

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



Baseline Assessment of the Police Service of Northern Ireland

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1. Introduction to the Baseline Assessment process

- 1.1 Under the provisions of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) is required to carry out an annual inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Over recent years, this inspection activity has been focused in nature and has concentrated upon areas of activity agreed by Her Majesty's Inspector in consultation with 'key' policing partners such as the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the PSNI itself. The last 12 months however has seen the inauguration within Northern Ireland of a Chief Inspector of the Criminal Justice System whose remit is to co-ordinate inspection activity across the vast majority of agencies within the criminal justice system, PSNI being one.
- 1.2 At the same time within England and Wales, HMIC's approach to undertaking its inspection activity has changed in the light of significant shifts within the world of policing. These include the government's modernisation agenda, the national policing plan and the emerging policing performance assessment framework (PPAF). Baseline assessment has therefore been introduced by HMIC to provide a strategic overview of where individual forces find themselves in terms of their strengths and areas for improvement. The intention being that by identifying those areas where improvement is seen as necessary, by working together more closely, HMIC and forces can jointly drive up performance.
- 1.3 This report is the outcome of HMIC's assessment of PSNI performance up to 31 December 2003, and represents a baseline against which the Service's improvement will be monitored. This is a new methodology and reflects the changing environment in which the Police Service and the Policing Board are operating. The main features of the new approach are:
- Assessment is structured around frameworks of issues/core questions, with descriptions of good performance;
 - More use is made of self-assessment and the views of other regulators and partners; and
 - A tailored programme of inspection activity for each police force whether in England, Wales or Northern Ireland results, driven by the assessment but integrated with each force's strategic development plan.
- 1.4 Creating this baseline has entailed an intensive period of evidence gathering but the task of maintaining and updating it will be less so. The tailored programme of inspection activity will include quarterly visits by HMIC staff officers, the ongoing programme of Best Value review inspection, and focused inspections of those areas of concern that are flagged by the baseline assessment (unless the Service already has remedial action either planned or under way). By co-ordinating these activities HMIC can deliver continuous assessment and monitoring of progress, rather than undertaking periodic snapshots of performance.
- 1.5 Baseline Assessment differs from a traditional inspection. While it is designed to set out comprehensively the strengths of each force and the areas where it should

improve, it intentionally avoids being a detailed analysis of the processes underpinning performance. That sort of detailed examination will, when necessary, be part of the tailored programme of inspection activity.

- 1.6 This assessment draws heavily upon on site work conducted by HMIC staff officers on behalf of HM Inspector Mr K R Williams CVO, CBE, QPM, BA between 22 September and 3 October 2003. It takes account of a wide range of documentary evidence, structured interviews at headquarters, with staff from operational DCUs and the results of consultation with many of the Service's partner agencies and other stakeholders. Performance data has also been examined to identify recent trends. Annual data is drawn from reports submitted to the Home Office, and the Service provided 'in-year' data to HMIC. At the conclusion of the on site evidence gathering, a debrief was given to the chief officer team and some matters of factual accuracy were discussed and confirmed. Since the provisional assessment was made in October 2003, the report has been updated to take account of performance up to 31 December.
- 1.7 Unlike police forces in England and Wales, where the majority of the areas subject of baseline assessment have been graded in terms of whether HMIC considers the standard of the service being provided to be excellent/good/fair/poor, HMI has concluded that such an approach is not necessary within the PSNI. This is because the baseline assessment has identified discreet areas of inspection activity which require attention. (These are outlined within the body of the report and are also summarised within Section 7.)
- 1.8 He is conscious too of the necessity of integrating his inspection activity with that of the Chief Inspector of the Criminal Justice System. The requisite discussions have taken place to ensure that this is the case.
- 1.9 The baseline has therefore provided HMI with the basis of his inspection activity for the next twelve months and beyond. In addition, the assessment also fulfils his legislative requirement of an annual inspection of the PSNI for 2003.

2. Service Overview and Context

- 2.1 The Police Service of Northern Ireland exists to make Northern Ireland safer for everyone through professional, progressive policing. It aims to be a Service everyone can be proud of.
- 2.2 Its values as an organisation are honesty and openness, fairness and courtesy, partnerships, performance and professionalism and respect for the rights of all.
- 2.3 The PSNI came into being on 4 November 2001. Police headquarters is at Knock, in East Belfast, and the Service is divided into two geographical regions – urban and rural.
- 2.4 At the end of December 2003, the Police Service had an establishment of 7,500 regular police officers. The effective strength, however, excluding officers on secondment and those who have not yet graduated from initial training was 7,088 regulars with 1,646 full-time reserve officers, 870 part-time reserve and 3,655 civilian support staff.
- 2.5 Urban region covers an area of approximately 1,403 square kilometres, taking in Greater Belfast, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Lisburn, Larne and Newtownards and serving a population of around 800,000 people.
- 2.6 Rural region stretches from Fermanagh in the west, through Londonderry and across to the east coast as well as most of Counties Tyrone, Armagh and Down, an area of 7,461 square kilometres which is home to around 886,275 people.
- 2.7 The regions are made up of smaller district command units (DCUs). Twenty five DCUs are coterminous with district council areas outside Belfast, with the city being divided into four DCUs, north, south, east and west.
- 2.8 Each DCU works closely with the elected and independent members of its local district policing partnership (DPP), adopting a proactive, problem solving approach to tackling crime and disorder.
- 2.9 The Police Service is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, which in addition to independent members drawn from the broader Northern Ireland community, has representatives from almost all the main political parties.
- 2.10 The development of a performance culture across the organisation has been a key feature. The implementation of the National Intelligence Model business process has been integrated within the planning cycle through the development of a performance calendar. Performance information is shown at Appendix 1

3. Methodology

- 3.1 Baseline assessment is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the performance of PSNI across the broadest spectrum of the activities that collectively make up the Service. For the purposes of this initial assessment the Service has been broken down into three overarching areas of activity. These being:
- Operational Performance;
 - Leadership and Corporate Governance; and
 - Partnership and Community Engagement.
- 3.2 Underpinning these overarching areas there are, in total, 23 sub-areas. These cover a diverse spread of policing activity ranging from how the Service tackles volume crime to its response to the health and safety of its personnel and facilities. Each area has been assessed and its strengths and areas for improvement identified. All 23 areas have an executive summary that sets out HMI's overview of that activity.
- 3.3 Wherever possible, the starting point for assessment is qualitative evidence, over time or against locally set targets. This is supplemented by qualitative assessment of leadership, systems, structures and processes. However, not all activities lend themselves to quantification. For example, evaluating critical areas such as strategic management, diversity, and performance management requires a qualitative assessment based upon acknowledged good practice and professional judgement.
- 3.4 Where the primary judgement is compliance with a standard such as the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) or the National Intelligence Model (NIM), it will be possible for each police force/PSNI to be rated highly. More typically, performance has been examined in relation to comparators, such as the national average of performance, where there will always be stronger and weaker performers.
- 3.5 In reaching his final conclusions about how he views the current standard of each individual area of activity, wherever possible bearing in mind the different issues facing the PSNI, HMI has moderated his assessment by comparison to police forces within England and Wales. All of which have recently been subject to a similar baseline assessment process.

4. Operational Performance

4.1 Tackling Level 2 Criminality

Following the recommendations from the Stevens Inquiry, together with the Blakey and Crompton reports into how the Service handles its response to serious, major and cross boundary criminality, the structure of the crime operations department has been changed to provide more effective service delivery and improved performance. Resource levels within the department are being increased significantly as a result. The Service has made an unequivocal commitment to the introduction of the NIM, though the current structure of 29 DCUs is viewed as a constraining factor. Performance within this area of activity is good. There are numerous examples of effective multi-agency working across a broad range of activities. Whilst performance within this area is competitive, work is ongoing within the context of the restructuring of the crime operations department and the new structures also need to 'bed down' fully.

Strengths

- The restructuring of the crime operations department in line with the recommendations from the Stevens Inquiry and other reports is viewed as positive. Whilst resource intensive (approximately 200 experienced additional staff are required to service requirements), this development is well supported across the wider organisation, though there are concerns about how long it will take for the 'new' structure to bed down and start producing improvements in performance.
- The Service has done a considerable amount of work to develop its strategic crime assessments. The documents produced are of high quality and should 'drive' activity to combat level 2 crime.
- All control strategies have a defined and dedicated lead officer who is accountable for performance. There is ample evidence of operational success against level 2 criminals, e.g. drugs, cash in transit robberies and terrorism etc. The number of drug seizures increased by 31.8% between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The number of persons arrested for drug related offences increased by 35.4%. Seizures of Class A drugs increased by 28.7% and Class B drugs by 11%. Seizures of cannabis increased by 33.4%.
- The Service has made a commitment to recruit, train and retain civilian police (crime) analysts. These staff are physically located across the DCU structure and are proving beneficial in terms of their product and impact upon crime (at Levels 1 and 2).
- The ACC crime (operations) is the champion for the introduction of the NIM. There is substantial evidence that the Service has made a commitment to the introduction of the NIM. There is a tactical TCG monthly meeting that is chaired by ACC (operational support).
- The restructuring of the operational regions (from three to two) is seen as a positive step in terms of the ability of the Service to deal more effectively with level 2 crime. Regional TCG meetings focus upon issues which have cross boundary implications e.g. volume crime issues, roads policing and public order.

- The Service operates with a dedicated drug squad. It also works within an effective multi-agency structure with regard to organised immigration crime. The Service has secured funding to support national operations to combat organised immigration crime.
- As part of the restructure of the crime operations department, the Service has created a single branch with responsibility for the investigation of financial crime. It is in the process of applying for funding for an additional four support staff financial investigators.
- The Service is adequately serviced in terms of its surveillance capacity at this level. Tasking takes place via the TCG process and is prioritised against need.
- There is evidence that PSNI works effectively with both the NCS and NCIS. Operational successes confirm the position.

Areas for improvement

- Though the Service has made a clear commitment to the introduction of the NIM, HMI considers the current structure of 29 DCUs to be an inhibiting factor. The NIM is resource intensive and many of the existing DCUs are too small to fully implement the model. (Also see volume crime section).
- ‘Brigading’ of DCUs to facilitate the introduction of the NIM may assist but there are concerns that the smaller DCUs may lose out under such arrangements.
- Severance issues may impact detrimentally on the ability of the Service to sustain its capacity to service covert policing needs, though there are succession plans in place which acknowledge these potential problems.
- There are some concerns regarding training inputs on NIM to CID officers and student officers in particular.

4.2 Volume Crime

Volume crime performance over the past 12 months has been impressive and the Service is also ‘on course’ to achieve its five-year crime reduction target. The Service has committed itself to the full implementation of the NIM and relevant structures are in place within most DCUs, though the current structure of 29 is an inhibiting factor. Restructuring at regional level should provide additional, better trained resources to service volume crime requirements. Whilst there is evidence of effective partnership working at a local level to support efforts to better manage volume crime there are very substantial concerns about forensic support services at this level. The abstraction of CID personnel to service higher level crime requirements is also an inhibiting factor in terms of the effective management of volume crime. There appears to be a danger that the Service may be at some risk of becoming a crime recording as opposed to a crime investigation organisation, in that crime is recorded but there is not then the capacity or the experience to investigate that.

