

**ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**PAPER NO: AP15/33**

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
16 JUNE 2015**

**SUBJECT: HMIC CRIME DATA INTEGRITY REVIEW 2013/14**

**SUMMARY:**

1. On 24 October 2014 the Accountability and Performance Panel received a report (AP14/70) detailing the background to the HMIC Inspection of Crime Data Integrity.
2. The recording arrangements were reviewed under three specific headings, namely Leadership and Governance, Systems and Processes and People and Skills. These were outlined in the main body of the report.
3. The report detailed the HMIC recommendations and the actions to be taken by the Constabulary immediately, after three months and after six months. A further national report containing additional recommendations was received in October 2014. Many recommendations, however, duplicated the local actions and these were also reported against in the paper to the Accountability and Performance Panel.
4. Subsequent updates were provided to the Accountability and Performance Panel on 18 December 2014 (verbal update) and 24 February 2015 (Paper AP15/10).
5. This report provides a further update on the actions to be taken immediately, after three months and after six months. The report shows where actions have been completed, with updates where applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to support the work undertaken in respect of the HMIC Inspection of Crime and Data Integrity, and note the establishment of the Crime Data Integrity Group, together with the introduction of the Crime Integrity Group (incident auditing team).

## **DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In the 2013/14 inspection programme, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspected all forces in respect of crime and data integrity. The central question was:

"To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?"

1.2 The inspection involved:

- An examination of a small representative sample of data from force crime and incident recording systems, asking the basic compliance question 'If a crime has occurred has it been recorded?'
- A dip sample of out-of-court disposals (Cautions, Penalty Notices, Cannabis warnings and Community Resolutions).
- A review of crime cancellation (no-crime) decisions for rape, robbery and violence.
- An assessment of local crime recording arrangements.
- A peer review of the audit findings.

1.3 The recording arrangements were reviewed under three specific headings, namely Leadership and Governance, Systems and Processes and People and Skills. These are outlined further below.

1.4 A taskforce, known as the Crime Data Integrity Group (CDI), had already been established to:-

- Ensure the public can have confidence in the accuracy of police recorded crime data;
- Ensure that police leaders are effective in their oversight and assurance of crime data held by Suffolk Constabulary;
- Ensure that victims are served well by Suffolk Constabulary when crime recording decisions are made;
- Ensure that out of court disposals are the right ones for victims, offenders and the wider public.

1.5 The Terms of Reference for the CDI Group are attached at Appendix A.

### **2. HMIC FINDINGS: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

2.1 The report acknowledged that Chief Officers support crime data integrity and that action and decisions are clearly victim focused. Policies and procedures were considered consistent with the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS).

2.2 The report found the monthly Force NCRS audit is currently directed principally to high risk crime and incident types recorded within the Crime Information System (CIS) and the Force incident recording system (STORM). Results are reported directly to force performance meetings and circulated widely with actions directed at

the managers responsible. This was identified as good practice, however the inclusion of a more varied sample including other input systems and other themes could inform and improve integrity. Equally, quality assurance within the Contact and Control Room (CCR) could be reviewed to encompass more varied themes.

