which are not so easy to measure, such as searching for missing persons, resolving neighbour disputes, protecting vulnerable people, reassuring communities through preventive patrol or simply engaging with the public. It is important, therefore, that performance measures are used as information to help assess risk, make good decisions and enable improvement, not as outcomes to be pursued for their own sakes.

4.162 It is the responsibility of police leaders to ensure their officers and staff concentrate on those activities that matter most to delivering a quality policing service to the public, not those that are easiest to count. However, the use of appropriately valued performance assessments will enable forces to understand that officers and staff are doing what is expected of them. Those leaders without any way to measure the performance of their staff run the risk of not seeing an imbalance of workloads; creating significant pressures for some officers and staff, while others may be under-performing. In addition, while officers and staff will often be very busy, forces need to know whether the work being carried out by them is the right activity based on an informed assessment of risk.

4.163 Within each police force, there is a performance development review (PDR) process for all officers and staff. This process should provide each member of staff with clear objectives and measures or criteria for a favourable evaluation of their performance. HMIC did not examine individual PDRs of officers and staff during this inspection; however we did seek to understand how clearly each force articulates and measures the performance expectations of its staff. The development of performance assessments for staff needs to ensure that each officer, and each member of staff, understands what is expected of them and how they will be monitored.

4.164 In 17 forces, there was some form of performance assessment in use to measure the workload and activities of the majority of officers and staff. These arrangements, in the main, were in place for response officers, neighbourhood officers, PCSOs and local detectives as well as those officers responsible for dealing with roads policing and firearms incidents. However, even in these forces there was little evidence of performance scrutiny in relation to other specialist staff, such as those involved in investigating serious crimes or dealing with vulnerable people.

4.165 The content and extent of the performance information we found varied from force to force and also between different policing functions within forces, to reflect the priorities and focus of the team. The information we found generally included a combination of one or more of the following:

- reactive work – such as the numbers of incidents attended, crimes investigated and crimes detected or other resolution achieved. In some forces this also included details of outstanding issues, such as the number of suspects yet to be arrested, or crime investigations overdue for an update;

- self-generated work – such as the numbers of intelligence reports submitted, stop searches conducted or arrests made. A number of these forces are trying to ensure that there is a qualitative assessment for some of these proactive measures, such as recording the results of stop searches and focusing on arrests for particular crime priorities; and

- a quality assessment of work – such as the numbers of prosecution files returned for further work, victim satisfaction feedback, supervisor feedback, and letters of thanks or complaints recorded.

4.166 The systems in place in these 17 forces provided this information electronically, regularly, usually monthly, and at a number of different levels. This allows supervisors to monitor the performance of their own teams (and make appropriate comparisons with others), and provides senior managers with workload and performance information at a higher level.

4.167 It is clear that those forces using performance assessments are trying to strike the right balance between the quantity and quality of performance measurement with their senior leaders, stating they were moving away from quantity measures to focus much more on quality issues. HMIC spoke to supervisors during the inspections that supported this stance and were particularly conscious of the need for quality in relation to self-generated work such as stop searches and arrests, where crude numbers or targets can generate perverse effects if not carefully monitored.

Case study

In Nottinghamshire Police TOMI (team and officer management information) packs are produced centrally on a monthly basis for supervisors. This provides information on team submissions on activities including response times to incidents, crimes under investigation, stop searches carried out and the results, intelligence entries, crime user satisfaction survey information, investigations over 21 days old, outstanding named suspects and the number of arrests made. This information can be obtained at the level of individual officers to allow supervisors to monitor or quality assure individual officer workload and performance.

4.168 In the remaining 26 forces, while some basic management information was available, many officers and supervisors were unclear how their individual and team performance was being measured or assessed. HMIC was told by senior leaders that officers and staff were clear about the expectations of them and the need to provide a high quality service to the public. However, there was no apparent routine, consistent way to monitor or assess the performance of individuals or teams.

4.169 These forces typically demonstrated little or no corporate understanding of what officers and staff were doing with their time (this was particularly evident in relation to specialist resources), few corporate measures or indicators and an inability to draw performance information without having to access multiple IT systems. While officers and staff in some teams within these forces were completing 'productivity' sheets (including information contained in paragraph 6.33 above) that indicated how they spent part of their working day. We found that this was instigated usually by local supervisors; however, there was no consistency between teams in the information collected, or in how that information was used.

4.170 The limited use of performance assessments in forces is disappointing; it is difficult to see how staff in many forces are expected to know what is required of them. It is important that these assessments balance quantitative and qualitative aspects of police work, although it is acknowledged that this can be hard to do. The absence of appropriate performance measures, which have been communicated and fully

understood by staff, may mean that a force fails to recognise good work or, more importantly, fails to identify poor performance. The lack of this information is a matter of concern as, without it, forces cannot compare the workloads and activities of officers and staff across different policing teams, and across similar forces. This would give them an improved understanding of the different levels of demands being placed upon their resources, and so enable them to make better decisions on the deployment of assets.

Recommendation 28

> **By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they have the means to assess and better understand the workloads of their staff, and that officers and staff understand what is expected of them and how they will be assessed.**

Average crime workload

4.171 The extent to which forces have a sound and sufficiently detailed appreciation of the workload of their officers and staff across the different range of policing functions is limited. Having a clear picture of the nature, intensity and volume of this workload, and associated activities, will not only inform – and may substantially improve – resourcing decisions, but should also have a material beneficial effect on the ways in which forces establish, enhance and use their capacity to respond to crimes and incidents.

4.172 The police receive many calls for service. Over two thirds of incidents reported to the police are not specifically concerned with crime or anti-social behaviour. However, despite this significant demand, preventing and investigating crimes remains their core business. To provide an indication of the capacity of the police to respond to crime reports, HMIC drew on information from published data to compare the number of crimes reported with the number of officers potentially available to deal with them.

4.173 HMIC established two categories of police officer role: front-line officers and visible officers. Information regarding the number of officers in these categories is recorded consistently by forces. It is important to note that visible officers will also be included within the category of front-line officers.

4.174 Front-line officers include police officers that interact with the public on a routine basis. This category includes detectives, but also includes, in some forces, police officers in roles which would not deal ordinarily with a crime, such as call-handlers. Front-line officers accounted for 89 percent of all police officers in England and Wales as at 31 March 2014.

4.175 The category of visible officer includes the following uniformed officers: response, neighbourhood, community relations, probationers, roads policing, firearms, mounted officers and dog handlers. This category accounted for 56 percent of police officers as at 31 March 2014, but does not include any detective roles.

4.176 During the 12 months to the end of March 2014, there were nearly 3.46m crimes recorded by the police forces of England and Wales. As of 31 March 2014, there were approximately 113,600 frontline officers and approximately 72,200 visible officers in England and Wales. This equates to approximately 30 crimes recorded for every frontline officer in 2013/14, and approximately 48 crimes recorded for each visible officer.

4.177 Using the attendance data from the 24 forces that were able to provide the information, on average, 79 percent of all crime was attended. If this were representative of all forces in England and Wales, broadly this would equate to the average frontline officer attending approximately 24 crimes in a year and the average visible officer attending approximately 38 crimes a year.

4.178 HMIC accepts this is a simplistic view and takes no account of differences in time and resources required to deal with different crimes; nor does it consider other demands on the police. In addition, the contribution by police officers to dealing with crimes will never be shared equally, although it is a matter for each chief constable how resources are deployed and the work which is given to police officers and police staff.

4.179 The College of Policing's work on demand includes some examination of how officers in certain areas spend their time. Further work is needed in this area, to assist forces in making accurate resourcing decisions and decisions about how best to prevent crime and protect the public.

Recommendation 29

> **All forces should work with the College of Policing to continue with its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the nature and extent of the workload and activities of the police service. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.**

Freeing up police time

Organisational change for greater efficiency

5.1   Over the past three years, police forces have been focused on saving money and improving efficiency to meet budget reductions. In order to cope with and manage these reductions, all forces have carried out organisational reviews and made changes. For the most part, these changes have followed similar patterns, with the emphasis on keeping officers and staff on the frontline serving their communities.

5.2   Forces have been focusing on becoming more efficient by implementing changes such as:

- reducing operational budgets such as those for staff who are working overtime;

- making reductions to support functions, such as business management, human resources and administrative support, many of which have been restructured or centralised;

- restructuring policing area boundaries, with the responsibilities of managers being increased as their numbers are reduced; and

- exploring opportunities to work across a range of business areas with neighbouring forces, which might yield a combined reduced cost.

5.3   HMIC acknowledges the savings already achieved by the police service (as has been discussed in HMIC's Valuing the Police[33] reports over the last four years). However, while all forces were able to demonstrate the financial savings they had made, few were able to provide evidence of savings in officer and staff time, which should be reinvested to improve the service to the public.

Establishing tasks for warranted versus non-warranted powers

5.4   As a general rule, a member of police staff of similar grade operating in the same environment will cost in the region of a third less than a police

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[33] Valuing the Police – A programme of annual inspections conducted by HMIC since 2010 examining plans in police forces to deal with the budgetary reductions of the 2009/10 Spending Review. Available on www.hmic.gov.uk

officer. Many forces therefore have been gradually increasing the use of police staff in roles that deal with the public where the warranted powers of an officer are not essential. These roles include police staff response officers, crime investigators and custody assistants

5.5   Twenty-five forces are reviewing which tasks require the warranted powers of a police officer and assessing where those powers are necessary or desirable. These reviews being carried out by forces are aimed at examining whether further opportunities exist to use police staff crime investigators and other support staff to carry out operational and administrative tasks that are normally carried out by response officers. This would free up more time for response officers to spend on frontline patrol and tasks which require police powers.

5.6   The use of police staff investigators has been in use in many forces for some years, working in local CID officers as well as in more specialist functions such as professional standards departments. A number of forces have also adopted, or are considering, the use of police staff to support response officers by undertaking routine tasks which do not require warranted powers, such as taking statements and undertaking enquiries, allowing police officers to focus on responding to calls for service from the public. In Avon and Somerset Constabulary the requirement for officers and staff to guard major crime scenes has been outsourced to a private security company, allowing officers and staff to be used for roles more in keeping with their core skills and training.

Recommendation 30

By 31 March 2015, those forces that have not already done so should conduct a review of the tasks currently being carried out by their police officers to establish which activities do not require warranted police powers and could be carried out by police staff.

Non-police tasks

5.7   During the inspection, forces consistently reported two main concerns that they considered placed significant demands on their resources: reports to the police of incidents involving people with mental health problems and providing police assistance either to support ambulance staff or to respond in their absence. Forces believed both of these issues were at least in part the responsibility of other organisations.