Strengths

- Volume crime performance over the last 12 months has been impressive, by comparison to the national average, with crime reductions having been achieved within 'core' crime areas such as car crime.
- The Service is well on course to achieve its five-year crime reduction targets. It is already ahead of target to achieve these reductions.
- The operational command unit, in urban region, is being reorganised to provide a 24/7 proactive capability to tackle volume crime and reassurance issues. This includes the restructuring of the territorial support group (TSG) from 6 units to 8. These units will be dedicated to specific DCUs across the Service to support volume crime requirements. In rural region a further 13 TSGs provide support to 17 DCUs.
- The Service has made a commitment to recruit, train and retain civilian police (crime) analysts. These staff are physically located across the DCU structure and at regional level are proving beneficial in terms of their analytical products and impact upon crime.
- The ACC crime (operations) is the champion for the introduction of the NIM. There is substantial evidence that the Service has made a commitment to the introduction of the NIM.
- Formal NIM compliant systems such as TCG meetings are in place within the majority of the DCUs.
- The restructuring of the operational regions (from three to two) is seen as a positive step in terms of the ability of the Service to deal more effectively with volume crime. Regional TCG meetings focus upon issues which have cross boundary implications e.g. volume crime issues, roads policing and public order.
- There is evidence of effective partnership working across the Service to support efforts to better manage volume crime.
- The ICIS IT system is now fully integrated across the Service. This provides details of young offenders that can be readily accessed in terms of managing volume crime requirements.

Areas for improvement

- Though the Service has made a clear commitment to the introduction of the NIM, the current structure of 29 DCUs is an inhibiting factor. The NIM is resource intensive and many of the existing DCUs are too small to fully implement the model.
- There are very substantial concerns around the availability of effective and efficient forensic support services to assist in the investigation of volume crime. (Also see forensic management section.)

- There are concerns around the availability of surveillance capacity to service volume crime demands. Currently the TSG cannot undertake certain aspects of surveillance but the group is in the process of receiving training.
- There appears to be only limited technical assistance available to support volume crime investigation.
- The commitment to properly service volume crime requirements appears to vary between DCUs. Whilst HMI accepts there may be reasons for this e.g. ongoing terrorist threats, dealing comprehensively with volume crime, within a devolved structure, is a 'primary' function at DCU level. Greater effort is necessary within those DCUs where volume crime currently appears not to be a high enough priority.
- Due to the high levels of major and serious crime within some DCUs, all available CID staff have their attention focused at this level. The investigation of volume crime therefore has become the responsibility of uniformed staff. There are dangers within such an approach and HMI is concerned that the PSNI may be at some risk of becoming a crime recording, as opposed to a crime investigation, organisation. This may be most apparent in terms of crime involving motor vehicles.
- There is some concern that in certain categories of crime where high value motor vehicles are the intended target of the offence, greater recognition needs to be given of the linkages between volume crime and organised crime e.g. dwelling house burglaries where a high value car is stolen.
- Some concerns were expressed about the overall quality of crime investigation at this level. This appears to be an issue of staff (in)experience and the (in)adequacy of training.

4.3 Hate Crime

The Service is well regarded by its external partners and stakeholders in relation to its commitment and performance. Some good examples of effective partnership working were evident, especially in relation to crime against women and in meeting the needs and expectations of 'hard to reach' groups. However, there is evidence of inconsistency in the application of policy across the Service e.g. crime against women. This is in part due to the lack of a clear ACPO champion to drive hate crime issues forward and the 'gap' between the ownership of policy (ACC criminal justice) and accountability for performance delivery (ACCs urban and rural).

(N.B. It should be noted that the Service was assessed against HMIC protocols for the inspection of hate crime (which is a term recognised more in an England and Wales setting). HMI accepts that within Northern Ireland this term is not commonly used with the Service focusing upon 'Crimes against Vulnerable Persons' (which unlike the definition of hate crime excludes domestic violence). For the purpose of this report, bearing in mind the application of HMIC protocols to assess this area of criminality, the term 'hate crime' will be used).

Strengths

- External partners were generally positive in relation to PSNI's commitment to hate crime issues.

- Positive examples of inter-partner initiatives were evidenced, especially in relation to crimes against women.
- The Service has robust mechanisms in ascertaining the needs and expectations of vulnerable and hard to reach groups i.e. IAGs, umbrella groups, community forums and the engagement of the Service's minority liaison officers.
- The Service's code of ethics clearly articulates the standards required to deliver hate crime objectives.
- The Service is currently undertaking work aimed at setting a definition, policy and procedures to standardise the recording and investigation of sectarian, racial and homophobic incidents.
- There is evidence of effective partnership working in hate crime and the Service is looking to develop a single multi-agency forum in which the PSNI will be the lead agency.

Areas for improvement

- External partners were generally positive but highlighted inconsistencies i.e. mixed awareness and support for policies and strategies across PSNI for women's issues.
- Responsibility for hate crime policy is vested in ACC criminal justice. Delivery responsibility rests with two regional ACCs. This 'gap' between the ownership of policy and accountability for performance delivery, i.e. a clear lack of a 'champion' is causing confusion across the Service and possibly accounts for the lack of consistency reported above.
- The Service does not have specific quality control measures in place for the investigation of hate crime and outcome monitoring, other than those applied to all other criminal investigations. It is unclear how effective these processes are in ensuring that the seriousness of hate crime and the service to hate crime victims is seen as a priority.
- The new criminal justice (CJ) department includes responsibility for youth justice issues, domestic violence, hate crime and victim issues. This is a wider remit of responsibilities than most CJ departments would discharge.
- The Service response in relation to racial and homophobic crime is currently being reviewed and updated by ACC (corporate development) to incorporate and comply with the ACPO hate crime policy.
- Concerns are starting to emerge around what appears to be the specific targeting of VEM persons particularly within Belfast. Whilst the numbers involved are small, nonetheless HMI stresses the need to keep this situation under close scrutiny

4.4 Reassurance

The Service is proactive and effective in marketing the work being undertaken by the organisation. There is clear commitment to reassurance issues at a senior level and a reassurance ethos across the Service which is driven by the Service's communications strategy and policing with the community implementation plan. Both these policies are

effectively driven and have resulted in a number of innovative initiatives aimed at meeting the needs of hard to reach, vulnerable and minority groups. However, it was uncertain to what degree the Service effectively measures its performance in this area and there was a lack of clear targets and outcome measures. A more clearly focused reassurance strategy (incorporating demand management elements) would assist the Service to improve its already good performance in this area.

Strengths

- There is clear evidence of strong commitment to reassurance issues by the Chief Constable via the strategic level communications, marketing and image board. The Service's 'policing with the community' implementation plan sets out a number of approaches to increase visibility and accessibility to police services.
- The Service has enthusiastically adopted the learning from the HMIC 'Open all Hours' thematic inspection and has undertaken a number of reassurance initiatives, e.g. liveried vehicles, cop shops, cops on buses, CCTV etc.
- The Service has an effective external five-year communications strategy which, in addition to traditional press/media focus, has a wider focus on PR and marketing as a means to improving public confidence and awareness of work being undertaken by the Service.
- This strategy has a significant focus on hard to reach, ethnic and other minority groups. A number of initiatives e.g. 'get home safe', 'urzone' and 'rural watch' have been undertaken. (Also see areas for improvement.)
- The Service has established trained officers in each DCU to deal with vulnerable adult issues.
- The Service has been instrumental in the establishment of a Northern Ireland vulnerable adult protection forum and there is evidence of effective partnership working in this area.
- The Service has a range of high quality publications aimed at ensuring that staff are aware and exploit the opportunities to raise the Service's profile amongst communities i.e. the in-house 'Call-Sign' magazine, policing with the community video, and A-Z media guide. A corporate identity manual is currently being produced. In an innovative approach 210,000 copies of the Service's 2002/03 annual report was circulated via the local press to ensure a wider circulation.
- Community safety branch holds the policy in respect of domestic violence, racial and homophobic incidents and holds monthly meetings with relevant officers and independent groups.

Areas for improvement

- The crime fighting fund is not applicable to Northern Ireland. As a result, concerns were expressed by the Service that its hands are 'effectively tied' in relation to income generation initiatives as any such success is negated by a pro rata reduction in NIO funding. Despite this the Service has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at exploiting opportunities to secure additional funding e.g. Operation Clean Up.

- The Service does not have an overarching and dedicated reassurance strategy but has included these within its communications strategy and the policing with the community implementation plan. However neither of these documents details specific Service-wide targets, especially in relation to tackling disorder and anti-social behaviour. The Service has identified the need to develop a reassurance policy and the need to reinforce it at DCU level.
- The Service does not have a specific demand management strategy but rather has a stated intention to support front line policing within the HR strategy. This is assisted by a staff allocation model. (Also see call handling section.)
- There is no Service-wide guidance regarding station opening times, nor has research been undertaken to assess public demand or needs. Currently only 5% of facilities have disabled access, although this is expected to increase to 17% by April 2004.
- The Service is investing in improving access via e-policing and the internet (PoliceNet) but the Service is starting from a very low base position.
- The Service is currently reviewing its methods of ascertaining customer satisfaction/needs with the work/performance of the Service.
- Further initiatives with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community are being commenced from January 2004.

4.5 Call Handling

The Service readily accepts that this area has not been subject to the rate of change that has been applied to other areas. The Service has provided a reasonable and understandable explanation of the rationale for this, mainly centred on the historically high levels of public expectation on police to attend when called. These 'expectations' now place significant demands on the Service, which it accepts it now cannot always meet. To its credit the Service is reluctant to damage this hard earned public trust. It is unwilling to risk a detrimental impact on public confidence by the introduction of call management and demand strategies at a time when it is encouraging all communities to seek police assistance, when previously they may not have done so. However, the Service also accepts this 'conflict' cannot be left unresolved and the proper management of public expectations in relation to the resources available has now become a priority. HMI contends that this is a significant area of service delivery, which is vital in terms of how the Service interacts with the public. Whilst short term work is being driven by ACC urban which will address some of these issues, nevertheless HMI concludes that this is an area of activity that requires focused inspection.

Strengths

- ACC urban has been appointed as lead in the co-ordinated IT project.
- In partnership with the Policing Board the Service is considering the introduction of public satisfaction surveys to monitor call handling and response time satisfaction.
- An interpreter service is provided and the Service has undertaken initiatives to improve access by persons whose first language is not English.

Areas for improvement

- ACC operations support department owns the call grading policy but not call management generally or performance management, which is owned by ACCs rural and urban. There is evidence that this is an area of confusion across the Service and engenders a lack of ownership and performance monitoring.
- There is no Service-wide call handling strategy or targets. Although a pilot call grading communications strategy is being considered.
- The Service operates a total of 20 separate call handling centres with little or no co-ordination or commonality between them. Call handling is delivered in inconsistent ways across the Service, with each DCU being left to define its own functions, working practices, response criteria, training and staffing levels. The Service has set up a call management project to address this and other areas of call handling.
- A large number of police officers are currently performing call handling. Little focus appears to be being made to review these posts with a view to employing civilian staff, thereby releasing police officers to front line posts.
- There are no performance targets and no monitoring of standards i.e. call answering times and scene attendance times, either at DCU level or Service-wide.
- There is significant abuse of the '999' system due to confusion by the public on how to contact police services.
- The call grading policy in place is applied in an inconsistent way. Quality assurance is limited; little or no auditing of its implementation takes place.
- No demand management or call analysis is undertaken e.g. repeat, duplicate or persistent callers. Availability of IT to assist in this area is minimal.
- No customer consultation or satisfaction work is undertaken in relation to call handling/response times.
- There appears to be cultural resistance to implement a call demand/management strategy due to the Services historical performance in attending all calls and the resulting public expectation that this should continue.