### **3. HMIC FINDINGS: SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

- 3.1 The two principal systems reviewed for data accuracy were the STORM incident recording system and the Case Administration Tracking System (CATS) used for recording incidents concerning children and vulnerable persons.
- 3.2 Auditing of STORM indicated that a small number of incidents had not been recorded as crimes. In general, correct police action had been taken in the circumstances and the needs and wishes of the victim were the prime consideration. However, HMIC reported that there was a basic misunderstanding of the administrative rules requiring the completion of a crime report. There was no evidence to indicate any failure to record being driven by performance pressures.
- 3.3 HMIC acknowledged that the Force has a strong focus towards victims of crime, but felt on occasion that the Force had referred cases for partner agency investigation, and sometimes overlooked the obligation to record the matter as a crime. HMIC reported that this was leading to an approach of 'investigating to record'.
- 3.4 HMIC considered that staff used out-of-court disposals responsibly, with a bespoke pro-forma checklist guiding staff to correct disposal decisions. It was identified that in the case of Community Resolutions the agreed outcome was not necessarily always meaningful and appropriate.
- 3.5 In respect of "no-crimes"<sup>1</sup> (cancelled crimes), HMIC identified errors where the threshold required for Additional Verifiable Information (AVI) had not been met.
- 3.6 Concern was expressed in relation to rape offences. HMIC reported that they inspected six rape investigations and four of these had not been recorded as crimes. Investigations have been carried out in relation to all these reports. HMIC did not express any concerns about the level or appropriateness of these, but reported that these should have been recorded as crimes. HMIC found this to be further evidence of 'investigating to record' rather than recording upon first report.

### **4. HMIC FINDINGS: PEOPLE AND SKILLS**

- 4.1 Staff within specialist investigation departments were found to have appropriate knowledge of NCRS. HMIC reported that operational staff appreciate that the needs of the victim are essential to all crime investigation decisions, but that they would benefit from further awareness training in the aspect of administrative recording of Home Office Counting Rules (HO CR) and National Crime Recording Standards.
- 4.2 Dedicated Decision Makers<sup>2</sup> (DDM's) likewise should be provided with additional guidance to address the rules, specifically in relation to Additional Verifiable Information.
- 4.3 The Force Crime Registrar (FCR) conducts a monthly audit commensurate with the resources available and reports direct to the force lead on a monthly basis. The HMIC identified that audits should encompass more varied themes to inform and

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<sup>1</sup> "No-crime" is the status given to a crime after it has been fully evidenced that no crime took place – from 01/04/2015 referred to as cancelled or transferred crimes.

<sup>2</sup> "DDM" is an identified officer authorised by ACC to cancel a crime record or reclassify the crime type already recorded.

improve integrity. It was noted, however, that there is little resilience and limited resources within the FCR section.

- 4.4 The assessment of the recording arrangements form the basis of a number of recommendations that the Constabulary is expected to implement within set periods of time.
- 4.5 These recommendations are detailed below, showing where these are complete and with updates where applicable.

## **5. HMIC CRIME DATA INTEGRITY REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS (JUNE 2015)**

- 5.1 This section sets out the points which required action, immediately, within three months and within six months of the publication of the report (28/08/2014) together with action that has been taken.
- 5.2 Remedial work has been taken in respect of all recommendations and it would be reasonable to say that all have been satisfactorily addressed and could be considered as completed, although there is further work continuing (e.g. on-going training and further refinement of audit/supervisory functions) to enhance the improvements already made.

### Immediately

- 5.3 *The Force should review where and with whom responsibility for day to day oversight of the application of, and compliance with, Home Office Counting Rules (HOOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) is held; and ensure that this is reflected in relevant policy and guidance and communicated to staff.*

### **COMPLETE - update**

- 5.4 Dedicated Decision Makers' (DDM) responsibilities have been reviewed and reduced to specified posts in respect of no-crimes and reclassifications. Only certain Detective Inspector posts may cancel crimes (no-crime) and reclassifications have been restricted to Detective Inspector and Crime Allocators only. In accordance with Home Office guidance amendments (1<sup>st</sup> April 2015), Detective Inspectors can only cancel crimes where they are independent of the investigation. Formal procedure has been adopted and this is included within the policy document.
- 5.5 *The Force should ensure that reports recorded separately on other force systems (e.g., those used by the public protection teams) are recorded as crimes. Special attention should be directed toward the CATS database and those reports which involve vulnerable adults and children. The Force should put in place proportionate and effective audit arrangements through the FCR to assure itself that reports held on these systems are properly recorded as crimes.*