5.8   HMIC acknowledges the work currently being carried out by the College of Policing on these issues.

Mental health

5.9   Every day, the police receive many calls from members of the public reporting that they are concerned for the safety of another person. These are classified as 'concern for safety' incidents. Such incidents include concerns for people who are believed by callers to be vulnerable and reports of people who are believed to have mental health problems.

5.10   The primary role of the police is the prevention of crime and disorder, and the protection of life and property. Where a report is made because of a concern for the safety of an individual or the protection of a member of the public or their property, then it is appropriate for the police to respond to it. However, police officers and staff only have basic first aid training and protective training and equipment. Police officers and staff are not health professionals and are not specifically trained to deal with people who have mental health needs. Moreover, they will not always be aware of the most appropriate ways to help individuals with mental health problems.

5.11   When the police attend reports of this nature, if they believe that the person is suffering from a mental disorder in a public place, and that person is in immediate need of care or control, section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 provides the authority to take the person to a 'place of safety' so that his or her immediate mental health needs can be properly assessed.[34] Most recent figures indicate that, in 2012/13 in England and Wales, 7,761 people were taken into police custody as a place of safety under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983.[35] Once the person is in a place of safety (either in hospital or a police station), a police officer or member of staff often will have to supervise him as there may be a threat of his harming himself or others.

5.12   While every force in England and Wales told HMIC of its material problems and anxieties in relation to concern for safety incidents and the strain these placed on policing resources, few forces had carried out any research to establish in any detail the amount of staff time they take up and the cost incurred by the force as a result.

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[34] A 'place of safety' is defined in section 135(6), Mental Health Act 1983 as: "residential accommodation provided by a local social services authority under Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948; a hospital as defined by [the Mental Health Act]; a police station; an independent hospital or care home for mentally disordered persons; or any other suitable place the occupier of which is willing temporarily to receive the patient."

[35] Some of the issues in relation to the use of police stations for persons detained under section 136 Mental Health Act 1983 are examined in: *A criminal use of police cells? The use of police custody as a place of safety for people with mental health needs*, HMIC, London, June 2013.

5.13 As a result of these concerns being raised at a national level, in February 2014, a Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat[36] was launched. This is a joint statement, agreed by a number of agencies including health and social care, police and justice, and local government, about how public services should work together to respond to people who are in mental health crisis. This initiative describes the principals and good practice that should be followed by health staff and partners when working together to help people in urgent need of mental health care.

Case study

Nottinghamshire Police undertook a study into the costs associated with dealing with people with mental health problems. Between January 2013 and October 2013, there were 909 people in Nottinghamshire detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983, and of these 275 (30percent) were taken into police custody.

The total cost of dealing with the people under this Act by Nottinghamshire Police in 2013 is estimated to be over £361,000. This includes all costs associated with managing incidents in the call-centre and police resources required to attend and deal with incidents, including custody and transportation costs. This cost compares to £144,000 in 2011 and £230,000 in 2012.

The total number of hours that Nottinghamshire Police officers and staff spent in 2013 dealing with individuals under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 is estimated at 13,118 hours. This compares to 5,685 hours in 2011 and 8,954 hours in 2012.

5.14 Twenty-one forces either have programmes of work, or are starting pilot programmes, to tackle these problems, mainly with mental health workers patrolling alongside police officers, particularly during the evenings. This is to provide a quick response to concerns for safety of individuals suffering from mental health problems by specially trained staff who can provide an early assessment of their needs. Feedback to HMIC, the majority of which was anecdotal, was that the mental health workers are able to assess problems at the scene of the incident and obtain the professional health services required much more easily than the police.

Case study

Leicestershire Police has evaluated its programme to manage incidents relating to mental health problems and reports that their triage car, containing a police

[36] *Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat – Improving outcomes for people experiencing mental health crisis,* Department of Health and the Home Office, February 2014,

officer and a health worker, responds to about 120 incidents each month. There has been a reduction in the number of people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 of about one third since its introduction. The average time spent dealing with each detained person has dropped from eight hours to five.

5.15   This experience shows that forces may find benefits in adopting a similar programme. Forces should, however, ensure that to do so would be cost effective and beneficial in their particular areas.

Recommendation 31

By 31 March 2015, those forces without a mental health triage programme should carry out analysis to assess whether adopting such a programme would be cost-effective and beneficial in their particular areas. Where the analysis indicates this would be positive, all forces should work with their local mental health trusts to introduce such a programme by 1 September 2015.

Ambulance service

5.16   A number of forces reported to HMIC that they had significant concerns about the attendance by ambulances to reports of injured or sick people. When an accident or incident is reported which requires the attendance of the ambulance service, it will sometimes also require police attendance. However, forces reported that the level of response by the ambulance service has deteriorated significantly in the last year or two. HMIC were informed by police officers in many forces that on an appreciable number of occasions they had been required to wait with injured and sick members of the public for a number of hours. In some cases, due to the level of injury to the person, the police made the decision to take the individual to hospital themselves. This decision places an unfair level of responsibility for the health of the member of the public on the police patrol, and despite officers having good intentions; this places the public at risk as police officers have only a basic level of first aid training.

Case study

Northumbria Police undertook research into the amount of time officers spent at incidents that they believed should have been dealt with by the ambulance service. The force estimates that in the region of 1,000 hours a month of police officer time is spent unnecessarily dealing with incidents that they assessed should have been the responsibility of the ambulance service.

5.17   Eighteen forces are working with the ambulance service to agree the level of service that each organisation should provide in particular incidents. Feedback from staff during the inspections also indicated that

where forces have monitored incidents and asked senior leaders to raise problems of this nature at planning meetings with the ambulance service, this has had a positive effect.

5.18 In addition to providing support to forces in refining and monitoring service level agreements, the ambulance service has carried out its own research and, with the force, has addressed the issues. The main issues identified by the ambulance service included an unrealistic expectation by the police of ambulance response times, particularly to minor conditions or injuries; and reports of ambulance delays in some cases related to requests which would not warrant an ambulance response.

5.19 As a result of this research and its ongoing engagement with forces the ambulance service has identified a number of schemes which appear to be good practice in improving police understanding of the ambulance response to incidents and reducing unnecessary delays at scenes. These include:

- development of 'police support cards' which have been issued to frontline officer and staff. These cards provide simple guidance to the police at the scene of an incident, clarifies the information required to obtain an ambulance response and sets out likely response times for different categories of patients;

- introduction of special arrangements which enable direct communication between the police officer at the scene and the ambulance control room. In Hampshire this has resulted in a 50 percent reduction in ambulance deployments and, linked to this, reduced time spent at the scene of incidents by police officers and staff; and

- direct links between the incident management systems of the London Ambulance Service and the Metropolitan Police Service to triage and prioritise calls. This has improved response times by the ambulance service as well as the quality of information provided for the initial assessment.

5.20 It is clear that these initiatives, and the relationships being developed between the police and ambulance service, are better developed in some areas than others. Forces should ensure that they can understand accurately this type of demand and, where necessary, work with the ambulance service locally to manage it. This should also provide greater detail for the College of Policing work on demand currently being carried out.

Recommendation 32

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress its work into how mental health cases and ambulance provision can be better managed. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Reducing bureaucracy

5.21   The police service has been trying to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy for some time. In 2001 a Home Office commissioned study was published called *Diary of a Police Officer,*[37] which found that officers were spending almost as much time in the police station as they were on the streets. In response, the government appointed Sir David O'Dowd, the former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, as chair of the policing bureaucracy taskforce.

5.22   In July 2002, the taskforce put forward 52 'change proposals' for forces to consider. As a result of this work, between 2002 and 2008 senior officers were seconded to the Home Office as bureaucracy champions to support forces implementing the O'Dowd recommendations. Since this time further reviews of bureaucracy have been carried out. In 2007, Sir Ronnie Flanagan was appointed to undertake a review of policing, which included respects in which bureaucracy could be reduced[38]. In 2009, Jan Berry, former chair of the Police Federation, provided a further report on bureaucracy reduction[39].

5.23   In 2010, the Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board (RBPB) was set up at the request of the Home Secretary to develop proposals and actions to further reduce bureaucracy in the police service. The board was chaired by Chief Constable Chris Sims (West Midlands Police) and included representatives from ACPO, the Home Office, HMIC, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Police Federation and the College of Policing (taking over from the National Policing Improvement Agency).

5.24   The RBPB identified opportunities to improve procedures in the police service and reduce the administrative burden on officers and staff, while

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[37] *Diary of a Police Officer*, PA Consulting Group, London, 2001

[38] *Independent Review of Policing by Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Final report,* London, February 2008. Available from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080910134927/police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police-reform/review_of_policing_final_report/

[39] *Reducing Bureaucracy in Policing,* Jan Berry, London, October 2010. Available from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-bureaucracy-in-policing

ensuring the police remain accountable to the public. The board was not intended to replace activity carried out by ACPO, the College of Policing or criminal justice programmes, but sought to assist forces through:

- supporting existing and planned national work;

- developing a range of project methodologies;

- commissioning and overseeing demonstration projects; and

- acting as a gateway to challenge the growth of future bureaucracy.

5.25   The RBPB influenced a number of significant national projects, including the development of the National Decision Model (NDM); the consolidation and reduction of guidance and advice available to the police, known as Authorised Professional Practice; and the review of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), which considerably reduced the size of the manual without having an adverse effect on how it is used. In addition, while not responsible for criminal justice reform, the RBPB provided support and advice in several projects, including modernising the ways in which suspects are charged with criminal offences, increased use of video technology and making forensic reporting more streamlined.