4.6 Roads Policing

Effective roads policing is a strategic priority for both the PSNI and the Policing Board. There has been a recent significant decrease in the level of serious injury casualties. The number of fatalities has also decreased. Day to day responsibility for the delivery of roads policing is split between PSNI HQ, which has responsibility for policy, and the two operational regions. There is some concern as to whether this provides the most effective means of service delivery. There is strong evidence that this function is intelligence-led under the auspices of the NIM and that effective partnership working supports this approach. Whilst the Service is heavily committed to working towards the full implementation of the ACPO road death

investigation manual, effective and efficient forensic support to crash and collision investigation is in doubt. There is however evidence that technology designed to support roads policing is being deployed effectively. The Service recognises the importance of encouraging female officers to professionally develop by pursuing roads policing as a career option.

Strengths

- Road casualty reduction is a major strategic priority for the PSNI. There has been a significant decrease in the number of serious injury casualties (-15.4%).
- Responsibility for the delivery of roads policing is split between Service HQ that has a responsibility for policy and the two regions who have operational primacy. There was a commitment to retain this approach under wider restructuring arrangements.
- The Service has traditionally been 'traffic orientated' but is now pushing to become roads policing driven, i.e. its objectives are wider than detecting road traffic offences. Roads policing officers actively support the Service's wider objectives in terms of crime reduction etc.
- An analysis of the action measures in the Northern Ireland road safety strategy has recently been carried out to establish which objectives have the greatest impact on casualty reduction. The action measures for each principal contributor to the strategy have now been deemed as high, medium or low priority. PSNI's contribution to the strategy has been included within its 'own' strategy.
- Roads policing activity is 'driven' under the auspices of the NIM. Staff are tasked under a TCG structure and roads policing activity is intelligence-led.
- There is ample evidence of effective multi-agency working as reflected through numerous joint initiatives.
- The Service is committed to working towards the ACPO road death investigation manual. It has an established programme of SIO training in place for DCU based inspectors. There are 65 trained family liaison officers available to support roads policing investigations across the Service.
- There is substantial evidence of positive action initiatives designed to encourage female officers to consider roads policing as an area of activity that will result in professional personal development.
- There is clear evidence of commitment to make effective use of technology to support roads policing objectives e.g. mobile speed camera enforcement and the use of automatic number plate recognition systems.
- The annual policing plan contains specific roads policing targets.

Areas for improvement

- There are concerns around the availability of effective and efficient forensic support services to assist in the investigation of fatal and serious crashes and collisions. (Also see forensic management section.)

- There is resistance to the creation of 'expert' police officers regarding crash and collision investigation. (This links directly to the previous bullet point.)
- There are some concerns around the level of commitment within some DCUs to roads policing issues.
- Some concern has been expressed about whether the existing arrangements for delivery of this service are the most effective i.e. the split of responsibility between HQ (policy) and the two regions (delivery). The issue appears to centre round whether a centralised structure may provide a more integrated service (see previous bullet point).

4.7 Critical Incidents

The PSNI has a long history of dealing with critical incidents, some of which are very high profile. It is a routinely armed service and therefore has a heavy commitment to staff training in the use of firearms. It operates with a cadre of officers who are highly trained in the use of a broad spectrum of firearms. The NIM is used to task these officers. Officers who command public order situations are trained and these incidents are debriefed to promote learning. The Service runs regular exercises with partners and is working with An Garda Síochána to develop a protocol to respond to cross-border type emergencies.

Strengths

- As a routinely armed service PSNI has a heavy commitment to training its officers in the use of a variety of firearms. Training is mandatory and is conducted generally in accordance with the ACPO firearms manual and human rights legislation.
- Tactical firearms advisors are on call 24/7 via the Belfast regional control and can advise readily on spontaneous and pre-planned firearm incidents.
- Special operations branch (SOB) personnel are trained to higher standards than that of officers who carry firearms for personal protection purposes. Due to the service being unable to call upon mutual aid, this training includes a broad range of firearms disciplines e.g. armed surveillance, close protection, dynamic intervention, etc.
- SOB runs twice-yearly demonstrations of their capability for operational commanders and HQ departmental representatives. It also engages in briefings and demonstrations for external 'key' partners.
- The level 2 NIM TCG process is attended by representatives from the SOB. SOB staff also attend high level strategy meetings in respect of pre-planned firearms operations. Where SOB staff are deployed, an ACPO rank officer is designated as 'gold' commander.
- Command band training courses are run annually for officers who command public order situations.
- Policies pertaining to critical incident management are 'owned' by operations support department and are subject to ongoing review. This is prompted by 'learning' from debriefing of public order situations and is consistent with recommendations made by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI). There is an internal committee that 'signs off' actions arising from recommendations made by the PONI.

- PSNI runs a number of major incident exercises annually. All exercises are subject to debriefing.
- Formal liaison takes place on an ongoing basis with agencies such as the Parades Commission who offer advice and comment on operational practices in different parts of Northern Ireland.
- As part of its response to dealing with major breakdown of public order, the Service has acquired water cannon. This provides a 'middle option' in support of Patten recommendation 70.

Areas for improvement

- The Service is considering whether to adopt the national management of critical incidents course. A pilot course was run in Belfast in 2002 and a number of PSNI officers have undertaken this training in GB.
- PSNI is working with An Garda Siochana to develop a cross-border emergency planning protocol (per Patten recommendation) but there are sensitivities, stemming from political considerations, which need to be overcome.
- The Service, supported by the NIO, is making progress towards finding a viable alternative to plastic baton rounds, inclusive of the water cannon.

4.8 Forensic Management

The Service acknowledges that the current arrangements for the provision of forensic services to support volume and major crime are not effective. The Service has undertaken a major internal restructuring of crime operations department together with the realignment of the forensic science department. A newly appointed scientific support manager (SSM) should assist to bring about improvements in performance, however much work needs to be done. In addition, significant concerns have been expressed regarding the level of service and value for money received from the FSNI. It is the HMI's view that the relationship between the Service and the FSNI needs to be re-examined and redefined as a result of the significant changes to both organisations and the requirement to refocus their respective priorities over the past two years. He concludes that inspection activity within this area is required as a matter of urgency.

Strengths

- There is confidence within the Service that the recent crime operations restructuring and its resulting integration of the forensic support function into a new structure will give greater strategic perspective and cohesion.
- The alignment of SOCOs to the SSM as a result of the restructuring and the development of meaningful and robust performance indicators (PIs) for SOCOs are also seen as key to real progress.
- The SSM is now involved in the strategic tasking and co-ordinating group at levels 2 & 3.

- The setting up of service level agreements (SLAs) for crime scene managers and SLAs between the SSM and DCUs for volume crime is also seen as a significant improvement.

Areas for improvement

- The current arrangements of a fixed spend SLA with the FSNI is inflexible and the Service believes restricts its control of its forensics requirements/needs as currently delivered by the FSNI.
- The centralised nature of the forensics budget resulted in a lack of accountability by DCU commanders for the forensics spends with no incentive to manage such resources wisely. However, a recent meeting of the resource allocation group identified the need to develop devolved forensic budgets to DCUs as a matter of priority.
- Slow turn round times of submissions to the FSNI, in many cases amounting to months are reported by the Service. For example, CJ DNA average of six weeks. Crime scene submissions average turnaround times of six weeks are reported and evidential submissions of four/five months.
- The SSM is working on a new forensic support strategy.
- There is a general lack of critical policies e.g. scene attendance or 'stain submissions' policy. There is no evidence that forensic submissions support and link with wider service or DCU goals and objectives. This is especially the case in relation to volume crime.
- The performance management system is not sophisticated and there are issues concerning the reliability of data. There is not a robust and effective mechanism that can link outputs to outcomes and service priorities.
- There is a lack of effective quality control measures across all forensic areas.
- The current submissions policy is formulated on the ability of FSNI to service the volume of stains, and not on the identified priorities of the Service.
- There is a poor level of forensic awareness by front line staff. Especially middle service officers.
- Lack of effective systems to manage DNA and fingerprint matches. Only 40% of match pro formas are returned for monitoring.
- The Service has not undertaken any benchmarking activity against the HMIC thematic inspection 'Under the Microscope'.
- The Service does not maintain any form of footwear index.
- Whilst DNA and fingerprint matches are included within the Services TCG processes, it is unclear if full advantage is made of the range of forensic based intelligence or opportunities. Such mechanisms appear inconsistent and ad hoc.

- The limited capacity of fingerprint branch to service volume crime has been a major problem. Low staffing levels have been identified as a major contributor to this situation. This has been exacerbated by the effect of severance.
- A review of the fingerprint bureau to rectify identified procedural problems is to be undertaken.

4.9 National Crime Recording Standard

The PSNI has adopted the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and is in the process of adopting its own auditing mechanism to validate compliance with requirements. A Service crime registrar has been appointed but he has not been provided with any additional staff to assist him in carrying out this function. Enhancements to the 'Saturn' system from January 2004 should improve existing performance management systems within this area. It appears however that staff training for the introduction of NCRS was poor and that there are ongoing issues around the timeliness of crime recording.

Strengths

- PSNI has adopted the NCRS.
- At present local accountability for NCRS compliance is provided via the crime controllers within DCUs.
- The central statistics unit validates all crimes recorded by the crime controllers to validate that reported crimes are recorded correctly.
- The Service's principal statistician is designated as the organisation's crime registrar.
- The ICIS system provides an effective tool for the conduct of the crime registrar's function.
- From January 2004 the Service is moving to a daily download of crime statistics. This will enhance existing performance management systems within this area.

Areas for improvement

- Whilst the crime registrar has been delegated this responsibility he has not been provided with additional staffing resources required to carry out the function. HMI is therefore uncertain as to whether this function can be carried out effectively.
- The Service is in the process of implementing its own audits that will be based upon the same data quality tests as used by the Audit Commission. The intention is to 'shadow' the Audit Commission approach to ensure full NCRS compliance.
- It appears that training for staff generally, across the Service, in terms of the requirements of NCRS was poor.
- Information flows from DCUs regarding crime recording are reported to be slow and wholly reliant upon officers completing the crime recording forms in a timely manner. However, a new general order on crime recording requirements is in draft format.

- Incident log to crime report auditing is limited and not robust.
- There is no external audit function to validate internal NCRS compliance i.e. a body such as the Audit Commission.

4.10 Prisoner Handling

At present custody provision across the Service is provided by 22 designated PACE suites. There is however a strategic objective to reduce the number of custody suites to four main facilities supported by 13 local suites. Though a small number of suites have CCTV monitoring the vast majority do not enjoy the health and safety benefits accruing from the provision of such systems. Custody provision is provided entirely by police officers, with no support staff currently working within this environment though enabling legislation is 'in place' to migrate to CDO provision during 2004. Custody procedures are bureaucratic and would be enhanced by the provision of integrated IT systems. Custody is also a DCU based service, which may require review given the recent introduction of the CJS department. Though he has no real concerns about prisoner handling, HMI does consider that there is considerable scope to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of custody provision generally. He contends that there is room for much improvement, which he expects the Service to prioritise without the need for further HMIC inspection.

Strengths

- PSNI operates a serious crime custody suite that is state of the art. It is possibly the most advanced facility of its kind in the UK.
- Currently there is one custody facility which is designated by the Secretary of State to handle terrorist prisoners/suspects. A protocol exists to designate another suitable suite where capacity has been reached.
- Four existing suites are equipped with internal CCTV monitoring systems. These are reported to have enhanced safety within these facilities and to have reduced the opportunity for the levelling of malicious complaints against staff. (Also see areas for improvement.)
- Responsibility for the escorting of prisoners has already been transferred to the Northern Ireland prison service.
- Each DCU has a minority liaison officer who can assist custody staff and can facilitate contact with partner agencies where members of minority communities are brought into custody.
- As part of its 'ideas in action' initiative staff suggestions regarding custody related issues are continually evaluated and policy changes made.
- Where the PONI makes observations stemming from complaints arising from custody procedures, these are evaluated by the operations support department. Policy changes are made as appropriate.