### **COMPLETE - update**

- 5.6 A further, recent, initiative has been adopted, for subsequent evaluation: the introduction of a Crime Integrity Group (CIG). This is a small group of dedicated and experienced police officers and staff who review a specific selection of 'high-risk' 'STORM' incidents, together with all CATS and a sample of E-CINS records on a daily basis, addressing all issues with the originator. The effectiveness of the Group will be subject of future evaluation to be completed by 10 June 2015. This audit compliments the Crime Registrar's audit and the FCR audit provides a degree of quality assurance to the CIG.
- 5.7 *The Force should address the inaccuracy of its no-criming decisions. It should provide guidance to all officers and staff who are engaged in requesting or making*

*no-crime decisions which clearly describes the standard of additional verifiable information required in order to authorise a no-crime in accordance with the NCRS. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure effective compliance with the standard.*

**COMPLETE - update**

- 5.8 DDM guidance notes have been amended to re-emphasise Additional Verifiable Information (AVI) criteria, and re-circulated, with endorsement by Detective Superintendent County Policing Command, to all DDM's responsible for no-crimes and those responsible for reclassification.
- 5.9 One-to-one awareness input is on-going and delivered by the FCR to all new DDM posts, together with all Crime Allocator posts. This is supported by refresher training for current post holders with an updated DDM guidance package distributed to all Detective Inspectors and Detective Sergeants. Regular audit feedback is also provided.
- 5.10 Further input has been provided by FCR at Detective Inspectors' quarterly meetings together with force-wide detective training days.
- 5.11 *The Force should ensure that its crime recording policy is compliant with HOCR and NCRS. In particular, the Force should ensure its guidance on dealing with reports of rape clearly specifies the point at which, and conditions in which, a report of rape should be recorded as a crime. In addition there should be clear communication to officers and staff:*
- *to inform them of the crime recording policy and the expectation that they adhere to it*
  - *to stop any working practices which may amount to a policy of 'investigate-to-record'; and*
  - *to reinforce the unequivocal message that ethical crime recording and compliance with the NCRS is required irrespective of the effect this might have on force performance.*

**COMPLETE AND TRAINING ONGOING - update**

- 5.12 A news item has been circulated by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) advising all staff of the above bullet points. Other senior staff also endorsed NCRS and ethical crime recording.
- 5.13 A briefing note has been prepared on HMIC recommendations and delivery to CPC supervisors.
- 5.14 Various guidance notes, bullet-point briefing notes, flow charts and local briefings have been circulated to all staff regarding victim perception, third party reporting, timeliness of submission (including Rape offences) and ethical crime recording in general.
- 5.15 HOCR amendments (April 2015) have introduced a new method to record unconfirmed rape allegations. This has necessitated the circulation of force guidelines and additional crime training to ensure full rape recording compliance.
- 5.16 A joint training programme has been developed with Norfolk Constabulary in the form of an online training package. It contains a visual introduction by both ACCs responsible for Crime Data Integrity. The training package is currently being completed by all staff who have any responsibility for crime recording and investigation.
- 5.17 A collaborative replacement aide memoir has been delivered, reaffirming and emphasising the need to eliminate any 'investigate to record' approach. The aide

memoir was approved by HOCR and includes an endorsement from both Chief Officers.

- 5.18 An NCRS Training DVD is linked to the online training package and intranet.
- 5.19 The FCR has provided training updates to all CPC crime management staff and the CIG are currently providing cascaded training (via first-line supervisors) to all operational staff.
- 5.20 The amendment of the HOCR in April 2015 included additional force-wide guidance in respect of timeliness of recording, the ready acceptance of victim perception and the suitability of professional or responsible third parties to be considered as providing that perception on behalf of the victim. This has been included within the above training and is especially emphasised within the personal training sessions.