5.26   The RBPB commissioned a number of projects to reduce bureaucracy. However, the RBPB was not provided with the resources to measure the full effects of these projects or evaluate the reducing bureaucracy programme; hence none of the projects (described below) has been evaluated. Some of the more prominent projects commissioned by the RBPB included:

- **missing persons**: which explored a new approach to how the police respond to reports of missing people, using professional judgment to determine the level of risk to the missing individual and the introduction of the 'absent' category in the police handling of missing persons reports. This approach was piloted in three areas and it is estimated that in the region of 1600 officer hours were saved in a three-month period. At the time of the inspection 14 forces had implemented use of this new approach;

- **crime recording**: this remains an area of concern consistently identified by police as bureaucratic. Research was carried out into a number of potentially bureaucratic areas of crime recording; such as unnecessarily complex administrative processes, examining processes to remove duplication of effort or opportunities for the greater use of professional judgment by officers and staff. The resulting report was circulated establishing best practice;

- **performance development review (PDR)**: this process which relates to the way in which police forces conduct the annual review of the performance of each member of staff is seen by many forces as a bureaucratic burden. The RBPB carried out research to establish the risks and benefits of adopting a more streamlined approach. This research has provided evidence of restored credibility in the process, becoming a stronger priority in forces and involving less wasted time. Since the research all forces have reviewed their approach to PDRs with the vast majority introducing more streamlined and proportionate systems. Most forces now have an electronic system to record their PDR process, or are in the process of implementing one;

- **stop and search**: until 2011, the police were required by law to record the details of people they had stopped, as well as those they had stopped and searched.[40] For many forces this was a bureaucratic process, with lengthy details recorded on a paper form which were then subsequently typed into an electronic database. The requirement to record details of people stopped but not searched has now been removed, which has reduced a significant amount of bureaucracy in itself. In addition, the level of detail that was required to be recorded for those individuals stopped and searched has been reduced. This has enabled many forces to introduce electronic ways of recording stop and search reports, which eliminates the need to transfer the information from a booklet to an electronic database. In some forces the record of the stop search is now made at the time using the officer's radio, which automatically records all the necessary detail;

- **road traffic collisions**: research commissioned by the RBPB led to recommendations to give officers discretion to allow the relevant parties involved in a collision involving slight personal injury to settle differences between themselves, removing police involvement and the requirement to generate additional records. This work was disseminated in the service for forces to determine local policies;

- **disclosure training**: forces had raised concerns about how the police manage and disclose to the defence evidence in cases that are taken to court. The RBPB established that in many forces officers and staff did not fully understand what was required in this

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[40] Some of the issues relating to stop and search are examined in the HMIC inspection *Stop and search powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?*, HMIC, London, July 2013. Available on www.hmic.gov.uk

respect. This creates additional, unnecessary work.[41] A national computer-based training package was developed to provide basic awareness of disclosure issues, although the extent to which this had been taken up by forces has been patchy;

- **pre-trial case preparation issues**: the RBPB, ACPO and the CPS conducted research into whether suspects that had been arrested were being bailed from the police station unnecessarily. This work identified a number of problems such as forces having different interpretations of the amount of evidence required for a prosecution case and a lack of supervision during the initial investigation. These findings were circulated to all the forces to assist them improving work in this area. All forces reported that since receiving the RBPB report they have reviewed their case preparation processes and amended them to improve working practices and reduce bureaucracy; and

- **sudden deaths**: the police attend reports of sudden, unexpected deaths on behalf of HM Coroners. This can be a time consuming, bureaucratic process in many of these cases which are straightforward with no suspicious circumstances. The RBPB commissioned work to establish opportunities to provide a more streamlined, consistent approach. The results of the work proposed a rationalisation of the information required by HM Coroner's Office and the use of a risk assessment process to reduce the time the police were required to remain at the scene. A report was published establishing potential opportunities to save police time. However, whilst the recommendations have been taken up by some forces, universal adoption is prevented by differing relationships between the police, HM Coroners and the ambulance service.

5.27 HMIC spoke to staff in forces in which projects in these areas had been implemented who said that time was being saved as a result. However, forces were unable to provide clear evidence of the time that had been saved or how it had been reinvested.

5.28 In January 2014, the RBPB handed responsibility for this work to the College of Policing, which included the development of a transition plan along with a number of recommendations. These included that the College reviews the adoption and subsequent impact of a number of the projects outlined above.

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[41] HMIC has undertaken a number of joint inspections which examine some of the issues relating to the management of evidence in cases, most recently; *Stop the drift 2:A continuing focus on 21st century criminal justice*, HMIC & HMCPSI, London, July 2013

5.29 Since the handover, the College has carried out work to finalise the transition plan, outlined in the closing report of the RBPB. This is near to completion. As part of this work the College is developing five areas of business in relation to reducing bureaucracy. These are:

- the gateway process – the College will ensure that unnecessary bureaucracy is not being imposed through central government policies and national police guidance;

- a 'what works' centre – this will be a central hub where all forces can access on-line evidence-based advice, including robustly evaluated crime prevention interventions and initiatives that are proven to reduce bureaucracy and free up time. In addition, master classes and research fairs are planned for the future;

- authorised professional practice (APP) – the College will continue to ensure police guidance and doctrine are clear and concise;

- frontline champions – the College champions project is represented in 31 forces to share good practice to reduce bureaucracy; and

- the national policing vision 2016 – this sets out the short-term ambition for policing and includes the development of efficient streamlined processes to support officers and staff. An important piece of this work is prioritising new ways of working more efficiently using technology. The College will drive this activity and support forces in their adoption of new technology.

Overarching bureaucracy reduction programmes

5.30 All 43 forces have a programme in place to manage the organisational changes that are needed to meet the financial challenges the service faces. These change programmes examine the efficiency of systems and procedures as well as investigating possible technological developments for the force. However, we found no evidence of specific bureaucracy reduction programmes in forces.

5.31 While most forces are undertaking some work to reduce unnecessary paperwork and duplicate or inefficient procedures, there are significant variations in how forces have progressed efforts to reduce bureaucracy, ranging from system and procedural reviews to digitisation of manual records or automation of the procedure to reduce or eliminate the requirement to record the same information more than once. A number of forces have applied 'lean principles' to examine and streamline or simplify processes. Some forces, such as Leicestershire Police, have placed an emphasis on reducing the number of policies and associated forms, as well as instilling a more disciplined approach to the use of emails and the production of reports.

5.32   It is clear that while forces are making financial savings through changing working practices, forces are not measuring the time that is freed up by these changes. It is disappointing that we found, in the majority of corporate change programmes, business cases that were silent on identifying or monitoring business benefits associated with saving time, but focused solely on cash savings. Forces should ensure that they establish and record effectively how much officer and staff time is freed up by bureaucracy reduction work. That way the time saved can be reinvested effectively.

5.33   National responsibility for the bureaucracy reduction programme of work now lies with the College of Policing. This should provide an opportunity to increase the pace of work in this crucial area. The way in which forces approach opportunities to reduce bureaucracy could, and should, be more structured – in particular, how forces assess the merits of projects and measure the time saved. The use of individual bureaucracy reduction plans for each force would be helpful in this regard. It is extremely important that the College progresses the RBPB recommendation to measure and evaluate completed, on-going and future projects and in doing so establish good practice. This will provide forces with evidence-based options for them to improve the efficiency of their systems and processes and to free up police time.

Recommendation 33

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress the work it has taken over from the Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board to establish opportunities where savings can be made. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 34

By 31 March 2015, every force should introduce a local bureaucracy reduction programme with a plan for quantifiable efficiency savings.

Recommendation 35

By 31 March 2015, all forces should begin monitoring how much officer and staff time has been freed up by the policies they have put in place to reduce bureaucracy, and establish how the force has used the extra time.

Technology

5.34   Efficient policing depends upon modern technology that gives officers and staff the tools they need to do their jobs. Technology should ensure police officers have access to the information they need when they need

it. It should also improve the ways in which the public can obtain information and services from the police. Technology can also increase police accountability and public confidence through, for example, the use of body-worn video.

5.35 Technology should enable officers to spend more time on the streets, providing the service that the public expects from them. For example, if officers are able to use mobile devices to verify suspects' identities or fill in forms without returning to police stations, more officer time can be made available. This time could be used to provide a better response to calls for service, and be directed at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and to dealing with other local priorities.

5.36 The development and use of police technology has been a recurring theme in a number of HMIC reports over the years. Recently, HMCIC's "State of policing" annual assessment[42] remarked that advances in technology available to the police are and will continue to be enormously valuable in ensuring that police action is fair, efficient and effective, but that much more can and should be done. In an age when many people have access to information on the internet through a Smartphone or tablet, can use the device to take photographs, make video recordings and video phone calls, and can make use of apps to find out about their immediate surroundings, the technology available to the police officers patrolling the streets or responding to incidents too often lacks the functionality available in abundance to the public they police.

5.37 HMCIC is very far from alone in drawing attention to the need for more progress in providing the police with the technology they need, and expressing concerns, in particular, about how the police procure technology, the extent to which they maximise its benefits, and the lack of interoperability between different IT systems both within forces and between forces and other agencies.

5.38 The National Audit Office's report on police procurement[43] examined police procurement of non-ICT goods and services; some of its findings are also relevant to the procurement of police ICT. It noted that procurement activity at force level had grown organically, with forces historically procuring most goods and services independently, with the result that they had been procured in up to 43 different ways. This has led to lost opportunities to make savings through a more collaborative approach. The NAO noted that some forces had entered into voluntary

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[42] *State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of policing in England and Wales 2012/13*, HMIC, London, March 2014

[43] *Police procurement,* National Audit Office, HC 1046, Session 2012-13, March 2013

collaborative procurement arrangements which provide the potential for forces to improve their buying power, negotiate lower prices and make savings by combining back-office functions and reducing administration costs. While collaborative working, whether on procurement, or more widely in relation to other aspects of police business, is now more common in policing, there are still more efficiencies to be achieved through collaboration.

5.39   The NAO reported in 2012[44] that the programme, which started in 2007, to equip front-line police officers with mobile devices had at that time only achieved a basic level of benefits for most forces. It said that while in many forces the devices enabled officers to spend more time away from police stations, the cash savings had been limited, with only one in five forces having used the devices effectively to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing because of too little consideration having been given to both the need for the devices and how they would be used.

5.40   In its report in May 2014 on the criminal justice system, the Public Accounts Committee[45] concluded that there is a need for more integration of IT so that different systems within the criminal justice system can operate together, noting in particular the unsatisfactory state of police IT, with over 2,000 IT systems in use. However, the PAC report did point to some progress, giving the example of more than 90percent of police files now being transferred to prosecutors digitally, compared to none two years ago.

5.41   The PAC's conclusion echoes a theme in HMCIC's annual assessment of policing that drew attention to the need to minimise (as far as possible) the complexity and lack of interoperability of the technology used across the police service. This lack of co-ordination results from a piecemeal approach where forces have specified their technological needs and acquired the associated hardware and software separately, or at best in collaboration with a few others. To far too great an extent, their focus has been on local needs, with forces developing and introducing different systems at different speeds and with mixed results. In a world where multiple operational interfaces perpetuate – and may even intensify – complexity and lack of interoperability, it is essential that these difficulties are kept to the irreducible minimum. While there is no prospect of a single national police IT system being developed – and no need for a

[44] *Mobile Technology in Policing*, National Audit Office, HC1765, Session 2010-11, January 2012

[45] *The Criminal Justice System*, Committee of Public Accounts, Fifty-ninth Report of Session 2013-14, HC 1115, May 2014

single system – greater interoperability could be achieved if the various police ICT networks were brought together in one network of networks allowing information to be transmitted and received more easily between systems.