- Responsibility for ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements within custody rests within estate services branch.

Areas for improvement

- Currently, trained custody officers operate 22 PACE designated custody suites across the Service. The intention is to create four enhanced strategically located custody facilities supported by 13 localised custody suites. This forms part of the planning mechanism within the Service's developing estate strategy. Appropriate funding will have to be provided for the implementation of such a strategy and is subject to the outcome of the SR bid to be announced in July/August 2004.
- CCTV systems in those suites that currently are not equipped with this facility (Patten recommendation 63) would also enhance health and safety considerations. This is a funding issue involving the NIO and the business case has yet to be finalised.
- The existing administrative processes within custody are bureaucratic and slow due to an insufficient number of custody officers particularly at peak times. Whilst part of the custody process has been computerised many aspects remain paper based, though, as part of the Causeway project, a pilot computer based system is being introduced. Significant efficiencies appear achievable by the introduction of integrated IT systems to support custody.
- Cell capacity within Belfast at certain times appears insufficient. This results in the abstraction of staff to ferry prisoners to other DCUs for processing. Efficiency gains appear achievable within this area.
- There is no real time monitoring of custody capacity across the Service. Either the BRC or DCU control room must establish where custody provision is available when local facilities are at capacity and then inform officers by radio or MHS message where they can transport prisoners to.
- At present there are no civilian detention officers working within custody suites. All existing personnel are uniformed police officers. Once again, considerable efficiency gains appear achievable and are accompanied by the opportunity to return trained police officers to street duties and accompanying public reassurance. A bid for 46 CDOs has been submitted to the NIO and a decision is awaited.
- Custody provision is a DCU based service and DCU commanders determine staffing levels allocated to this service. With the recent introduction of the criminal justice department it is questioned whether the timing may be appropriate to review staffing arrangements for custody suites.

4.11 Science and Technology Management

The Service acknowledges the very low base from which its IT strategy seeks to improve upon. HMI acknowledges the progress the Service has made in 18 months. However, substantial problems still exist and the Service has a significant way to go in introducing 'core' IT systems. There is frustration across the Service that progress has not been as quick as it could have been. HMI has concerns regarding the apparent lack of resources committed to IT

and data/information security and lack of effective and timely auditing and monitoring. He also has concern that progress has been slow and some key organisational blockages i.e. commitment by DCUs, lack of effective project management methods are holding back the Service.

Strengths

- A new information security policy and a manual of protective security have recently been introduced.
- There were concerns about the effectiveness of IT systems intrusion testing. However, there is now evidence of recent robust intrusion testing.
- The DCC chairs the strategic security committee and this structure is replicated at regional and DCU level. A strategic level information management group is also being established.

Areas for improvement

- All chief officers have been appointed as senior users for all major IT projects. It is hoped that this will help to drive forward essential IT development.
- There is confusion and uncertainty across the Service as to where/who responsibility for IT security is vested.
- At the time of the baseline assessment fieldwork, the director of information management was not personally directly engaged at the strategic level.
- There is a lack of resource commitment to this important area of data/information security (1.5 FTE), as a result there is little effective auditing taking place. In addition, there was little evidence of data security awareness by operational staff.
- Significant delays have occurred with implementation of IT projects but a recovery plan has now been established.
- The independent validation for the management of IT projects was withdrawn as progress was assessed as slow and uncoordinated.
- The IT links to the HR function appear ineffective. As a result there appears to be a lack of effective strategy/project implementation as the implications of such strategies are not fully accounted for - i.e. training, role changes, grade changes, etc.
- There are concerns over a general Service-wide lack of involvement and understanding of how to use IT to support front line effort i.e. user requirements. Significant frustrations were reported by staff regarding the availability of IT, together with a lack of requisite training.
- There are concerns the Service lacks a robust IT project management regime e.g. delays and difficulties experienced with the introduction of some major projects, though HMI does acknowledge that progress is being made in this area.

- The Service IT strategy is still only in draft form.
- From a very low base 18 months ago the Service has made impressive improvements but there is still a significant reliance on paper based systems which results in levels of bureaucracy and accompanying inefficiency e.g. see prisoner handling section.

5. Leadership and Corporate Governance

5.1 Leadership and Direction

The Chief Constable is well regarded across the Service in terms of impact and leadership. The ACPO team is largely 'new' which suggests long term stability. A competition has recently confirmed the appointment of an ACC within the newly created criminal justice department. There are too many operational DCUs; rationalisation is required to improve efficiency. Concern was expressed to HMI over the 'sway' some departmental directors appear to have over the strategic direction of some parts of the organisation. The Service is committed to 'policing with the community' and good progress is being made in that direction. The DPP structure, which is bedding down well, supports this concept and therefore the retention of the same number of DCUs, a tension which needs to be taken into account when formulating changes in this area. Their constitutional positioning is, however, of concern. Working relationships with 'key' partners are effective and professional. The 'Change Programme' for the Service was generally well managed but there are issues around the effectiveness of internal and some aspects of external communication. Progress is required in terms of raising the levels of visibility of senior officers, particularly members of the ACPO team. Staff surveys/studies have either been conducted or are ongoing. Whilst HMI believes there are some strong positive indicators, he also contends that some critical decisions and developments remain to be made, he therefore intends to keep this area under review.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable has been in post for about 18 months and he is well regarded within the Service. HMI received positive feedback from many quarters about his impact and leadership.
- The ACPO team has recently been reorganised to reflect the restructuring of the Service. Most of the ACCs are relatively new into post, which suggests there is likely to be stability within the ACPO team for some time.
- Feedback confirms that there is a performance management structure 'in place' and that the organisation has the feel of a performance driven culture.
- Feedback confirms generally effective and professional working relationships between PSNI and its 'key' strategic partners e.g. NIPB, NIO, OOC and PONI.
- Progress towards a community policing model of service delivery has been good. The Service has moved a long way in this respect in a short time. HMI and other 'key' partners believe that the PSNI is fully committed to this style of policing.
- Feedback confirms general satisfaction with the DPP structure, which appears to have bedded down and be working well, though even greater progress is thought to be probable when republican representation on DPPs is achieved.
- There are issues in respect of pace and the work breakdown structure of the 'Civilianisation programme'.

- Whilst devolvement and empowerment to DCUs are considered to be making good progress, there is concern that some DCU commanders are still struggling with these concepts.
- A health and welfare 'whole organisation' staff survey has recently been conducted on stress cases and their causes.

Areas for improvement

- There are two 'new' ACCs, commanding the 29 operational DCUs, urban region and rural region. HMI considers that this number of 'business units' is too many and this is having an adverse impact on the operational efficiency of the organisation. Rationalisation, in the form of 'brigading', will bring economies of scale and is being actively considered.
- Concern was expressed to HMI over the 'sway' that certain non-police departmental directors appear to have over the strategic direction of some parts of the organisation.
- Feedback suggests that whilst the change management programme was generally well managed, communication across the Service about the programme and its impact could have been better handled. HMI is concerned that there is a 'rumour machine' operating and steps still need to be taken to ameliorate its negative effect by improving internal communication across the Service. HMI considers this to be vitally important in terms of keeping staff properly informed about critical decisions e.g. the future of the full-time reserve.
- Feedback confirms that the pace of civilianisation of non-operational police posts is not progressing rapidly enough. HMI considers that there is enormous scope to convert large numbers of 'police' roles and functions to police/civil staff delivery thereby releasing trained police officers to frontline duties. He understands that some Patten non-severance funding is available to progress this development. Decisions are awaited from the NIO/Treasury regarding the 'civilianisation' business case.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the constitutional positioning of the DPPs and their relationship with the community safety partnerships.
- Feedback suggests that the levels of visibility of senior officers generally, but ACPO ranks in particular, are perceived by frontline staff as being poor.
- An overall reduction in size, amongst other factors, means that the Service cannot provide the same levels of service it once did. Concern was expressed that this fact needs to be communicated honestly and openly to communities across Northern Ireland.
- Feedback suggests that better use could be made of the APR mechanism to 'inform' promotion assessment competitions. Concerns were also expressed about the apparent lack of succession planning for 'key' posts.

5.2 Strategic Management

The Patten report has provided the PSNI with a clear sense of direction. It has committed itself towards the delivery of community based policing and is working with its 'key' partners to improve policing delivery across a broad spectrum of activity. The organisation has been restructured and there have been reductions in the numbers of officers in senior ranks. Power has been devolved from the centre to the operational districts. There is evidence of improved cross-border co-operation. However, the fluid nature of the political landscape is of concern as it has implications for the preferred style of policing the Service wishes to pursue as well as raising difficult questions about policing numbers, severance, recruitment and the future of the reserve forces. IT provision is viewed as a significant factor in the overall efficiency and modernisation of the Service. Whilst HMI is satisfied that the Service is striving hard to deliver community based policing and significant progress has been achieved, he is concerned about the uncertain nature of the political landscape and the implications that this may have for future policing delivery. HMI does have concerns about overall planning processes. Though he considers this to be low priority area for inspection he does consider that 'in-house' improvement is required particularly in terms of planning.

Strengths

- The Patten report has provided the Service with a clear sense of direction. The Service has not only committed itself to 'policing with the community' it has restructured to ensure that it is better positioned to deliver this style of policing.
- PSNI and its 'key' strategic partners within this area e.g. the NIPB, the NIO, the OOC and PONI are working together closely and professionally to deliver improved policing across the broadest spectrum of service delivery.
- PSNI has 'slimmed down' the number of officers within its senior ranks and is delegating responsibility to more junior ranks. This is encouraging staff to take ownership and to make their own decisions.
- The concepts of devolvement and empowerment have generally been well received and acted upon, though some aspects require attention (see previous section).
- The relationship with An Garda Síochána has improved and the PSNI is working closely to improve cross-border co-operation.
- A resource bidding process is 'in place' to ensure corporacy in decision making in terms of staff deployment across the Service.

Areas for improvement

- The changing political landscape within Northern Ireland raises concerns about policing and the potential impact that this may have in terms of further progress towards the delivery of community based policing.
- The foregoing situation has significant implications for 'total' staffing numbers across the PSNI. This raises questions about the most viable number of police officers (regulars and reserves) required for the delivery of the policing service for the next five years and

beyond, which links directly to the progress being made to policing a more 'normal' society i.e. with reduced security demands. Stemming from this situation, difficult questions remain about severance, recruitment and the future of the full and part-time reserves.

- In some parts of Northern Ireland the ongoing security and political situation is a significant blockage towards the desire of the PSNI to engage overtly with communities and to deliver policing by consent. The endorsement of the 'new' policing arrangements by all political parties would have a significant beneficial effect.
- Whilst IT provision across the Service is improving, many critical systems are still not in place. There is a reliance on bureaucratic paper based systems which are impacting negatively and significantly on the overall efficiency and modernisation of the Service. (Also see science and technology section.)
- A significant weakness is perceived within the planning process in that there is no requirement for each department to prepare and publish strategic plans within set time frames to support the annual policing plan. The wider, overall planning timetable also appears to lack co-ordination. In addition, planning processes within DCUs need to be more 'joined up'. HMI draws attention to comments he made about planning processes in his inspection of the Service in 2002 (paragraph 3.9). HMI understands that this had been recognised and is being addressed. He anticipates good progress within this area when the baseline assessment is refreshed in the latter part of 2004.

5.3 Performance Management

The Service has made significant investment and shown its commitment to establishing an effective and robust performance management system. There is evidence that this is supported by a performance management ethos across the Service at all levels. The Service has invested in its commitment to a performance driven approach as evidenced by the resources allocated to the recruitment, training and retention of performance analysts. From a low base the Service has come a long way in a short period of time. Having laid firm foundations good results are beginning to show. Some minor organisational blockages still remain, however, the Service is moving forward at a significant pace.

Strengths

- There is clear evidence of effective strategic drive and commitment from senior managers towards performance accountability. There is a clear policy of making staff accountable for areas they can impact upon.
- The delivery of management information is being enhanced and will be virtually 'real time' by January 2004.
- There is a robust and sophisticated performance management structure via biyearly ACCs' reviews in addition to the bimonthly local DPP performance reviews. Monthly tactical assessments are also produced which additionally highlight crime performance.
- Robust and effective internal inspection processes are in place and are well resourced.
- There appear to be good linkages to the Policing Board, which holds the Service accountable for performance.

- A performance culture appears embedded, and the Service has identified a need to become more sophisticated and focused upon crime and disorder reduction as well as detection.
- A newly introduced IT driven annual performance review (APR) mechanism for all staff and management appears robust, effective and well regarded. The APR has been specifically designed to reflect how individual performance matches and impacts upon DCU objectives. The APR is intended to match individual activities to local needs.
- The analysis centre (AC) is a corporate resource and employs over 70 analysts. All DCUs have at least one. In addition to their core role (NIM services/products) DCU analysts provide key data for the service PAC (performance/accountability arrangements). However, resilience is still a problem and the Service estimates that further staff additions will be required as a result of the recent crime operations restructuring.
- Significant progress has been made in the recruitment and retention of analysts. This is supported by effective structures for training and well advanced proposals for a continuous professional development programme.
- The SATURN management information system is generally effective (see areas for improvement). In general it was reported that the system enables:
 1. The supply of timely and meaningful information on indicators and targets;
 2. Delivery of the most appropriate information to the most appropriate staff;
 3. A focus of exception reporting to better target limited resource; and
 4. A link between activity and outcomes.

Areas for improvement

- Problems exist with devolved financial management to DCUs. In particular some DCUs do not as yet have business managers. This is viewed within the Service as critical in terms of driving performance. However, recruitment activity is being undertaken.
- HQ departments (except specialist operations) do not appear subject to the same degree of rigour as DCUs in terms of performance. However, the Service intends to apply the PAC process to all departments within the next 12 months.
- Gaps were identified in the Service's capacity to provide an analytical function in relation to economic crime (this is not seen as a priority by the Service).
- The Service does not undertake DCU comparative performance management analysis. The Service expects acquisition of appropriate software during 2004 to improve this situation. HMI understands that progress has been made in this area.
- The SATURN management information system is assessed as not being user friendly, although some improvements have recently been made.
- PSNI has a staff suggestion scheme, 'Ideas in action'. The scheme is currently subject to some amendment.

5.4 Human Resource Management

Whilst he acknowledges that the PSNI has made significant progress in a relatively short period of time within this very wide functional area and that critical plans and strategies are 'in place', HMI has very real concerns around what he views as vital aspects of HR management within the Service. He compliments the PSNI on the progress that it has made on staff recruitment and reducing sickness levels though he still contends that much scope for even greater achievements within this latter category (sickness management) remains achievable. He believes that this should be made the subject of early 'in-house' inspection. He also has considerable concerns regarding the pace of 'civilianisation' across the Service. He believes there to be substantial scope to convert non-operational police posts to support staff provision thereby freeing up trained police officers to return to frontline duties. He believes that this could be made subject of an HMIC inspection in its own right but that the outcome of on-going activity at the national level i.e. an HMIC thematic inspection may have bearing in this respect. He is concerned too about the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the tenure of the full-time reserve. HMIC has noted the decision reached by the Chief Constable and the Policing Board in October 2002 in relation to the future of the reserve, and the intention of the Chief Constable to review security arrangements after summer 2004. There was feedback about the continued provision of an effective policing service after the planned run-down of the reserve unless the other steps in the strategy including civilianisation, transfer of officers to frontline duties and recruitment into the part-time reserve are carried forward expeditiously.

(N.B. it should be noted that comments within this section do not relate solely to HR activities being delivered by the central HR department. The section addresses HR issues across the organisation corporately).

Strengths

- The HR department is involved in a number of working parties researching issues around the part-time reserve, student officer training and internal communications.
- A revised APR system was launched in April 2003 (also see areas for improvement).
- The occupational health and welfare unit (OHW) has been restructured and 'new' welfare officers are being recruited. The intention is to change the focus from welfare to employee support. The OHW teams are being assigned to each DCU to support frontline policing.
- The HR strategy defines the organisational intention to support frontline policing within the DCUs. A staff allocation model is used to distribute the available resources using objective measures of predicted demand.
- Recruitment into the Service is driven by meeting the Patten policy objectives for compositional change. An external agent, who applies national standards, is contracted for that work and then the PSNI applies the legislative requirement of the 50/50 basis. Competitions are run biannually and targets for recruitment are being achieved.
- PSNI does not use the national fitness test as a precursor to student officer recruitment. It is now applied at the end of student officer training and the standard is mandatory. External consultants are used to monitor the impact of fitness requirements particularly with regard to female applicants. Early indications suggest that the policy change has created an opportunity for developing fitness levels for female student officers (with proper evaluation HMI recognises this approach could amount to national good practice).

- The Service is pursuing a recruitment campaign for the part time reserve. (Monitoring in July 2003 revealed a heavy non-catholic bias in terms of recruits).
- The Service has a costed training plan that is linked to the training and development business plan. It also has a training strategy that has been approved by the NIPB.
- Whilst the training department per se is not liP accredited, various sections are accredited to professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Institute of Information Technology Training. Training staff hold either Centrex qualifications or other formal training qualifications.
- The central personnel function has made a strong effort to disengage from casework and to take a more strategic perspective. There is however, a perception that some DCU commanders may be resistant to this change of emphasis.
- Significant improvements in performance have been made within sickness management. This has been done by re-engineering processes at the HQ HR department level. HMI contends that there is large scale organisational learning potential here regarding other systems.
- In terms of long-term sickness, direct referrals, automatic sick leave regarding injuries on duty and case conferences have reduced time lags from 90 to 30 days. This has been accompanied by the robust application of the attendance management policy at a local level.
- Health and safety professionals have been recruited to tackle injuries in the workplace - accident reduction. This is being converted into a performance indicator to inform ACCs within their PAC briefs.
- Lessons have been learnt from early severance experience as the mechanism was fixed and rigid. Staff associations now appear to recognise what is good for the Service as opposed to the individual in terms of the application of severance criteria.
- Police officer recruitment into PSNI has been very successful, good quality recruits are being attracted and retention levels are high. Thirty five percent of applicants are female.
- Thirty year projections of current recruitment policies have been undertaken.
- Full-time reserve work is 'in being' to manage the welfare issues stemming from this area. The Service is also actively trying to make full-time reserve staff more employable as police officers elsewhere in the UK.
- There is a perception that the external communications strategy has been successful but internal communications are not perceived as being as effective. An audit is planned.

Areas for improvement

- Whilst the HR model is being used for allocating staffing resources, there is internal concern that it is not run in sufficient time to set agreed budgets in advance of the financial

year. It needs to support joined up planning (see comment in strategic management section). HMI accepts there are differences of opinion within the Service in this regard. He contends, as outlined in his last focused inspection of the Service in 2002, the need to integrate planning cycles.

- A costed HR plan and a HR strategy had been agreed by NIPB but is now subject to review. Steps are in hand to develop costed HR plans at DCU level.
- Feedback suggests that the application of the HR plan is not resulting in additional officers at the frontline. The perception remains that HQ is still 'top heavy' with staff numbers.
- Feedback suggests that the application of the HR plan may be resulting in the loss of experienced CID staff to 'other' functions. (CID aides are replacing experienced detectives within DCUs). Also there are considerable delays in staff receiving their CID training.
- Whilst significant reductions have been achieved in sickness levels across the Service (which HMI recognises and acknowledges), considerable scope exists to reduce these levels even further. Though the revision of the attendance management policy should assist here, HMI considers that sickness management is an area that should be made subject of an early 'in- house' inspection.
- Considerable concern was expressed from a variety of quarters about the pace with which 'civilianisation' of non-operational police posts are proceeding. HMI believes there to be enormous scope across the Service to convert such posts to support staff provision and he understands the relevant funds are available. Whilst he believes that this area could be made subject of an in depth inspection in its own right, he is mindful of on-going work at the national level i.e. an HMIC thematic inspection which is likely to have bearing in this regard.
- A tenure policy (per Patten) has also been presented and agreed by the NIPB (though HMI has reservations about the concept of tenure, which has fallen into disrepute in most police forces within England and Wales). He understands that a structured approach to career development is also being prepared. HMI contends that wholly honest and robust APR is central to this debate and that when this is achieved the concept of tenure becomes redundant. (Also see performance management section).
- There are issues around the frequency of firearms training. It is described as very ad hoc with some staff not receiving training in a timely manner.
- There is a strong perception by sergeants, in particular, and some inspectors that recruit training is not preparing student officers for the practicalities that they face when they leave the training school e.g. casefile preparation, interviewing and statement taking are all cited as being problematic areas.
- SLAs are not in place regarding training provision. There is either reluctance or disagreement as to validity of the approach. (This is also an area of concern for the OOC).

- Progress appears to have been slow regarding downsizing certain functions e.g. the full-time reserve but a timeline is now in place.
- The future of the full-time reserve continues to be a difficult area. April 2005 has been identified for the start of the rundown of this reserve. However, this is subject to a security review that will commence at the latter part of 2004. There are substantial concerns about the overall viability of the Service unless sustainable progress can be achieved in terms of bolstering the part-time reserve. HMI is aware of the sensitivities of this issue in particular the necessity to ensure that this reserve, like the regular service, is more representative. This is seen as a significant issue for the Service.
- Despite on-going efforts, the part-time reserve appears to be facing real issues regarding recruitment and funding. There also appear to be issues attracting older applicants to this reserve. HMI considers that there may be issues around the working of the application process itself which he contends needs to be examined.
- Logistical issues are anticipated regarding the training of part-time reserve officers with target recruitment level set at 2,500.
- Significant concerns were expressed particularly by the Police Federation regarding unsolved RUC staff murders and the inconsistent approach being adopted regarding high profile murders where funding is found to continue or reopen investigations. Consistency of approach is seen as central to this issue along with welfare and morale issues.
- Feedback was received which suggests that whilst the 'new' shift pattern may be good for staff welfare it does not provide well for effective operational policing.
- Feedback was received from many quarters that, despite its amendment, the APR system is still viewed as a 'waste of time'. It continues to be perceived as being 'just bureaucracy that does not impact on performance'.
- Significant concern was expressed over delays within medical retirement processes i.e. now 200 days average as opposed to 150 days (NIPB involvement). There is no fast tracking mechanism to prioritise more urgent cases.
- The Service is working towards delivery of staffing targets i.e. police 4,378 staff within the DCUs.
- Concerns were expressed around the variation in grievance procedures between police and civil staff members. There is a view that this could require rationalisation.
- There is an ongoing longitudinal study taking place with probationary officers to ascertain development and opinion regarding progression through student officer and probationers training.

5.5 Professional Standards

At the time of the assessment, PSNI was the only police service in the UK to be subject of wholly independent scrutiny and investigation of public complaints made against its officers.

This function is carried out by the office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI). These arrangements have been in place for three years. The promotion of professional standards within the PSNI is strongly supported by the ACPO team. There is an internal investigation branch (IIB) whose primary responsibility is to uphold and promote professional standards. The IIB also acts as the interface between the PONI and PSNI in relation to more sensitive or difficult issues. PSNI has encouraged PONI to deal directly with DCUs as appropriate. Working relationships are considered to be effective. PSNI has made a big commitment to raising its standards of conduct. There is a Code of Ethics and an accompanying strategy to support the requirement for high professional standards. Staffing levels within the IIB are considered appropriate but there are concerns around the systems (particularly the IT systems) that support the work of the branch. Whilst HMI believes that much good work is being undertaken to promote professional standards across the Service, he considers this area of activity to be particularly important. He therefore intends to keep developments under review.

Strengths

- The PSNI is in a unique position in the UK in that it has a fully independent oversight body i.e. the office of the Police Ombudsman (PONI) which is legally bound to investigate **all** complaints made against the police.
- PSNI operates with an internal investigation branch (IIB) whose primary duty within the Service is to uphold and promote professional standards but which also provides initial liaison between the Service and the PONI in relation to sensitive or complicated issues.
- The standard of behaviour required of PSNI officers is governed by the Service's Code of Ethics, which is incorporated into legislation, by the PSNI (Conduct) Regulations 2003.
- There is also a strategy for integrity and professional standards that incorporates an audit tool, which tests all policies for integrity. The strategy has four main strands and is considered to be comprehensive.
- The IIB has undertaken a considerable amount of work to promote professional standards across the Service e.g insight forums, leaflets to all members of the organisation and publicity within Service publications.
- The ACPO team has demonstrated its commitment to professional standards by the formation of a professional standards committee (PSC). Team participation is continuous. The DCC is the accountable officer for IIB and he also chairs the PSC.
- The Service is developing a service confidence procedure to assist in countering threats of corruption. This work is being undertaken by the IIB in conjunction with Service analysts and is in line with ACPO recommendations. Senior officers from the branch also represent the Service at national level via ACPO committees.
- Staffing within IIB is considered to be adequate for purpose. They are well trained across a broad spectrum of disciplines e.g CHIS handling, RIPA etc. There is evidence that welfare considerations are taken into account when IIB staff return to the wider organisation.

- PSNI operates an independent confidential reporting line called 'safecall' which is available to report potential wrongdoing by members of the organisation. It is the first police service in the UK to provide this facility.
- Staff integrity testing procedures are in place and are conducted on a risk assessment basis.
- Whilst some concerns were expressed to HMI over the consistency of decision-making by PONI, in respect of informal resolution (IR) procedures, the PONI has confirmed that in 2003 only six out of 562 such cases were returned for further consideration. HMI acknowledges the resilience of these arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- Whilst the IIB operates with an internal intelligence and integrity unit there is concern over the provision of an IT system to support the work being undertaken. This unit applies NIM principles to its activities.
- Support staff grievances currently sit outside the direct remit of IIB and are dealt with by staff from the human resources department. Concern exists over the training HR staff have received to carry out this role.
- Despite the fact that the dedicated complaints officer from PONI visits all DCUs and trains inspectors, there is concern over the depth of training provided to PSNI inspectors who are required to attempt IR. The perception is that the IR mechanism overall is not working properly and that there are issues to be addressed for both the PONI and PSNI.
- Management information is now passed electronically and once a month in a hard copy format between the PONI to DCU commanders. However there still is a perception that blockages may exist within IIB.
- There are issues around significant delays that can occur in arranging interviews with police officers involved in complaints. There is a perception that this is not always justified and that some cultural resistance to the PONI may still exist. Some parts of the crime operations department in particular are cited as being very slow at producing requested information.
- There is a perception that the Service is poor at keeping in touch and updating complainants/victims.
- Enhanced processes could be adopted to reduce the opportunity for complaint e.g better training in areas such as baton and firearm usage, crime prevention etc.
- Concerns were expressed over the introduction and implementation of the 'safecall' system. There is a perception that there is a lack of proper checks and balances re the potential misuse of the system.
- There are some concerns around the lack of progress re internal accountability mechanisms, integrity testing and early warning systems to identify potential areas for complaints against the PSNI. Although HMI believes progress is being made in this area.

- Technical support to internal investigations is limited and there are issues around the installation of such equipment when it is supplied from the wider organisation.

5.6 Race and Diversity

The Service has made significant progress in a short period of time and there is evidence of strong commitment to diversity issues at the most senior level of the Service. However, cultural blockages do remain and this commitment may not be fully evidenced across the organisation. The Service is establishing the necessary structures and policies to manage these cultural changes and the recent appointment of a diversity manager is a good example.

Strengths

- The Service appointed its first diversity manager in July 2003.
- ACC (criminal justice) is the service 'champion'.
- The Service has established its own equality scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- The Service has a gender action plan.
- The Service has established an ethnic minorities support group to assist with recruitment initiatives and to address policing issues affecting ethnic minority communities. An ethnic police officers' association has also been established. This appointment has brought a new enthusiasm and commitment to this area. The main priority is to establish key systems and mechanisms to monitor diversity issues.
- A gender action group is in existence and there is strong support from the strategic level to set up LAGPA and BPA branches within PSNI. The Service is in the process of adopting a gender action plan and has established a gender action working party; this will incorporate gender agenda issues.
- An innovative project working with an external organisation 'Mediation NI' aims to assist DCU commanders to better understand the issues of policing polarised communities.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of Catholic officers from 8% in November 2001 to 14% by May 2004. The percentage of females joining has also risen and now 34% of all recruits are female. The percentage of ethnic officers is currently 0.27% of the service. The 2001 census of Northern Ireland estimated that 0.85% of the population are from an ethnic background.
- The Service undertakes monitoring of recruitment attrition rates by use of an external agency, however it is unclear what mechanisms are in place to implement remedial action where appropriate.

Areas for improvement

- The diversity manager currently has limited staff resources at her disposal. A business case has been submitted and is being considered.

- A diversity strategy, which will include a cultural audit, is currently being written.
- There are some concerns in the Service over cultural blockages and that the Service may take some time to adapt to an ethos of 'diversity'.
- With higher levels of female recruitment taking place evidence is now starting to emerge of isolated sexist attitudes and instances of discrimination. The Service is beginning to respond to these.
- There is a perception that the existing grievance procedure is now outdated and ineffective, however this is being reviewed.
- There are no policies currently in place to support transsexual staff but the issue has been recognised and is being researched.
- Mechanisms to undertake analysis of grievances in order to identify potential problems of harassment and discrimination do not appear sufficiently robust. The Service is reviewing its procedures in relation to ongoing equal opportunities cases.
- The Service has established a disability project board. Accessibility audits were completed in 2002 and work is to be completed by December 2004 within this area. Currently 17% of PSNI premises comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

5.7 Health and Safety

The Service has a robust, sophisticated and committed approach to health and safety issues. The commitment is driven from the top and is in evidence across the organisation. Daily performance is effectively driven by a professional H&S function that is headed by a health and safety manager with considerable external experience. The Service operates a number of impressive and effective processes e.g the wide range of comprehensive supporting policies, the deployment of a dedicated accident investigator and a 24-hour call out system to assist operational staff with health and safety issues. The Service appears to be a centre of good and professional practice.

Strengths

- The Service has a wide range of up to date and comprehensive H&S policies in place, supported by an annual health and safety business plan and health and safety policy.
- The Service employs a dedicated accident/incident investigator, this is assessed as being effective in reducing incidents and increasing the learning from incidents.
- There is a clear commitment to health and safety issues which are championed by the DCC. There is evidence of strong commitment and awareness across the organisation.
- The Service is currently obtaining a health and safety IT software package, which will assist in tracking and preventing incidents.

- There is evidence of robust auditing procedures. The chief health and safety advisor has introduced an innovative auditing matrix STAAR.
- There is evidence of an accountability structure through executive level meetings and local health and safety quarterly meetings chaired by each DCU commander.
- There are a number of other functionally based committees' i.e ergonomics, claims management etc. Staff associations are consulted and engaged in all these committees and forums.
- The health and safety function has strong and effective links into the occupational health unit.
- The IT based incident reporting mechanism appears robust. This reactive monitoring system records all injuries, ill health and near misses.
- The Service is implementing a comprehensive and risk assessed proactive system of incident prevention, which includes environmental monitoring, health surveillance, and management performance monitoring.
- The Service operates a 24-hour health and safety call out facility, which demonstrates its commitment to health and safety issues.

5.8 Best Value

The Northern Ireland Policing Board and Service were introduced to the concept of Best Value in 2003. The legislative requirement and responsibility on the Policing Board is provided by the Northern Ireland Police Act 2000 (part 5) as the Local Government Act 1999 (currently the legislative driver in England and Wales) is not applicable. Progress has been slow with key monitoring arrangements, key processes and staff resources not being adequately established to date. The Policing Board and Service are aware of the shortfalls and are keen to make improvements. The first Best Value Inspection in Northern Ireland was conducted during March 2004.

Strengths

- PSNI has completed a number of pilot reviews to develop the Best Value methodology. These reviews have been mainly inward facing.
- Legal responsibility for Best Value rests with the NIPB. It has expressed its willingness to make the necessary improvements needed to drive forward activity in the light of the pilot work undertaken. Efforts have been made to recruit staff to undertake the liaison role between the Board and the Service. A strategic working group has also recently been formed.
- A systems based approach has been adopted to drive forward review activity. A five-stage methodology is being used (though HMI contends there may be difficulties in terms of large scale strategic and cross cutting review activity using this approach).

Areas for improvement

- The current Policing Board structure and arrangements do not provide opportunity to effectively monitor and scrutinise Best Value processes/reviews/improvement plans. Currently Board involvement is at the strategic level with no opportunity to scrutinise or be involved at practitioner level. The development and adoption of working protocols/reporting arrangements will add value and understanding.
- The Policing Board has decided not to take a hands on approach in regard to specific BVRs and has chosen to finance and appoint Best Value officers to provide the interface between the NIPB and PSNI. Currently, the Board is not involved in selecting areas of activity suitable for review. Inward facing activities will have very limited impact in improving service that will be appreciated by the public.
- The Best Value methodology requires updating. The review priority matrix is two years old. It has not been used to identify strategic Best Value reviews but can be utilised to priorities suitable Best Value review activity flowing directly from this Baseline Assessment. The costing methodology also requires expansion to include 'proper' costs (Best Value Planning and Guidance 2003).
- There does not appear to be any meaningful involvement of staff associations or trade unions within the Best Value review process.
- Internal communication on Best Value principals and 'wins' from Best Value review activity is very limited and not developed via media such as the intranet site. HMI encourages the development of an effective communications strategy for Best Value.
- Improvement plans require appropriate milestones, performance information and improvement targets that can be agreed/monitored by the Audit and Best Value Committee of the Policing Board.

5.9 Resource Management

In general, financial services are reasonably well managed and have made significant progress during a period of widescale change. The Service has sound medium term financial plans in place and a significant change to a financial aware culture has been observed. Substantial progress has been made in regard to financial devolution to local budget holders with over 80% devolvement, however there are frustrations by middle management over this devolvement and a belief that it is notional rather than real i.e limited only to overtime. A newly formed PSNI audit committee was to be inaugurated January 2004 which is a positive move in relation to the Service's financial planning and monitoring arrangements. The Service has recognised that it is entering a period where a much tighter regime of financial management, than it has previously been accustomed to, will be required. It also recognises that significant challenges i.e the robust management of overtime have still to be faced.

Strengths

- There has been a significant focus on budgets and planning since the appointment of the 'new' Chief Constable. This is being soundly supported by the finance director's agenda for change. As a result the Service is moving steadily towards a financial awareness culture.