#### Within Three Months

- 5.21 *The Force should communicate the availability of the confidential reporting line to staff again, emphasising that it is indeed confidential and can be used for all matters of concern, including those relating to crime data integrity.*

**COMPLETE – The reporting line was reviewed and is used regularly. No evidence was found of any significant mistrust of the line by officers or staff.**

- 5.22 *The Force should introduce a structured and proportionate quality assurance process by supervisors within the force control room. This should be undertaken on a consistent basis across all teams, include a check of compliance with the NCRS and, where appropriate, feed into the development of professional practice and continuous improvement within the force control room.*

**COMPLETE BUT SUSPENDED - update**

- 5.23 The Constabulary's Command & Control system has been adapted to include a function to record the live time audit of incidents. This will also assist in monitoring consistency across the CCR teams. Training for control room supervisors and inspectors has been delivered, together with enhanced NCRS input from FCR. However, implementation has been delayed whilst the function is being used to evidence the CIG full audit process (audits within the CCR would, at present, only duplicate those being conducted by CIG).
- 5.24 *The Force should review its assessment of the risks associated with crime data integrity and the apparent under-recording of crime, taking the necessary steps to improve the accuracy of crime recording. Risks should be included in, and monitored through, the force risk register.*

**COMPLETE – The issue was addressed by an immediate entry in the Force Risk Register.**

- 5.25 *The Force should review its policy and practice for dealing with reports of making off without payment, ensuring that it is compliant with the HOCR and the NCRS, and that staff responsible for making crime-recording decisions on these offences are aware of the requirements to work within these policy guidelines.*

**COMPLETE – The Home Office has reviewed the make-off without payment policy. Some grammatical changes were made to clarify the issue of 'record to investigate', otherwise the policy was considered fit for purpose.**

- 5.26 *The Force should introduce a structured regular audit plan and ensure the Force Crime Registrar (FCR) has sufficient resources and skills to carry out a proportionate and effective audit programme that balances the cost of the checking process with the need to improve the accuracy of crime recording. This should include the capacity*

*to respond to emerging issues and to re-visit and test the effectiveness of changes made to respond to identified shortcomings.*

**COMPLETE – update**

- 5.27 The audit programme has been enhanced and now includes additional material from the CATS system, E-Cins sample and inclusion of the STORM category of 'NCRS Exempt Crime
- 5.28 The CCR themed audit will also inform the FCR audit of issues or incidents which will benefit from further attention
- 5.29 The current CIG incident audits greatly compliment the NCRS audit, the results are reported direct to CDI Group, and as a result the NCRS audit is showing dramatic improvement with overall compliance rates.

Within Six Months

- 5.30 *The Force should review the roles, responsibilities and number of designated decision makers in the force so as to secure a consistent application of the NCRS in respect of no-crime decisions, and in so doing ensure the force should make sure designated decision-makers are independent of investigations.*

**COMPLETE - update**

- 5.31 As per the recommendation at 5.3, a paper was prepared by Detective Superintendent, CPC, and accepted by the CDI Group. There has been an appreciable reduction in the number of officers authorised to perform some DDM duties and these duties can only be performed for crimes where the DDM is independent of the instigation. The cancellation of rapes has also been reviewed and only the senior officer in charge of crime investigation, in consultation with the FCR may now authorise.
- 5.32 *The Force should establish and begin operation of an adequate system of training in crime-recording for all police officers and police staff who are responsible for making crime-recording decisions, and ensure those who require such training receive it as soon as reasonably practicable.*

**COMPLETE - update**

- 5.33 As per the recommendation at 5.11, a complete review of operational officer training has been completed and a Suffolk/Norfolk online training package has been prepared, together with a comprehensive aide memoir and a NCRS Training DVD. It is anticipated all online training will be completed within the next six months. Additional training input is also being provided to all operational staff, by both personal presentation and cascade training.
- 5.34 Additional awareness training to re-emphasise NCRS values and HOCR technical rules has, and is, being reviewed for staff with specialist functions and, where appropriate current guidelines have been updated e.g. Crime Allocators, CCR supervisors, Crime Trainers, Vulnerable People (PVP) supervisors and all DDM's, including a presentation to all CCR supervisors in January and Detective Inspectors in March 2015.