5.42   There have been attempts in the past to create a national approach to establishing how technology can best be used to meet the police service's needs and procuring it as cost effectively as possible. The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) was established under section 109 of the Police Act 1997 to determine, in partnership with the police service, the service's requirements for information and communications systems, including ensuring that police ICT systems join up with those of other criminal justice organisations, and to exploit developing technologies to meet those requirements. In particular, it was responsible for developing, procuring and managing the implementation of national information technology and communications systems.

5.43   PITO was abolished in 2007, and its responsibilities and functions were transferred to the National Policing Improvement Agency. The NPIA was abolished in 2013, and its police ICT functions were transferred to the Home Office. Both PITO and the NPIA operated in a complex governance structure as the delivery agent of the Home Office, police authorities and the police service for nationally developed ICT systems for the police. These governance arrangements reflected the respective responsibilities for policing held by the Home Office (overall direction and funding), police authorities (ensuring police force efficiency and effectiveness), and police forces (operational policing). However, when in operation, they did not always lead to the procurement of a product that met the needs of all police forces and which each force was willing to adopt.

5.44   The NSPIS custody and case system is a case in point. Some forces preferred non-NSPIS systems either because they already had non-NSPIS systems or because they preferred to procure them as they considered the non-NSPIS product to be better. The government's then objective of having all forces using the same system, thus aiding interoperability and getting best value for money for the investment made in developing the NSPIS product, had to be modified to allow a mixed economy of NSPIS and non-NSPIS custody and case systems.

5.45   The landscape will change again when the Police IT Company becomes fully operational. The establishment of the Police ICT Company in 2012 was a potentially positive step. However, for the moment, it remains dormant while a PCC ICT Board, comprised of a group of PCCs, considers its functions and form. It is encouraging that the APCC has recently appointed a police IT director in assist with this work. The company currently is owned jointly by the Home Office and the

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners as an interim measure until PCCs take full ownership and control of it. In the meantime, critical national systems such as the PNC and PND are being provided by the Home Office, acting, in effect, as a staging post for functions that might at some point be transferred to the Police ICT Company.

5.46   At the national level, the Criminal Justice Board, chaired by the Minister for Policing, Criminal Justice, and Victims and made up of operational leaders across the criminal justice system including the police service, is responsible for taking action to improve efficiency across the CJS to modernise and reform the CJS into a simpler, swifter and more open service which meets the needs of victims and the public.

5.47   Below the Criminal Justice Board, work is being carried out by the Home Office, PCCs and the police service to support forces in their efforts by ensuring national systems link up and talk to each other and other systems in the criminal justice system. The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice are undertaking a piece of work with all the main digital reform projects underway in the CJS to ensure that the projects are aligned better to maximise the benefits of reform. A Police Digitisation Steering Group and a National Policing Vision Programme Board have been established by the College of Policing this year and work is in progress.

5.48   The Police Digitisation Steering Group is chaired by the College of Policing and oversees the work being carried out by forces, supported by the College, as they try to make operational policing more efficient and effective through the use of digital technology.

5.49   The National Policing Vision Programme Board, chaired by the chief executive of the College of Policing in his role as the national policing lead of the Futures Business Area which assesses the principal demands which the police service faces, has been set up to co-ordinate national projects and programmes that directly support the National Policing Vision; establish gaps, threats and opportunities in policing where capability may need to be built in order to achieve the National Policing Vision; support police forces and other organisations to work together successfully to achieve the objectives of the National Policing Vision; monitor and evaluate the success of the national policing bodies and partners in achieving those objectives; and co-ordinate and issue communications in that respect. However, the programme board's work, insofar as it covers police IT, and the mapping work being carried out by the Home Office will be of little value if it is not used to provide basic capabilities, such as guidance on mobile phone use for forces, or to help bring much needed coherence to the many different strands of work.

5.50   In addition, funding has been made available by the Home Office to encourage innovation. The Police Innovation Fund was established in

2014/15 in recognition of the need to improve the technology available to the police service in England and Wales, whether to improve ICT, or equipment such as body-worn video, or to help forces collaborate with each other or with other emergency services. £20 million was made available to forces through a precursor fund in 2013/14 and £50 million is available in 2014/15.

5.51   In 2013/14, 65 proposals from a total of 115 received were successful. The successful proposals included ones from six forces which received funding for body-worn video technology. Nine forces are using funding to introduce mobile data equipment enabling officers to access intelligence, take statements and update crime records without having to return to police stations. Funding has also been provided for collaborative work between six forces, designed to share buildings and infrastructure with the fire and rescue service, which will help them make savings.

5.52   In relation to the financial year 2014/15, in July 2014 the Home Office announced that 85 proposals had been successful and would be funded, with every force receiving a share of the £50 million. The funding will cover a wide range of projects to improve the service which forces provide, as well as collaborative work between forces and with other agencies such as the fire and rescue service. For example, it will enable eight police forces to buy more body-worn camera technology; support a better police response to people they encounter with mental health problems through, for example, the introduction of multi-agency mental health awareness training and safeguarding support; fund the development of an app by two Welsh police forces which will enable officers to record and upload audio and visual statements taken from witnesses at a crime scene onto relevant force information systems, thereby allowing officers to spend more time on patrol; and fund the development of a model to assess the demands on police time so that resourcing and deployment decisions can be better informed.

5.53   The enthusiasm which police forces have shown in making proposals for funding is acknowledgement by police leaders of the need to modernise their technology and of the efficiencies that can be achieved through collaboration with other forces.

5.54   While there is much work being carried out by the relevant national policing leads, the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the College of Policing, together with private sector suppliers, to modernise police technology, it is a matter of concern that the positive activities currently underway have in too many respects been fragmented and uncoordinated, with a risk that overlaps, gaps and interdependencies might not be identified. The problem was described to us by one programme manager as being a very broad and confusing landscape with ambiguous governance.

5.55   It would be generous to describe current arrangements as a planned transitional phase during which the police ICT-related functions of the now abolished National Policing Improvement Agency have been redistributed to the Police ICT Company and the Home Office. However, the absence of a national police information strategy, and the suspended state of the Police ICT Company, may not inspire significant and enduring confidence that lessons of the past – particularly those relating to the need to establish what police IT requirements are, as opposed to what those outside the police service think they are, and for clear governance and responsibility for implementation – have been learned.

5.56   The provision of modern technology to enable police officers and staff to provide a high quality service to the public is too important to be left to chance. The stakes are too high in terms both of equipping the police with the technology they need, and the public money being spent on police ICT[46], to continue without certainty about the Police ICT Company's functions. Clarity is needed about what the company will do when it is fully operational, how it will assist forces, and how it will ensure the interoperability of police ICT systems between forces and with other agencies. Clarity is also needed on the relationship between the company and the Home Office, for example, in developing critical national policing infrastructure that will be managed by the Home Office, and also the circumstances under which the Home Secretary's powers under section 53 of the Police Act 1996 to make regulations as to standards of police equipment, including IT software and hardware, on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness, would be invoked.

5.57   It is therefore encouraging that in July 2014, the Home Office established a new mechanism for the oversight of ICT in law enforcement, including policing, called the National Law Enforcement IT Steering Group, under the chairmanship of the permanent secretary at the Home Office. The group has met once, and is scheduled to meet every three months. Its responsibilities include:

- ensuring the co-ordination of IT programmes in policing;

- the stewardship and future transfer to police and crime commissioners of the police IT systems presently in the custody and control of the Home Office (principally the PNC, PND, and ANPR systems, and their subsequent replacements);

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[46] In 2012/13 some £675m was spent on local police force ICT.

- the achievement of the objectives of interoperability of systems, including through the establishment of open information and technical standards;

- the security of the biometric forensic capability of the Home Office for the purposes of law enforcement, immigration and asylum management; and

- the continuity of reliable voice and data wireless communication services to police, ambulance, fire and other public services concerned with safety.

5.58 The Home Office is also working with the Ministry of Justice, its agencies and the bodies for which it is responsible in relation to the necessary connections and co-ordination of ICT plans involving other parts of the criminal justice system.

5.59 It is also to be welcomed that in April 2014, the Home Office issued its first open standards for electronic witness statements and the Two Way Interface[47]. Whilst these are not mandatory standards issued under section 53 of the Police Act 1996, they should be adopted by all concerned with police ICT since interoperability is an essential requirement which has been neglected for far too long. The concept of open standards is crucial to ensuing interoperability between systems and in facilitating a national information strategy. If these standards are not adopted, or if further difficulties with interoperability materialise, serious consideration should promptly be given to the use of the powers conferred by section 53.

5.60 Whilst this inspection has not been one of the national police ICT landscape, it is important to recognise that steps appear now to be being taken to tackle the fragmented and fragmentary state of police ICT. Of course it remains to be seen what success they will have, but the commitment of the leadership of the Home Office in this respect is cause for optimism.

Digitisation

5.61 Digitisation is the conversion of information into a digital form so that it can be managed and disseminated more easily and making it more readily available to those who need to have access to it. Digitisation also

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[47] The Two Way Interface allows the two-way flow of information between the case management systems of the police and other criminal justice agencies supporting interoperability and consistency in data sharing across the criminal justice system.

refers to the development of processes using technology to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of those processes. In policing, digitisation facilitates the achievement of the objectives of the National Policing Vision 2016[48] which sets out what should be the essential characteristics of a police force which has sufficiently adopted digitisation in 2016 and beyond. It enables officers to have access to databases and fill in forms that formerly would have required them to return to a police station, thereby allowing them to spend more time policing the communities they serve. Body-worn video can record officers' interactions with the public and can be used in evidence if necessary. For its part, the public gains improved access to information and services through forces' websites and use of social media.

What difference will improved technology make?

5.62   Responsibility for the Policing Digitisation Programme has recently transferred to the College of Policing. The College is working to ensure that the police service meets the objectives of the National Policing Vision 2016. This programme will provide assistance to forces by focusing on what police forces have learnt from their experiences in introducing digitisation so far, and ensuring that this information is disseminated to all forces. It also aims to establish existing good practice and areas of police operations which would benefit from being digitised.

5.63   In April 2014, the College of Policing sent all chief constables and police and crime commissioners criteria that explained the types of things that forces would need to be able to do better using technology in order to be considered to be fully digitised. These criteria will be revised in the latter part of 2014. Essentially these are:

- from a public perspective – ways of contacting and interacting with the police; making payments required under licences and paying fines online; reporting a crime and being able through an online facility to follow police progress in dealing with it, giving evidence at a time and place that is convenient, such as via a video link;

- from a police officer perspective – using mobile devices to carry out many activities away from police premises; identifying people and investigating crimes on the street; accessing a wide range of apps tailored to individual officers' roles, for example, apps that provide them with timely briefing information about known offenders in an area, apps that analyse data and social media to assist with investigations, apps that give officers problem-solving tools for

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[48] www.college.police.uk

dealing with domestic violence, and apps that can identify the nearest vacant police cell; and

- from a criminal justice perspective – allowing, for example, evidence to be obtained and managed away from the workplace by those working in the criminal justice system; courts to receive evidence via video link; the recording of evidence digitally on the street using mobile devices; and the recording of witness statements directly into a case file.

National initiatives

5.64 In 2013, the Digital Pathfinders Initiative, jointly led by the College of Policing and the National Policing Information Management Business Area (IMBA), was launched. This work was intended to encourage collaboration between forces that are trying to improve their use of digital technology and to share ideas, innovation and best practice to serve the public and the criminal justice system better and use their resources more efficiently. The learning from the various force initiatives has been used by the College of Policing to establish the principal ICT characteristics of a properly digitised police force. At the time of the fieldwork for the inspection, 22 forces identified themselves as digital pathfinder forces. Since then, all remaining forces have committed themselves to being fully digitised by the end of 2016.

5.65 In addition, work is underway across the police service, with the assistance of the College of Policing, to help forces introduce digital processes in a number of areas of their operations. An example in the area of criminal justice is the Digital First programme established by the Home Office to ensure evidence can be collected, used, stored and disseminated digitally throughout the process of bringing a prosecution, from initial police contact with victims, witnesses and offenders, through to trial. This should both speed up the system and help increase the likelihood of just outcomes being reached. Under the programme, digital witness statement forms have been developed to increase the speed and efficiency of sending witness statements from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service; work has been carried out to streamline digital criminal case files to make it easier and therefore quicker to complete them; and work has started to create a store for digital information to hold the large volume of data that is created by digitisation and which needs to be stored, managed, retrieved and disseminated across the various agencies in the criminal justice system.

5.66 The police service is working with the Communications Electronics Security Group (CESG) in GCHQ to ensure information including, for example, that held on national IT systems such as the PNC, can be easily accessed by officers from a range of locations and on a range of

appropriately secure devices. HMIC welcomes such developments, which help maximise the time that officers can spend in communities interacting with the public rather than sitting in police stations.

Examples of digitisation

5.67   The work described above is intended build upon local innovation that is currently underway. The College of Policing's report[49] of a Home Office survey of what police forces are doing to make the most of the opportunities provided by digitisation to achieve efficiencies and improve the service provided to the public, noted that there is a significant amount of activity being carried out in forces in this respect. The report found that most forces surveyed had at least one area where they were implementing a new method of carrying out their activities, for example, giving officers mobile devices enabling them to carry out identification checks on the street. Much of this work is being encouraged through the Police Innovation Fund. For example:

- **Surrey Police and Sussex Police** are developing ways in which they can share information electronically from both forces in one place, at a reduced cost. Sharing information in this way is allowing the forces to make changes to many aspects of their everyday policing, for example, crime reporting and neighbourhood policing.

- **Cambridgeshire Constabulary** has piloted the use of 154 tablets for mobile working, which has freed up officer time by up to an hour each day. **Surrey Police, Sussex Police and Gwent Police** have introduced voice recognition technology which allows a caller to say the name of the person or department they wish to contact and have his call routed automatically to that person or department without needing to speak to staff in the call centre. This reduces call handling centre costs and frees call handling staff from having to deal with many routine calls so that they can concentrate on those calls which require their skills and experience.

- The **Metropolitan Police Service** has introduced the **"Total Technology"** programme to transform its use of technology. Where currently, a member of the public wishing to contact the police would have to telephone or visit a police station, the changes that the force is introducing will allow the public to interact with the force in a variety of new ways, for example, by reporting a crime online

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[49] *Digital Pathfinders – the Digital Landscape 2013/14 and the next steps to digital forces*, College of Policing, April 2014. The report was sent to all chief constables and police and crime commissioners and made available to the police and other agencies but has not been published.

and checking progress of the police response to it. They will also be able to have access to services online at any time of day. For example, they will be able to apply for firearms licences, pay fines, and read policing and crime news reports online. In addition, it will provide officers with the technology they need to provide a quicker and more effective response to crime, for example, through obtaining evidential photographs digitally, and introducing electronic statements from victims and witnesses, and mobile crime reporting enabling officers to deal with victims more efficiently at the scene of the crime, for example, by giving victims a crime number.

5.68   Seven forces told HMIC that they were using **electronic witness statement forms**, which enable police officers to take statements and obtain witnesses' signatures and then send the statement securely to the relevant force systems which are updated automatically, saving officers' and staff time in processing the forms while also safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of statements, and reducing the amount of paper which needs to be processed manually. However, the staff we spoke to during the inspections raised concerns about these systems, including concerns that in some forces officers cannot go back into the statement to correct any manifest errors. Clearly, while the use of electronic witness statements is to be welcomed, their full potential in saving police time will not be realised until such problems are eliminated. Twenty-seven forces noted that they are in the process of introducing or have introduced systems for **electronic file submission**, which allows criminal prosecution files to be built and managed electronically. Such files contain electronic copies of the information required in the case and can be transferred electronically to the CPS, saving staff time and reducing the amount of paper used in the prosecution process.

5.69   Some forces have the means automatically to update multiple forms with common information, thereby reducing the need to update them manually and preventing information having to be entered more than once. However, in a number of forces, staff identified problems with scanned documents being misfiled or not being accepted by the Crown Prosecution Service, for example because it could not process the file electronically because the electronic formats in which they were sent were not compatible with the CPS system. Despite these apparent problems in some areas, the use of electronic witness statement forms and electronic file submission are good examples of ways in which forces can free up police time.

5.70   **Livelink** is video technology that allows officers to give evidence to a court in another place (elsewhere in the town or somewhere else) without leaving the police station. This does away with the requirement for officers to attend and wait, often for long periods, at courts for cases to be heard. Fifteen forces have this in place or are currently trying it out. In

Kent Police, where Livelink is used, the force estimates that not having to attend court saves it around 20,000 hours of officer time each year.

5.71 Equipping a force to use Livelink is relatively inexpensive, although the numbers and locations of court buildings that need to be served will have an adverse effect on the cost of the system to forces. However, it requires the active participation and contribution of other criminal justice agencies.

5.72 It is surprising that **video and telephone conferencing**, which hardly qualifies as new technology, is not used more widely across the police service. Some forces are using it to allow staff, particularly managers, to contribute to meetings without the need for time-consuming travel with associated costs. Many managers find themselves travelling significant distances to attend these meetings. For some of the larger forces, this can consume considerable amounts of time. For example, one senior officer reported regularly recording in the region of 2,000 business miles driven during duty time each month. Video and telephone conferencing would considerably reduce this kind of travelling.

Recommendation 36

 By 1 September 2015, all forces should conduct a review into their use of video and telephone conferencing and ensure that it is being used wherever appropriate.
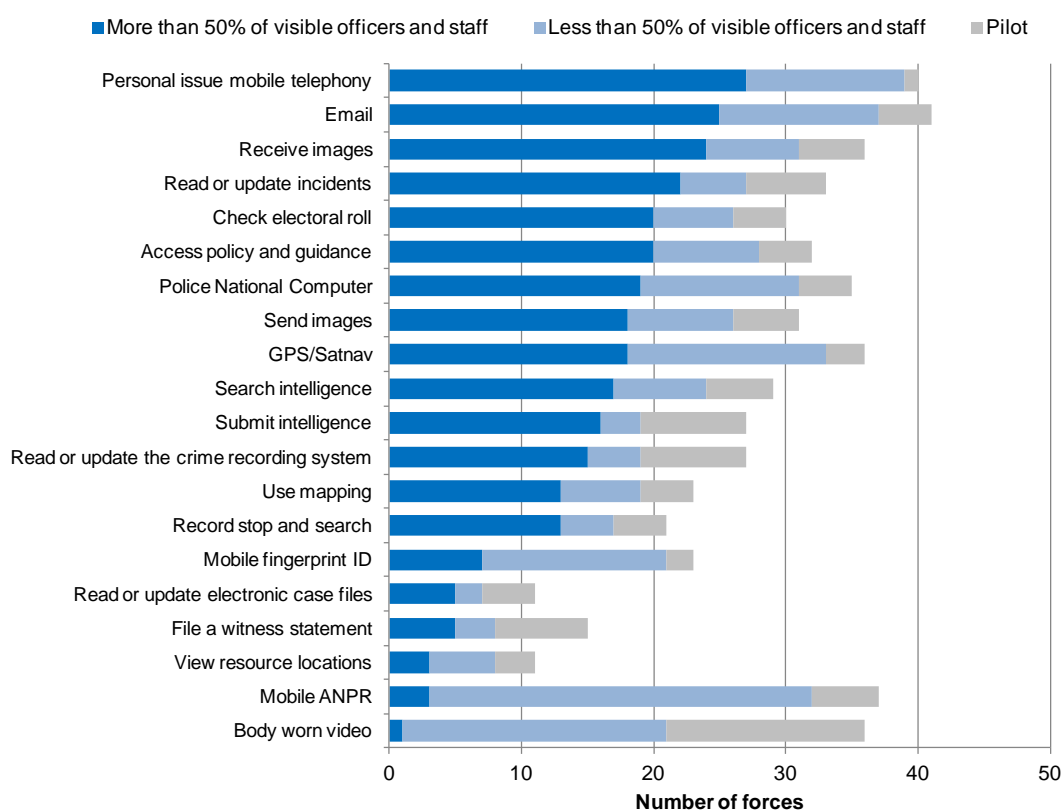
Mobile technology

5.73 Mobile technology has the potential to transform how frontline police services are carried out. Police forces are showing encouraging enthusiasm to make more use of the opportunities that digitisation has to offer. However, the College of Policing's Digital Pathfinders survey report noted that there were a number of constraints that those forces seeking to make use of digital technology to transform the way they operate were encountering with mobile technology. For example, all forces have areas with little or no signal coverage for mobile networks.

5.74 HMCIC's "State of policing" annual assessment noted the importance of hand-held devices in providing officers with up-to-date and reliable information that is relevant to their tasks, remarking that too many police forces had been lagging behind commercial organisations, which use modern devices to provide staff with the information they need in their work.

5.75 HMCIC's "State of policing" annual assessment also noted that body-worn video and sound-recording equipment provide officers with high quality evidence. This can (a) help improve end results for victims, (b) reduce pressure on the criminal justice system, and (c) provide

officers with valuable protection where the facts of an encounter with a member of the public are in dispute.

5.76 The National Policing Vision sets out the objective that by 2016 every police officer will carry a hand-held device that will provide him with up-to-date and reliable information about his locality, the presence of offenders, repeat victims, addresses and vehicles. This would be a positive step which will improve efficiency and effectiveness.

5.77 The table below shows the extent to which visible police officers and staff have access to various pieces of technology while they are out on the street. The data is correct as at 30 November 2013 and is based on information from 42 forces[50]. Where the information was provided, the table also gives an indication of how widespread is the availability of this technology in forces.

Availability of technologies to support working outside the office

5.78 The chart shows wide variations between forces in what uniformed, visible officers and staff can do away from the police station by using mobile technology. For example, only six forces had 14 or more of the 20

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[50] West Midlands Police were unable to provide HMIC with the data.

applications described in the chart available to the majority of their visible officers and staff, while 16 forces had fewer than four applications available.

5.79 There are also wide variations in the availability of individual types of mobile technology across forces. For example, in 27 forces personal mobile telephones were available for most of their visible officers and staff. In around half of all forces, more than 50 percent of visible officers and staff were able to use mobile technology to;

- read emails (25 forces);

- read or update command and control incidents (22 forces);

- receive images (24 forces) or send images (18 forces); and

- use the police national computer (19 forces).

5.80 However, in only 13 forces could the majority of visible officers and staff record occasions when they had exercised their powers of stop and search using mobile devices; in only seven forces could mobile fingerprint devices be used by those staff; and in only five forces could most visible officers and staff read or update a witness statement or case file remotely.

5.81 The lack of availability of mobile technology for use by police officers and staff on patrol in some forces is having an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness with which they can operate. The requirement for patrols to return to the police station to complete basic tasks is not only an inefficient use of time, but it also reduces the available preventive and reassurance patrol opportunities for the officers and staff.

5.82 Forces are increasingly realising that they need a combination of devices (for example, handheld devices, tablets and laptop-type devices for cars) rather than relying on a single device. For example, Dorset Police has 500 BlackBerry devices but is currently intends to introduce two different types of mobile data devices for individuals and vehicles to provide them with more appropriate functions which will be better suited to different situations.

5.83 A number of forces are now in the process of introducing mobile data equipment for the first time, or, in many cases, replacing existing, outdated equipment with more modern devices. A small number of forces are now starting to measure the amount of time being freed up by officers no longer needing to return to the station to complete forms and other administrative tasks. For example, Northumbria has estimated the time freed up by new mobile technology to be an average of two hours per day per officer.

5.84   HMIC also found evidence in five forces of officers and staff using their own personal mobile devices to record evidence photographically or to get them to locations they had been sent to using GPS/satellite navigation. This was the result of either the failure by the forces to provide them with the necessary mobile data equipment, or because the mobile data equipment that was provided was out of date. Police officers should not be expected to use their own devices to make up for deficiencies in the provision of suitable equipment. Moreover, there are likely to be data protection and security problems if they do so. However, it is understandable that officers dedicated to doing the best job they can are resorting to using their own mobile devices in the absence of suitable equipment supplied by their forces.

5.85   In forces where the provision of mobile data technology is better, HMIC found officers were enthusiastic about making the best use of the technology and helping to provide greater efficiency and effectiveness through easier and faster access to force systems. Officers believed mobile data helped keep them better informed. In particular, officers were positive about the benefits of being able to do more with mobile data devices such as taking witness statements and having access to mapping tools.

5.86   The use of mobile devices that can make, download and store images, should improve the quality of the evidence obtained and the ease with which it can be retained, thereby increasing the integrity of the evidence chain which should help increase the likelihood of a successful prosecution.

5.87   The progress being made by some forces and the apparent benefits indicated suggest that there are significant opportunities for forces to free up police time by making effective use of mobile technology. However, most forces are unable to measure what savings have been made in staff time as a result of any changes that have been introduced. While the need to make financial savings is well understood, it is also important for forces to be able to make and measure savings in officer and staff time. Only then will forces be able to make an informed choice about how such savings can be reinvested to provide an improved service to victims and the public more generally.

Recommendation 37

> **By 1 September 2015, all forces should have in place, and thereafter implement to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, a sufficient and costed plan to progress the development of mobile technology which prioritises the requirements of frontline officers and staff, and to achieve the objectives of the National Policing Vision 2016.**

Recommendation 38

By 31 March 2015, the police service should establish sound arrangements for its co-operation with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the College of Policing and (to the extent necessary) the Home Office to establish a national police information strategy which facilitates the most efficient and economical steps to ensure the greatest practicable accessibility of information (including its transmission and receipt) by police officers and others in or concerned with the criminal justice system.

Recommendation 39

With immediate effect, all forces should ensure that all ICT systems which they acquire or upgrade should comply with the highest practicable standards of interoperability.

Procurement

5.88   Whatever support police forces eventually receive from the Police ICT Company, they will still need to improve their role as intelligent customers when they specify and acquire new equipment or services. This is especially important when entering into new contracts where they should use the most advanced techniques in contract design, negotiation, completion, implementation and management. This is particularly so in the case of long-term arrangements for the acquisition of information and communications technology and services. In such instances, it is often the case that, in the absence of appropriate intra-contractual mechanisms, the balance of control and therefore advantage may move over time from the purchaser to the supplier. In such cases, the better approach can be to design the procurement on the basis of a long-term co-operative joint venture which establishes public interest and commercial principles which are to be applied as time passes and technology and operating practices change, and which enable that change to be accommodated promptly and efficiently at a fair and affordable price. In cases where technology may reasonably be expected to change significantly over time, it is often most appropriate to contract for a service to be provided which reflects improvements and advances in what is feasible and available, rather than for the production and purchase of equipment and software which will require improvement or replacement at the principal expense of the customer. In these and other respects, police forces should always consider and, where appropriate, use their collective buying power rather than individually negotiating contracts, often without access to the best contract design expertise and techniques. This is an area in which it was intended that the Police ICT Company would transform how the police buy and use technology.

5.89   Police and crime commissioners have an important role in procurement of police ICT, not only in ensuring that procurements are properly designed to achieve the objectives of police and crime plans, but also in satisfying themselves that procurements are made in the most cost effective way to protect taxpayers' interests. That involves, for example, looking beyond the purchase cost to the whole life-cycle cost of a procurement. It involves decisions as to whether the force should design and/or build any new ICT system itself, which would require an in-house capability with associated staffing costs and overheads and may not transfer to any outside creditworthy entity any of the risk for achievement of the objectives of the system, or whether the force should buy off-the-shelf systems. In each case, it is necessary that the force secures best value for money.

5.90   The PCC IT Board is working to improve PCCs' understanding of where savings can be made through a more collaborative approach to the procurement of local IT. It has recognised the potential of joint IT ventures and has commissioned work to identify where opportunities might lie. The first stage of the work will develop PCCs' understanding of how contracts operate for local systems and the evidence base on the potential benefits from improved collaborative procurement, including, for example, the development of common standards, market awareness and negotiation with suppliers. This is an encouraging sign that PCCs are beginning to work together to improve the procurement of police IT.

5.91   In these respects, large police forces have very considerable advantages over smaller ones. The Metropolitan Police have a sophisticated programme for the design and implementation of their own system which is focused on the needs of frontline officers, victims and witnesses, to ensure that police officers operate with the greatest efficiency and effectiveness without having to return to police stations or to enter data into systems more than once. In this, the force is large enough to do this itself, although on a case-by-case basis it is considering buying services or systems from others. The force has also assured HMIC that in this, it will ensure that the requirements of interoperability with the systems of other police forces and national police ICT systems, as well as the other parts of the criminal justice system, are and will continue to be fully met.

5.92   Depending on the success of the Metropolitan Police's work in this respect, it may be that its system will provide opportunities and advantages for adoption by other forces. Similarly, the Metropolitan Police intends to invite other forces to test some aspects of its systems and compare them with their own, to ensure that best practice is established and each can learn from the other. That approach is to be commended; police forces are not in competition with one another in their objectives of keeping people safe, maintaining public order and catching criminals.

5.93   It is also important that the police service takes full and timely advantage of the improvements in ICT design and public sector procurement which have been devised by or under the supervision of the Cabinet Office, including by the Government Digital Service. The Crown Commercial Service is an executive agency of the Cabinet Office with a remit to work with organisations and their departments across the whole of the public sector to ensure the maximum value is obtained from every commercial relationship and to improve the quality of the service provided. For example, it brings together professional advice and direct buying so that the development and implementation of policies are closely linked so that the taxpayer gets the best value from contracts. It also ensures through its contract management and supplier performance management services that the Government acts as a single customer, freeing up individual organisations in the public sector to focus their procurement expertise on what is unique to them.

5.94   As a result of the Government's G-Cloud initiative, public sector bodies also have access to the Government's CloudStore service. CloudStore gives these organisations access to internet-based computing, without the need for them to invest in their own systems and software so that they can avoid long contracts; buy the exact amount of computing resources they need; save money on maintenance and storage; and avoid custom-built solutions which take a long time to create, and which can be expensive and difficult to upgrade.

5.95   In 2011, the NPIA launched an entity and service called the National Police Procurement Hub, which is now the responsibility of the Home Office; most police forces have access to this and are encouraged to use it. It enables suppliers to have their goods or services accredited as suitable and fairly-priced, so that purchasers can buy things quickly and easily. Whilst it has so far been used predominantly for the acquisition of goods and services other than ICT, it can be used for ICT and, in some relatively small and simple cases, it has been. The case is strong for the further development of the Hub in relation to police ICT, particularly now that open standards for some aspects of police ICT have been published by the Home Office.

Recommendation 40

With immediate effect, all forces should review their ICT design and procurement arrangements and ensure that every appropriate opportunity for efficiency and economy in ICT design and procurement which is provided by centrally-provided or centrally-co-ordinated agencies is taken.

Conclusions

6.1 This inspection examined how effective forces are at carrying out the principal functions of the police, namely crime prevention and how the police respond to crimes and incidents, including how the police investigate crime and bring offenders to justice. Also we examined how forces are freeing up time for their staff to focus more of their energies and skills in these areas.

6.2 Evidence for this inspection came from over 800 interviews in forces, as well as more than 160 focus groups of operational officers and staff. We spoke to professionals and specialists across these particular areas of activity, and we commissioned independent public survey and focus group work.

6.3 The inspection used an initial review of relevant policy and procedure documents to establish how each force determined its approach to these areas of policing. The findings from this work were tested in-force through interviews with senior leaders, specialists, managers and frontline staff. This was further supported by the results of a data request to each force and dip-sampling and observational reality-testing whilst conducting fieldwork in each force.

6.4 In relation to crime prevention, the police service does not have a national strategy currently, and there are no standard definitions or operating procedures across forces. That is not to say that their absence prevents forces from undertaking prevention activity in their communities. HMIC recognises that to be successful in preventing crime, much more is required by forces than simply articulating crime prevention objectives in a planning document. However, an agreed plan and a consistent understanding of definitions and procedures provides clarity to staff, highlights the importance of crime prevention to the public and encourages the force to make sure that it monitors progress made. Work is already underway to address this by the chief officer lead for crime prevention on behalf of the police service.

6.5 We found that all forces were able to provide good examples of local, long-term projects to prevent crime in relation to regular, predictable events, such as alcohol-related crime in some towns and cities on particular evenings. In addition, the arrangements in place for forces to respond to unanticipated increases in crime and anti-social behaviour were also found to be generally good.

6.6 The development of the neighbourhood policing model for the police in the 1990s saw the introduction of a problem-solving ethos; to try and

address the root cause of a problem – such as repeated instances of crime or anti-social behaviour in a community – and prevent further problems or crimes. Forces were encouraged to develop their own databases to help with problem-solving and to record their cases and monitor activity carried out to tackle the problems in question. The use of a database is particularly important in the assessment of problem-solving cases, as it enables officers and staff to adjust their tactics in response to a problem when previous policing work proves ineffective. In addition, a problem-solving database provides evidence of effective tactics, which can be adopted by others when similar problems arise. The lack of a database to record this activity in around half of all forces is disappointing, with only a handful of forces able to provide evidence of effective evaluation of problem-solving and dissemination of good practice.

6.7   All police officers and police staff – especially those on the front line – have an obligation to do what they can to prevent crime, the primary purpose of the police. Despite this, we found that too little is being done by the police to inform the public of ways in which they can protect themselves in this respect. Moreover, in police forces, far too little is done to train police officers and police staff in crime prevention. This is a material deficiency in police training and police practice, and it must change now.

6.8   There are significant variations in the way forces approach police attendance in response to calls from the public. Some forces aim to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, although these forces are in the minority. Most forces assess the crimes or incidents reported to them and decide, on the basis of set criteria, whether an officer will attend or the matter will be dealt with over the telephone. The variation between forces' policies means that a member of the public will receive a different response from the police for the same type of crime or incident, depending on where they live.

6.9   For those forces that do not attend all crimes and incidents, determining whether to deploy an officer or member of staff to a crime or incident includes considering whether the caller or victim is vulnerable or has been the victim of a similar crime or incident previously. Our inspection established that, in around a third of all forces, call-handling staff were failing consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims. This means that those individuals, who may be in most need of action from the police or their protection, may not be getting it. These forces should ensure that they have robust systems in place and policy guidance is clear so that the more vulnerable members of the public are consistently and timeously identified.

6.10 In addition, the disparity in definitions of vulnerable and repeat victims across forces must be resolved. The use of different definitions for different crime and incident types, both within forces and across the service, can lead to confusion for officers and staff, and the potential for an inconsistent or inappropriate service to members of the public. These issues have been highlighted by HMIC previously and urgent work is needed for service-wide definitions to be agreed, to reduce the material risk of forces failing to provide victims the appropriate level of service.

6.11 HMIC was concerned to find that almost half of forces were unable to provide us with details of the reported crimes that they had attended. This is unacceptable. Forces cannot adequately assess the service they are providing to victims, or properly understand the demands being placed upon them, if they lack basic information about the numbers and types of crimes attended by officers and staff.

6.12 All but six forces have a policy to investigate at least some crimes reported to them over the telephone (desk-based investigation), rather than deploy an officer or member of staff. HMIC examined a small sample of different types of crime reports in each force, to assess the level of investigative and supervisory activity apparent for these crimes. This sample included crimes that had been attended and, in the relevant forces, those that had not.

6.13 We found that generally reports of more serious crimes, such as house burglaries, robberies and assaults, had been attended by police officers and/or specialist staff, such as crime scene investigators. The crime reports had been updated with the investigative activity already carried out and that yet to be carried out. There was, in the main, clear evidence of supervision, guidance and quality assurance.

6.14 This is not the case for reports of crime investigated over the telephone, with many crime reports examined showing little or no evidence of investigation or supervision. The approach taken by many of these forces of using a standardised question set means that in many cases the likelihood of the police attending was based on the victim's knowledge of CCTV, witness or forensic evidence being available. Even more worrying is that the inspection team observed some call-handlers in effect encouraging victims to carry out their own investigations.

6.15 This, together with the lack of time devoted to investigating some less serious volume crimes, indicates that, in many forces, the investigation is little more than a crime-recording process. It is true that there may be some crimes which, victim service quality and reassurance issues aside, would not benefit greatly from scene attendance. However, at the point in time that forces are making the decision not to attend, the victim (and the

call-handler) is unlikely to be aware of all potential evidence or lines of enquiry.

6.16   The investigation and detection of crime is core business for the police. Forces need to ensure that their investigative processes are robust, carried out by appropriately trained staff and adequately supervised and quality assured. This is clearly not the case, particularly in relation to those volume crimes that some forces have determined will be investigated over the telephone. In 13 forces, we found unsatisfactory investigations and supervision; in around half of the cases examined in these forces we found little or no evidence of investigative plans or assessment or guidance from supervisors. In approximately half of the cases examined in these forces, they had been filed within 24 hours of being reported.

6.17   In relation to bringing offenders to justice, we were extremely concerned to find that 11 forces were unable to provide us with information on the number of named suspects that had yet to be arrested or interviewed, and nine forces were unable to tell us the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail. Two forces were unable to provide either. During the inspection, HMIC examined 20 files of suspects who had been named as responsible for a crime but who had yet to be arrested or interviewed. In 12 forces, we found deficiencies in at least six of the files examined. These deficiencies included a lack of apparent activity to locate the suspect or evidence of supervisory review or guidance.

6.18   It is quite unacceptable for some forces to be operating in the second decade of the 21st century without the ability to establish and routinely monitor efficiently such basic information as the number of suspects yet to be arrested, or those who have failed to answer their police bail. The lack of effective systems in some forces to monitor progress of such a basic part of police work is a matter of considerable concern.

6.19   While overall crime continues to fall, the nature of the demands being placed on the police is changing, with many forces experiencing local changes in demand, such as the requirement to respond to incidents of people with mental health problems. In addition, crime carried out through technology – cyber-crime – is increasing, yet research shows that it is significantly under-reported. This means that police forces do not have sufficient information to establish and understand the scale of the problem and the threats associated with it, and are, therefore, not in a position to deal with it effectively.

6.20   We found the level of work being carried out by forces to understand the demands upon them to be patchy, although there is some encouraging work in a few forces that are examining how demand is changing over

time. However, this inspection has revealed the limitations of some forces' understanding of the demands they face in a number of important areas. For example:

- nineteen forces are unable to establish the number of crimes they attend; this means that they cannot assess accurately the activity carried out by, or demands upon, their staff;

- seventeen forces are unable consistently to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, which means there may be demand which they should be dealing with but are not, and victims placed at greater risk as a result;

- eighteen forces are unable efficiently to establish either the number of named suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed or the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail. This means the force is unable fully to understand its demand in these important areas; and

- twenty-six forces do not have any consistent way to monitor or assess the performance or workload of their staff. Without an appreciation of the workload of officers and staff or the activities they undertake, a force is unable accurately to assess the demands upon it.

6.21　The College of Policing currently is carrying out work on behalf of the police service to establish better how it provides services to the public and the nature and extent of demands on policing resources. Following some initial data-gathering and analysis, the College is considering how further work should be focused to maximise the benefits to the service.

6.22　Forces should not wait for this work to conclude, but should progress their own programmes and initiatives to improve their understanding and management of demand locally, using good practice identified by the College's work to date.

6.23　In this period of continuing austerity, it is essential that decisions in relation to resource distribution and the levels of public service being provided are made with accuracy and certainty. This can only be done if the force has a detailed and thorough understanding of all of the demands upon it. This is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and more work needs to be done by forces in this respect.

6.24　In the future, HMIC intends to report the extent to which each force understands its demand using its annual force management statement. These statements will provide information on the projected short, medium and long term demands on each force and their plans for how they will meet those demands. These statements will provide a significant amount

of factual information that will underpin future inspections carried out by HMIC as part of its new all-force assessments called Police, Efficiency and Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL)

6.25   The police service has been engaged in reducing bureaucracy programmes and initiatives since 2002. In 2010, the Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board (RBPB) was set up by the Home Secretary to develop proposals and actions further to reduce bureaucracy in the police.

6.26   In addition to influencing national programmes of work, such as the review of the national intelligence model, the RBPB also commissioned and supported a number of individual projects. These projects include exploring a new approach to reports of missing persons, adopting a more streamlined approach to the police performance development review process, reducing the bureaucracy in the stop and search process, as well as a number of projects aimed at reducing bureaucracy and saving time in relation to prosecution cases and the preparation of evidence.

6.27   However, the RBPB was not resourced sufficiently to measure or evaluate the full effects of the reducing bureaucracy programme. Many of the projects remain on-going, or have been closed but are yet to be evaluated. In January 2014, the RBPB was formally closed and responsibility for reducing bureaucracy was passed to the College of Policing. The College is in the process of finalising the transition plan for the RBPB work. One of the recommendations made by the RBPB in its handover to the College was for on-going projects to be monitored and for there to be an evaluation of concluded projects. It is important for the service that this recommendation is implemented.

6.28   None of the 43 forces is running a separate bureaucracy reduction programme. However, all forces have a programme in place to manage the organisational changes needed to meet the financial challenges the service faces. These change programmes examine the efficiency of systems and procedures as well as investigating technological developments.

6.29   The extent to which forces have done work to free up time, including reducing bureaucracy, is variable. Most forces are carrying out work to reduce unnecessary paperwork and duplicate or inefficient procedures. In addition, a number of forces have applied 'lean principles' to streamline or simplify processes. However, it is clear that while forces are making financial savings through more efficient working practices and reducing bureaucracy, they are not measuring the time freed up by these changes. In the majority of corporate change programmes in forces, business cases for change were wholly focused on cash savings, not saving time.

6.30 In order for forces to make real progress in freeing up the time of their officers and staff they must not only understand how, and how effectively, time is currently being used, but also establish and measure how time freed up is used subsequently. There is little point investing energy and effort to free up time if it is not reinvested in the areas of operations which are critical to sustaining and improving the service to the public. Forces must ensure that when future initiatives and projects are carried out, business cases specify the anticipated savings in officer and staff time. In addition, where officer and staff time is freed up, those savings need to be established, and how the time is reinvested and the effect of this reinvested time need to be assessed.

6.31 The national picture, in relation to the use of technology across the service, can only be described as inadequate. Forces are moving at different speeds and from different starting points. This has resulted in disjointed development of ICT systems by forces with insufficient consideration of wider issues, such as the need to be able to share information with other forces.

6.32 The absence of a national information strategy, and the fact that the Police ICT Company has been established for some time but is still not yet operational, has contributed to this current position.

6.33 While all forces have signed up to become fully digitised by 2016, there is significant work to be completed by some forces if this objective is to be achieved.

6.34 The availability of mobile technology for officers and staff is an equally depressing picture. Many forces are operating with old technology which is ill-suited to modern crime fighting; it is keeping inefficient processes in place. This results in officer effectiveness being compromised as they are required to return to police stations regularly; it also reduces opportunities for preventive patrol.

6.35 The current situation in relation to the development and use of ICT in the police service is unsatisfactory and its causes must be tackled.

6.36 The Home Office, APCC and the police service need to develop a national police information strategy, with the support of the College, which ensures future systems are interoperable with other systems, and clear governance, responsibility, ownership and accountability are established. This is a priority for the service.

6.37 This inspection has examined how well the police service is continuing to do those things that it was set up for in 1829, namely to prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, and bring the offenders swiftly to justice. Almost 200 years later, this primary purpose of the police remains unchanged. So it is a matter of concern that in a number of critical areas

of policing, a substantial number of forces do not appear to have a strong grip on their business. This is particularly worrying in the areas of police attendance to reports of crime and managing suspects and offenders; it needs to change quickly.

6.38 The use of technology can significantly assist the police in freeing up time and improving efficiency. However, the current arrangements in relation to ICT, the infrastructure in forces and their connectivity with others, and the use of mobile technology to support frontline officers and staff can only be described in many cases as lamentable. Without significant change to these important, interlinked issues there is a material risk that important organisational change decisions are ill-informed, police time is not used effectively and the service to the public suffers.

6.39 HMIC will continue to inspect these areas of policing core business and has made recommendations that significant improvements be made by the service as a matter of urgency.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Not later than 31 March 2015, the police service, through the national policing lead for crime prevention, should establish and implement a national preventive policing strategy and framework.

[paragraph 3.8]

Recommendation 2

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces' planning documents should contain clear and specific provisions about the measures forces will take in relation to crime prevention, in accordance with the published national preventive policing strategy and framework and in discharge of chief constables' duties under section 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to have regard to the police and crime plans of their police and crime commissioners.

[paragraph 3.16]

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2015, every force that does not have an adequate, force-wide problem-solving database should develop and start making use of one, to record, monitor and manage its neighbourhood problem-solving cases.

[paragraph 3.41]

Recommendation 4

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they are using their databases to track the progress and evaluate the success of actions taken in relation to each neighbourhood problem-solving case recorded on the database.

[paragraph 3.41]

Recommendation 5

By 31 March 2015, each force should ensure that it is able to disseminate information and share good practice from its database throughout the force, as well as to local authorities and other relevant organisations involved in community-based preventive policing or crime prevention.

[paragraph 3.41]

Recommendation 6

By 20 October 2014, the one force which has not already done so should adopt a sound force-level definition of a repeat victim of anti-social behaviour.

[paragraph 3.44]

Recommendation 7

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that their records clearly establish whether victims of crime and anti-social behaviour fall within the applicable definition of 'repeat victim', and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that when repeat victims call the police, the force's call-handlers have the means to establish immediately that the caller is a repeat victim.

[paragraph 3.44]

Recommendation 8

Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should provide and periodically refresh basic crime prevention training for officers and staff who come into contact with the public.

[paragraph 3.60]

Recommendation 9

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that crime prevention or disruption activity carried out is systematically recorded and subsequently evaluated to determine the effectiveness of tactics being employed.

[paragraph 3.68]

Recommendation 10

Not later than 31 March 2015, those forces using a threat, harm and risk policy, that have not yet done so, should provide call-handlers with specific, sound and comprehensible criteria against which they can assess threat, harm and risk.

[paragraph 4.43]

Recommendation 11

Not later than 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to establish as mandatory professional standards, service-wide definitions of vulnerable persons and repeat victims.

[paragraph 4.49]

Recommendation 12

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that call-handlers are following the correct procedures to identify callers as vulnerable or repeat victims.

[paragraph 4.49]

Recommendation 13

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place adequate systems and processes to enable the accurate recording and monitoring of the deployment and attendance of officers and staff in response to all crime and incidents reported to them.

[paragraph 4.65]

Recommendation 14

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that they have the ability efficiently and promptly to differentiate in their records their attendance to specific crime types, such as between burglary dwellings and burglary of other buildings.

[paragraph 4.76]

Recommendation 15

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should establish and operate adequate processes for checking whether attendance data are accurate, including dip-sampling records.

[paragraph 4.77]

Recommendation 16

By 1 September 2015, all forces should work with the College of Policing to carry out research to understand the relationship between the proportion of crimes attended and the corresponding detection rates and levels of victim satisfaction.

[paragraph 4.78]

Recommendation 17

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that PCSOs are not being used to respond to incidents and crimes beyond their role profiles, in respect of which they have no powers, or for which they have not received appropriate levels of training.

[paragraph 4.87]

Recommendation 18

By 31 December 2014, all forces should produce clear guidance for officers and staff on what kinds of crimes and incidents need to be dealt with immediately and are not appropriate for resolution by way of appointment.

[paragraph 4.89]

Recommendation 19

By 31 December 2014, all forces should ensure that where crimes or incidents are being dealt with by appointment, these are, to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, made for the convenience of the victim(s); and that appointments are never used in cases requiring immediate attendance.

[paragraph 4.89]

Recommendation 20

Not later than 30 September 2015, all forces should ensure their officers and staff involved in investigation of crime over the telephone in call-handling centres, crime management units and telephone investigation units have received appropriate investigative training.

[paragraph 4.97]

Recommendation 21

Not later than 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure that all crime reports have investigation plans that are being properly updated and supervised, whether these are for crimes that have been attended or those being resolved by desk-based investigation.

[paragraph 4.104]

Recommendation 22

By 31 March 2015, all forces should have in place and be operating adequate systems which ensure that all crime reports are appropriately investigated before being filed.

[paragraph 4.104]

Recommendation 23

By 31 December 2014, those forces with ineffective Integrated Offender Management arrangements should conduct reviews of their shortcomings to establish the improvements which should be made. In each case, not later than 1 April 2015 the force should have drawn up an adequate improvement plan and made substantial progress in its implementation.

[paragraph 4.118]

Recommendation 24

By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that they have adequate systems in place to record (a) the number of open unsolved crimes being investigated in relation to which there is a named suspect; (b) the number of people within their areas who have failed to answer police bail; and (c) the numbers of suspects about whom details have been circulated on the PNC.

[paragraph 4.121]

Recommendation 25

By 31 October 2014, all forces should ensure that effective monitoring procedures and systems are in place to enable police managers to track the

progress being made with named suspects and ensure they are being pursued as quickly as possible.

[paragraph 4.132]

Recommendation 26

All forces should work with the College of Policing to support its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the demand which the police service faces. Forces should understand what proportion of demand is generated internally and externally, and the amounts of time taken in the performance of different tasks. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

[paragraph 4.159]

Recommendation 27

All forces should progress work to gain a better understanding of the demands they face locally, and be prepared to provide this to the College of Policing to establish good practice in this respect. All forces should inform HMIC of their progress on this matter through their annual force management statements.

[paragraph 4.159]

Recommendation 28

By 31 March 2015, all forces should ensure they have the means to assess and better understand the workloads of their staff, and that officers and staff understand what is expected of them and how they will be assessed.

[paragraph 4.170]

Recommendation 29

All forces should work with the College of Policing to continue with its work to establish a full and sound understanding of the nature and extent of the workload and activities of the police service. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

[paragraph 4.179]

Recommendation 30

By 31 March 2015, those forces that have not already done so should conduct a review of the tasks currently being carried out by their police officers to establish which activities do not require warranted police powers and could be carried out by police staff.

[paragraph 5.6]

Recommendation 31

By 31 March 2015, those forces without a mental health triage programme should carry out analysis to assess whether adopting such a programme would be cost-effective and beneficial in their particular areas. Where the analysis

indicates this would be positive, all forces should work with their local mental health trusts to introduce such a programme by 1 September 2015.

Recommendation 32

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress its work into how mental health cases and ambulance provision can be better managed. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 33

All forces should work with the College of Policing to progress the work it has taken over from the Reducing Bureaucracy Programme Board to establish opportunities where savings can be made. All forces should be in a position to respond to this work by 31 December 2015.

Recommendation 34

By 31 March 2015, every force should introduce a local bureaucracy reduction programme with a plan for quantifiable efficiency savings.

Recommendation 35

By 31 March 2015, all forces should begin monitoring how much officer and staff time has been freed up by the policies they have put in place to reduce bureaucracy, and establish how the force has used the extra time.

Recommendation 36

 By 1 September 2015, all forces should conduct a review into their use of video and telephone conferencing and ensure that it is being used wherever appropriate.

Recommendation 37

By 1 September 2015, all forces should have in place, and thereafter implement to the greatest extent reasonably practicable, a sufficient and costed plan to progress the development of mobile technology which prioritises the

requirements of frontline officers and staff, and to achieve the objectives of the National Policing Vision 2016.

[paragraph 5.87]

Recommendation 38

By 31 March 2015, the police service should establish sound arrangements for its co-operation with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the College of Policing and (to the extent necessary) the Home Office to establish a national police information strategy which facilitates the most efficient and economical steps to ensure the greatest practicable accessibility of information (including its transmission and receipt) by police officers and others in or concerned with the criminal justice system.

[paragraph 5.87]

Recommendation 39

With immediate effect, all forces should ensure that all ICT systems which they acquire or upgrade should comply with the highest practicable standards of interoperability.

[paragraph 5.87]

Recommendation 40

With immediate effect, all forces should review their ICT design and procurement arrangements and ensure that every appropriate opportunity for efficiency and economy in ICT design and procurement which is provided by centrally-provided or centrally-co-ordinated agencies is taken.

[paragraph 5.95]

Annex A: About the data

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including inspection fieldwork, data collection from all 43 police forces in England and Wales, surveys of the public and already published data.

Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree the design of those data collections with practitioners from forces, and to verify the data that we have collected, mindful of the work forces have to do in response.

The data on forces which relate to this report are available from www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/core-business/