- The DCC has been influential in progressing activity based costing (ABC). Results from activity analysis have started to be used for resource allocation and also for civilian staff.
- There is a 'voluntary' 1% efficiency gain/savings regime in existence (also see areas for improvement).
- The recruitment of business and personnel managers is progressing.
- Progress has been made in regard to financial devolution to local budget holders with over 80% devolvement. (Also see areas for improvement.)
- There are good IT systems in place supporting the financial devolution process.
- The Service is undertaking a proactive education, training and awareness campaign using the 'FARM' system to increase awareness of good financial management.
- A new post of management consultant should have a significant impact on the Best Value process.
- The new head of procurement services is developing mechanisms to close a current gap in robust compliance monitoring systems.
- After much delay a decision has been taken regarding the building of a new police training college.
- PSNI has recently been subject of a comprehensive HMIC inspection within this area.

Areas for improvement

- There are frustrations by middle management over the devolvement of budgets. There is a belief that 'HQ has not really let go!' HMI accepts differences of opinion exist between DCUs and 'central' departments in this regard.
- Budgets are not particularly sophisticated and overtime is the only area that can be 'managed' effectively. However, the devolvement of the budgetary process is at an early stage. Sophistications are being introduced as the process develops.
- Confusion remains over the role and responsibility of business and personnel managers in some DCUs and there appear to be inconsistencies as to who their line managers are and the levels of interest taken by some DCU commanders as to their development and APRs. Again, these concepts are new to the Service and in that sense are still 'bedding in'.
- A significant number of comments were made both internally and externally regarding the poor state of the police estate. Estate strategy progress appears slow and aspects of the programme seem ad hoc and ineffective i.e the renovation of buildings that are earmarked for future demolition. The Service is aware of the difficulties and intends developing a building closure programme based upon reductions in the number of staff employed.

- There is an integrated planning process but a perceived weakness is a lack of co-ordination across PSNI. There is a lack of structural linkages between HR, estates and finance.
- There is a £16m budget shortfall (financial year 2003/04) which, the Service intimates, can be managed.
- Pay systems may be too inflexible to allow for market supplements for the retention and recruitment of professional staff. This has led to retention and recruitment difficulties.
- There is a lack of qualified accountants in the Service although some progress has been made recently.

6. Partnership and Community Engagement

6.1 Community Safety Partnerships

There is no primary legislation, such as that in England and Wales, to underpin crime and disorder reduction partnerships. Community safety partnerships (CSPs) have however been established under the community safety strategy for Northern Ireland. All DCUs are in the process of establishing CSPs and at the time of this report 23 CSPs were in place out of 27 which are planned, and there is full police representation on each partnership. There are established links in terms of the planning process between local CSPs and the Policing Plan for Northern Ireland. District policing partnerships (DPPs) exist within 28 of the 29 DCUs and their existence is enshrined in legislation. Favourable feedback was received from several quarters about the commitment of the PSNI to support the DPPs and the quality of partnership working in general. Concern was expressed about the potential duplication of effort between CSPs and DPPs and the need for closer co-ordination between the two. Concern was also expressed that there is no anti-social behaviour legislation in existence and that this should be introduced, although work is ongoing within this area in terms of voluntary anti-social behaviour contracts and other orders designed to promote community safety.

Strengths

- In line with recommendation 44 of the Patten Report, PSNI has made an unequivocal commitment to adopt a community policing based style of service delivery. The Service is striving hard to deliver its stated aim of 'policing with the community'.
- Unlike the rest of the UK there is no primary crime and disorder legislation, but there is the Northern Ireland community safety strategy. Each of the 23 DCUs with CSPs has a local community safety partnership (CSP) that delivers a local community safety policy based against an audit.
- The community safety strategy has highlighted numerous objectives to be addressed and these are cascaded to CSP to all key agencies with PSNI playing a leading role at all levels.
- All local community safety partnerships have full police representation.
- The Policing Plan for Northern Ireland has an indicator in relation to the police contribution to the community safety strategy and there is a link from this strategy to the local policing plan. This mechanism provides a direct link for the PSNI into the Policing Board for Northern Ireland (NIPB).
- There are well established links with province-wide bodies such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and this facilitates linkages into organisations such as the housing executive wardens scheme, to promote community safety and public reassurance through schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch.
- The HQ community safety branch (CSB) acts in the capacity of 'co-ordinator' for DCU contributions to the Northern Ireland community safety strategy as required by the NIPB.

- In compliance with legislative requirements, district policing partnerships (DPPs) are 'in place' across the majority of DCUs (at the time of the assessment there were 25 DPPs in existence). DCU commanders are required to consult and take account of the views of the DPP before issuing or revising the local policing plan. There is a framework in place to assist DCU commanders in terms of their reporting to DPPs.
- There is no anti-social behaviour legislation in Northern Ireland however there is a youth diversion strategy that is based on restorative intervention. This involves agreements being drawn up with offenders that are similar to acceptable behaviour contracts. Legislation in relation to ASBOs is now being introduced to Northern Ireland.
- The CSB is working with partners to research the feasibility of introducing anti-social behaviour orders and other complimentary orders, such as parenting and curfew orders, into local legislation.
- The CSB has a policing representative on the funding panel of the NIO community safety unit, which assists in securing funding for various community safety initiatives.
- HMI received favourable comments from a representative group of DPP members drawn from across the province about the willingness of PSNI to provide quality training and to 'educate' DPP members about the complexities of policing.
- DCU commanders reported favourably on the introduction of DPPs. The recent introduction of DPPs into policing within Northern Ireland whilst intrusive and challenging is viewed as contributing positively to improving the policing environment across Northern Ireland.

Areas for improvement

- Some concern was expressed that the separate structures for DPPs and CSPs may be duplicating effort and that there is a need for stronger links and better co-ordination between them. HMI considers this to be an area which could be made subject to cross-cutting inspection or governmental review.
- Whilst HMI received complimentary feedback about the quality of partnership activity from numerous external consultees, concern was also expressed about the general lack of police visibility (and resource levels) and police response to calls for assistance from members of the public (see call handling section).

6.2 Criminal Justice

The Service has made significant progress in a short period of time. The establishment of an ACC criminal justice and formation of a CJ structure now places the Service in a position to make further significant progress. Whilst much work needs to be done the Service has a clear vision of what is necessary in order to significantly improve its performance within this area.

Strengths

- The formation of the new CJ department headed by a newly created ACC post in October 2003 is a recognition by the Service of the need for better co-ordination and an acknowledgement of the importance of this area of work.

- ACC criminal justice represents the Service on the Northern Ireland criminal justice board.
- The CAUSEWAY joint CJ project is progressive and fully funded. PSNI is the 'key' partner within this project.
- The DPP commenced a pilot in December 2003 of the new public prosecution service (South Belfast).
- The Service is undertaking a significant number of projects on restorative justice.
- Working relationships between the PSNI and victim support services are reported to be good.

Areas for improvement

- The newly formed CJ department is still formulating its mainstream policy and strategy documents.
- Throughout 2004 the Service will be working towards a generic criminal justice unit (CJU) structure supported by corporate policy and strategy.
- The Service is planning CJ seminars across the Service in 2004, which are intended to pave the way for the redesign of DCU CJS processes.
- There is a significant gap in the availability and use of CJ performance management information, which it appears is not being progressed.
- The new CJ department includes responsibility for youth justice issues, domestic violence, hate crime and victim issues. This is a wider remit of responsibilities than most CJ departments would discharge.
- A number of partners and stakeholders commented negatively on the Service's previous and current performance in relation to meeting the needs of victims and keeping them informed.
- There is a general internal view that the standard of case files is poor due to the inexperience of constables and some sergeants. IT systems to support this are inadequate but there is a belief that the Causeway initiative should resolve this problem.
- There is a lack of consistency in the training, working practices and structures of the 29 CJUs. However, work is being undertaken to address this.
- Little activity is currently undertaken to measure the satisfaction of the public/victims with the Service's CJ processes. Although a review is underway.

6.3 Consultation and Community Cohesion

There is substantial evidence that the PSNI has made a strong commitment to consultation and community engagement at all levels. The DCC leads and is the Service's 'champion'.

ACC CJ has responsibility for policy development, which is heavily influenced via a multiplicity of consultation groups and forums. At DCU level LPTs are in place and the DCU commanders are the operational lead for consultation with 'their' communities. Both the DPP and the CSP structures have enhanced consultation though there is some concern about the overlap between these separate and distinct bodies. PSNI has organised a number of conferences and initiatives designed to promote consultation and community cohesion. It is also in the process of developing a victim-based definition of sectarian crime. Currently there appears to be minimal evidence of overt private sector involvement in partnership activity. There are inconsistencies across the Service over the role and responsibility of minority liaison officers. Taken overall, HMI is satisfied that there is much good work ongoing within this area. Though there are some areas for improvement he does not view these as being critical. He anticipates that the commitment he has seen will be further developed by in-house improvement effort.

Strengths

- Lead responsibility for the corporate approach to 'policing with the community' rests with the deputy chief constable. He is the Service's 'champion' and has primacy in terms of reporting progress to the NIPB.
- The ACC criminal justice department (CJD) leads for the Service in terms of policy development. The community safety sub-branch which is part of this department has responsibility for consultation with minority and 'hard to reach' groupings such as vulnerable persons, youth, ethnic communities, victims and LGBT groups.
- Effective working relationships are reported with the CJD and the NIO's community safety unit.
- Community consultation is a central plank of the 'policing with the community' strategy. Two elements of the strategy relate directly to the role that local communities have in setting local priorities and holding the PSNI to account.
- Whilst local policing teams provide the direct interface between the Service and the community, in each DCU the operational lead for consultation is the DCU commander. They have the responsibility for ensuring community consultation issues are included within local policing plans.
- The recently introduced DPPs, and some of the longer established community safety partnerships, are seen as very positive developments towards improving consultation and communication between the Service and local communities (also see comments within community safety partnership section).
- Much of the responsibility for formal survey activity rests with the NIPB.
- PSNI has hosted a number of conferences and partnership activities over the last 12 months e.g new directions within human rights.
- Independent advisory groups (IAGs) have been established. These advise PSNI and assist within the development of policy.

- The Service has demonstrated its ability to use the NIM, problem solving mechanisms and the skills of its analysts to draw communities together, through consultation, to reduce the opportunities for crime. An initiative in the Foyle DCU is a good example which resulted in a 'Tilley Award' in the crime reduction category.
- The Service is in the process of developing a definition of sectarian crime. This will be based on the Macpherson standard and will acknowledge victim influences.
- Accredited training has been developed in community safety for PSNI staff and others outside of the organisation, which can lead to a degree level qualification.
- The PSNI is commencing a number of initiatives that will promote consultation and community cohesion. These include Neighbourhood Watch schemes, good neighbour schemes and strategy to tackle attacks against the elderly. A new domestic violence strategy is also being formulated.
- HMI received positive feedback about school and youth initiatives being undertaken by PSNI in some areas of Northern Ireland.
- A public opinion survey in a local newspaper has confirmed significant support and public confidence in PSNI.

Areas for improvement

- There appears to be an issue stemming from the overlapping structures and responsibilities flowing from the separate recommendations that created parallel structures i.e DPPs and CSPs. This can complicate effective consultation.
- There is not a generic structure for CSPs and how they are implemented and operate locally. An additional complication is where the community police liaison committees and evolving community forums fit within the overall consultation structure. A significant issue for CSB is the multiplicity of groups with which they are required to interact. Rationalisation would assist.
- Currently there appears to be minimal evidence of overt private sector involvement but it is recognised that there are issues around the prevailing security situation and the changing policing environment. The main issue appears to be one of timing.
- There are inconsistencies apparent across the Service regarding the role of minority liaison officers, which is a function of the community liaison sergeants within the DCUs.
- There appears to be a multiplicity of officers on DCUs performing a broad range of separate community safety roles and functions. Economies of scale may be achievable.
- HMI detected some tension between policy ownership and no direct control/line management over the staff that delivers it within the DCUs.

7. Conclusions and next steps – PSNI’s Inspection plan

This report on PSNI’s recent and current performance establishes a baseline against which its future performance will be monitored. As is apparent from the gradings, the Service has a number of significant challenges to meet if its performance is to reach the standards expected both by Government and the communities of Northern Ireland.

Set out overleaf are the proposals for HMIC working with PSNI and the NIPB over the next three years, concentrating on areas where a need for improvement has been signalled. Where the Service is achieving success, HMIC’s objective is to leave it to continue with its efforts, working to principles of earned autonomy that allow for light touch regulation. However, the Service’s performance across the board will be monitored by the Policing Board – this provides an ‘early warning’ system and the focus of attention may change if PSNI starts to deteriorate in key areas of activity.

Inspection Plan for PSNI– 2004/05 to 2006/07

Area of activity	Proposed inspection activity
Tackling Level 2 Criminality	Consideration is being given to an HMIC inspection of Level 2 criminality being undertaken. Monitoring during quarterly visits
Volume crime	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Hate crime	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Reassurance	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Call Handling	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Roads Policing	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Critical Incidents	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Forensic Management	Cross cutting inspection, co-ordinated via the chief inspector of the criminal justice system, in the spring of 2005. Monitoring during quarterly visits
NCRS	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Prisoner Handling	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Science & Technology	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Leadership & Direction	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Strategic Management	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Performance Management	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Human Resource Management	HMIC Personnel & Training will be conducting a focused inspection in October 2004 to be completed in January 2005
Professional Standards	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Race & Diversity	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Health & Safety Strategy	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Best Value	To be arranged (TBA) during 2004/05
Resource Management	Monitoring during quarterly visits
CDRPs	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Criminal Justice	Monitoring during quarterly visits
Consultation & Community Cohesion	Monitoring during quarterly visits

Planned Inspection Activity

In addition to the lists below, HMIC staff officers will check progress against Efficiency Plan and Managing Overtime targets every quarter.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2004/05	•	• Baseline Assessment review	• Pre – Inspection – Training & Personnel	• Formal Inspection- Training & Personnel • Forensic management inspection
2005/06	• TBA	• Baseline Assessment Review	• TBA	• TBA
2006/07	• TBA	• Baseline Assessment Review	• TBA	• TBA

KEY: Q1=Apr-Jun; Q2=Jul-Sep; Q3=Oct-Dec; Q4=Jan-Mar

Watching Briefs

To update the annual Baseline Assessment Review, all 23 functions will be briefly checked by HMIC staff officers during quarterly visits. As a guide the functions have been broken down into each quarter below, but this may vary due to other planned inspection activity.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
• All areas to be checked during quarterly visits	• All areas to be checked during quarterly visits • Baseline Assessment Review	• All areas to be checked during quarterly visits	• All areas to be checked during quarterly visits

Appendix 1

Performance table

Crime						
Performance Indicators	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	April-Dec 2002	April-Dec 2003	National 2002/3
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	70.9	82.3	84.5	63.7	56.7	113.2
% Total recorded crime detected	27.1	20.1	23.0	22.5	24.9	24.0
Dwelling Burglary per 1,000 households	15.8	14.5	16.2	12.1	10.8	20.2
% Dwelling Burglary detected	13.6	9.7	9.7	9.9	10.7	14.6
Robberies per 1,000 population	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.07	0.9	2.07
% Robberies detected	12.8	13.7	13.4	14.3	13.9	18.5
Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	9.8	10.7	9.2	6.8	5.6	18.7
% Vehicle crimes detected	9.0	6.3	7.5	7.1	8.1	4.32
Violent crime 1,000 population	14.4	17.5	19.2	14.6	14.4	19.0
% Violent crime detected	56.6	44.2	48.2	47.2	49.2	49.5
% Racially aggravated crime detected*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34.4 ¹
% Domestic violence repeat victimisation**	N/A	N/A	23.0	Annual Data		31.0 ²
% Repeat burglary victims***	N/A	N/A	N/A	Annual Data		10.0 ³
No. offenders charged, summons or cautioned for Class A drugs offences per 10,000 population	1.53	1.09	1.34****	Annual Data		2.81 ⁴

* Legislation not applicable in N Ireland

¹ Excludes Durham

** Only available for 2002/03

² Excludes Lincolnshire, Durham, MPS, Nottinghamshire, S Yorks and Warwickshire

*** Not available from PSNI systems

³ Excludes Durham, Merseyside, MPS, N Yorks and Notts

**** Differs from ADR figure (which currently only gives figures relating to supply offences)

⁴ Excludes Durham, Gloucestershire and S Yorks

Operational Performance						
Performance Indicators	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	April- Dec 2002	April- Dec 2003	National 2002/3
Road Traffic Collisions causing death/serious injury per 1,000 population	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.59 ⁵
PACE Stop & Search per 1,000 white population	N/A	1.7	4.3	3.3	N/A	12.2 ⁶
PACE Stop & Search per 1,000 minority ethnic population	N/A	6.7	7.4	4.8	N/A	31.9 ⁷
PACE % arrests from white Stop & Search	N/A	15.9	7.7	7.1	N/A	12.5 ⁸
PACE % arrests from minority ethnic Stop & Search	N/A	25.0	19.6	29.0	N/A	14.0 ⁹
Public order incidents per 1,000 population	N/A	N/A	N/A	Annual Data		53.9 ¹⁰
% 999 calls answered within local target	N/A	N/A	N/A	Annual Data		85.5 ¹¹

⁵ Excludes Avon and Somerset and Durham

⁶ Excludes Cheshire Dorset Durham Glos GMP Leicestershire Merseyside MPS N Yorks

⁷ Excludes Cheshire Dorset Durham Gloucestershire GMP Leicestershire Merseyside MPS Northumbria N Yorks

⁸ Excludes Durham

⁹ Excludes Durham

¹⁰ Excludes Durham and GMP

¹¹ Excludes Humberside

Corporate Health						
Performance Indicators	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	April- Dec 2002	April- Dec 2003	National 2002/3
% New appointees who are female	23.7	35.0	28.5	29.9	39.7	24.8 ¹²
No of sickness days per police officer	22.1	20.0	18	14.6	11.4	10.4
No of sickness days per police staff	16.8	15.7	16	11.8	10.8	11.7
Medical retirements per 1,000 police officers	22.2	14.4	15.2	24.6	14.2	6.18 ¹³
Medical retirements per 1,000 police staff	12.1	45.8	11.4	5.1	9.3	5.37
% Police Authority Buildings open to public and suitable for disabled persons	25	22	31	0 Sites ^{*****}	10 Sites ^{*****}	50.2 ¹⁴

¹² Excludes Surrey, Avon and Somerset, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Durham, Hants, Lancashire, N Wales, Nottinghamshire

¹³ Excludes Nottinghamshire

^{*****} Prior to 2002/03 this was measured on a per building basis but now is recorded per PSNI site which may incorporate more than one building. Hence April to December 2002 no PSNI sites were fully DDA compliant whereas by December 2003 10 sites were DDA compliant.

¹⁴ Excludes Durham, Gloucestershire and N Yorks.

Reassurance and Satisfaction				
Performance Indicators	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	National 2002/3
% Victims of Burglary satisfied with initial police response.	92%	85%	Not Done	86.9 ¹⁵
% Victims of Violent Crime satisfied with initial police response.	74%	73%	Not Done	74.0 ¹⁶
% Victims of Racist incidents satisfied with police action taken	N/A	N/A	Not Done	69.9 ¹⁷
% Of public satisfied with response to a 999 call.	90%	82%	Not Done	76.4 ¹⁸
% Of public satisfied with time taken to answer a 999 call.	N/A	N/A	Not Done	91.1 ¹⁹
% Road Traffic Collision Victims satisfied with service at scene of RTC.	91%	90%	Not Done	88.7 ²⁰
% Public satisfied with arrival time of police at immediate response incident.	N/A	N/A	Not Done	79.8 ²¹

¹⁵ Excludes Durham and W Mids

¹⁶ Excludes Durham and W Mids

¹⁷ Excludes Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Humberside, Sussex and W Mids

¹⁸ Excludes Durham

¹⁹ Excludes Durham

²⁰ Excludes Durham

²¹ Excludes Durham, Essex and MPS

Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ABC	Acceptable Behaviour Contract
ABC	Activity-based costing
ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ACPO IM Benchmarking Toolkit	The agreed means of assessing information management systems within forces.
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
APR	Annual Performance review
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order
BVR	Best Value Review
BCS	British Crime Survey
BPA	Black Police Association
‘Bradford’ System	A technique used in attendance management which ‘scores’ absence from work and sanctions apply when points reach a certain total – such as inability to apply for a specialist post
CC	Chief Constable
CCTV	Closed circuit television
CDO	Civilian Detention Officers
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Partnership
CENTREX	The national police training organisation
CJU	Criminal Justice Unit
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSB	Community Safety Branch

CSE	Crime Scene Examiner (known in some forces as SOCOs or CSIs)
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CSI	Crime Scene Investigator
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DCC	Deputy Chief Constable
DCU	District Command Unit
DPP	District Policing Partnership
Efficiency Plan	Government requires each force to make measurable efficiency gains of at least 2% per annum
FARM	Finance and Resource Management (a financial IT system)
FSN	Forensic Service of Northern Ireland
Gender Agenda	An ACPO/Home Office initiative to promote equal opportunities for women in the police service.
GPA	Gay Police Association
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HPDS	High Potential Development Scheme
HQ	Headquarters (usually refers to PSNI HQ Belfast)
IAG	Independent Advisory Group – a body advising a force or DCU on race and diversity issues.
ICF	Integrated competency framework – an amalgamation of the national competency framework and the national occupational standards framework.
IT	Information technology
JPM	Joint Performance Management (with CPS) of the quality and timeliness of prosecution files
Level 2 Criminality	Criminal activity that takes place on a cross-boundary basis.
LPT	Local Policing Team

NAO	National Audit Office
NCRS	National Crime Recording Standard
NIM	National Intelligence Model
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board ('The Policing Board')
NPP	National Policing Plan
NVIS	National Video Identification System
OHU	Occupational Health Unit
OOO	Office of the Oversight Commissioner
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
APR	Performance development review
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
PONI	Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
PNC	Police National Computer
PSA targets	Public Service Agreement Targets – these have been agreed between Government departments and HM Treasury. Police forces are expected to make a significant contribution to achieving several of these targets.
PSD	Professional Standards Department
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSU	Police Standards Unit
PPAF	Police Performance Assessment Framework
RTC	Road Traffic Collision
Sanction detections	Offences that are detected by way of charge, summons, caution, fixed penalty for disorder or offences admitted on a signed TIC schedule.
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer

SLA	Service Level Agreements
SLDP	Senior Leadership Development Programme
SOB	Special Operations Branch
SOCITM	Society of IT managers
SOCO	Scenes of Crime Officer
TCG	Tasking and Co-ordinating Group
TIC	Offence taken into consideration when admitted in court
Volume Crime	Not a technical term but normally refers to high incidence vehicle crime, burglary and in some areas robbery
VEM	Visible Ethnic Minority