Additional HMIC National Recommendations

- 5.35 *In cases of out-of-court disposals where there is a victim, they consult the victim before making the decision to issue or effect the disposal, and make a record that they have done so.*

5.36 *On every occasion when the making of an out-of-court disposal is under consideration, the previous offending history of the offender is checked to ensure the offender is eligible for the disposal in question, and make a record that this has been done.*

**BOTH PARTIALLY COMPLETE - update**

5.37 Checklists have been reviewed and amended, and have been re-launched in respect of Caution, Cannabis Warning, Penalty Notices and Taken Into Consideration (TIC<sup>3</sup>) outcomes. A new checklist has also been developed for Community Resolutions. The launch of this particular checklist has been delayed slightly awaiting clarification of policy but is being actively progressed. All these forms require compliance questions to be addressed by the officer and then endorsed by a supervisor.

5.38 *Forces should establish and begin operation of sound arrangements for the conferment upon force crime registrars of sufficient independence and authority, so as to ensure that high standards of adherence to the HOCA and NCRS are attained and maintained. In particular, such arrangements should provide that force crime registrars:*

- a) *report directly to the deputy chief constable*
- b) *have direct access to the chief constable*
- c) *are required periodically to report to the chief constable on crime-recording in the Force.*

**COMPLETE – update**

5.39 The Force Crime Registrar is the final arbiter in respect of crime recording and crime resolution. He has full support of and has direct and regular access to the Chief Officer responsible for Data Quality. Audit issues are addressed via Crime Data Integrity Group and the CPC Performance Meeting – both chaired by Chief Officers. The monthly audit is copied personally to all senior staff including the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) together with full report summary. A presentation of current audit processes was recently made to the DCC. Current reporting procedure is considered efficient and satisfactory.

**6. MONTHLY AUDIT REPORT**

6.1 The basic compliance test used by HMIC within their review for the incident-to-crime conversion was ‘how many crimes should have been recorded and how many actually were? The monthly audit has adopted the same criteria. The various incident types that are audited are combined and an overall compliance figure is presented. The audit summary provides an overall compliance comparison with previous months.

TOTAL – Incident review April 2015			% of crimes recorded correctly				
Incidents Reviewed	Crimes Identified	Crimes Recorded	December	January	February	March	April
370	134	124	89%	80%	80%	90%	93%

<sup>3</sup> TIC's are crimes that are not charged to court and do not attract an additional penalty but are placed before the court when final sentencing is being considered.

## **7. ESSEX POLICE PEER REVIEW**

- 7.1 In addition to internal audits, Suffolk Constabulary commissioned an independent peer review by Essex Police in February 2015 to provide reassurance of the integrity and accuracy of crime recording.
- 7.2 The audit reviewed NCRS compliance 'across the board'. Three hundred sequential incidents were reviewed and again the question was 'how many crime should have been recorded and how many actually were'? The review included every incidents recorded on the Storm system during the relevant period, not just high-risk (and invariably high compliance) incident types but also those where the NCRS interpretation may be more subjective.
- 7.3 The resulting overall NCRS compliance was 74.5%. Most non-compliance, as anticipated, was identified within either the volume crime areas or minor public order.
- 7.4 The CIG was introduced in order to improve the compliance level, by education – increased awareness training and referral of audit issues back to the officer/staff member dealing plus their supervisor. The CIG is primarily targeted at the volume areas together with the high-risk area of the Case Administration Tracking System.
- 7.5 A further review by Essex Police is due in June 2015. The review will mirror the previous audit in all the selection criteria and will enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of the CIG initiative and the enhanced awareness training.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None

## **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISK**

- 9.1 The HMIC recommendations, and Constabulary actions to be taken immediately, within three months and six months, are detailed in the main body of the report.

<b>ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)</b>	<b>PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'</b>
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	NO
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	NO
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	YES
Have human resource implications been considered?	YES
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	YES
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	YES
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	YES
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES