

Corporate Governance Committee

Thursday, 17 June 2010

Report of the Chief Constable

4b INFORMATION ITEM
THE NATIONAL CRIME RECORDING STANDARDS QUARTERLY AUDIT
REPORT - JANUARY TO MARCH 2010

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Members of the quarterly results of the Force National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) data and detection audits.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 In accordance with the Home Office guidelines on NCRS Audit procedures and recommendations, this report provides a concise indication of performance in specific categories of crime incidents and records. The audits are conducted centrally by the Crime Registrar and Audit staff on a forcewide level. The results will be illustrated by the inclusion of data charts that indicate areas of success and those requiring attention. Charts for the period January to March 2010 and the previous period, October to December 2009, are contained in **Annex A and B**. Detection details are shown in **Annex C and D**. A chart showing the number of samples audited for categories that fall below the standard is shown at **Annex E**. Areas that are found to be below the set standard are highlighted and form part of recommendations documents. The documents are subsequently forwarded to respective divisions and departments with a request for action plans to be completed and returned to the Crime Registrar.

2.2 In the data audit, two sections of data are now displayed as opposed to three in previous audits, as detailed later in this report. Each of the sections is divided into individual categories. In the detections audit, three categories are examined for accurate means of disposal. One data indicator is used. The purpose of a central audit is to ensure that compliance with the NCRS guidelines is rigorously enforced throughout the organisation. The Force audits are designed to comply, where possible, with the NCRS Audit Manual of Guidance and Force Crime Audit Policy.

2.3 Measurement of data integrity is in accordance with the HMIC colour codes as follows:-

GREEN	=	EXCELLENT	95% and above.
YELLOW	=	GOOD	90-94.9%
AMBER	=	FAIR	80-89.9%
RED	=	POOR	below 80%

- 2.4 At the Force National Crime Recording Standard Steering Group meeting on 24 April 2007, it was agreed that the acceptable standard of compliance would be set at 90%. This means that any category that falls below the standard and is shown in the RED or AMBER areas, automatically qualifies for remedial attention by way of action plans.
- 2.5 In accordance with the guidelines on data quality, three areas are subject to data audits:-

Investigation 1

- 2.6 Covers incidents that are reported as crimes and input onto the Command and Control system. Non compliance in this area carries a risk to data quality and public confidence.
- 2.7 Incidents reported as such must be closed with a crime reference number and an appropriate crime closure code. In the event of a report of crime not being confirmed, an explanation must be present on the incident report indicating why a crime record was not generated. Audit samples have been increased owing to this area being identified as a risk area. To ensure accuracy in the audit, confidence intervals have been introduced to this section. Please refer to **Annex A and B** for further details and quantities sampled.

Investigation 2

- 2.7 This covers all incidents reported that have been closed on a crime code irrespective of the initial opening code. All incidents closed in this manner must have a crime reference number displayed on the incident report. The crime record must be the correct classification for the offence reported. Owing to previous consistency in compliance it was agreed to audit this area on a lesser level. This is to enable a greater audit of quantities in Investigation 1.
- 2.8 It was acknowledged, however, there is an element of risk to the Force by removing Investigation 2 in the current format. Although there may be a crime number displayed in the incident this does not mean that a crime has been recorded within the crime system. Neither will there be a check on the crime recording system to establish if the crime has been recorded within the 72-hour period. The Crime Auditor will still review all incidents closed with a crime category on a summary view basis to check if a crime number has been entered on the log of all closed crime incidents. There will also be frequent summary checks on incidents over the 72-hour rule, to ensure there is no significant increase in their numbers. However, the Crime Registrar is of the opinion that this is acceptable, in order to concentrate on the greater risk involved with Investigation 1.

Classification of Crime Records

- 2.9 Crime records are audited to confirm the correct Home Office classification code has been used to record the crime. This is a potential risk area as correct classification ensures quality of data supplied to the Home Office is accurate. Overall the area is consistently compliant with NCRS. Samples are eighty per six categories of crime, where possible.

Additional Data Audits

- 2.10 No additional audits were carried out in this period.

Audit Findings January to March 2010

- 2.11 Force control rooms and divisional crime management units have joint responsibility for investigation 1 and 2 compliance. Please refer to **Annex A and B** for findings.

Investigation 1

- 2.12 Overall the Force compliance rate was 96.6%. All Divisions were above the compliance level of 90%. The results in comparison with the previous audit (97.8%) show a slight decline overall. Two areas that require attention are hate crime on D division, and malicious communications on the former A Division. Recommendations have been sent out and the result of action plans will be commented on in the April to June audit. Please see **Annex A & B**.

Investigation 1 – Additional Audits

- 2.13 No additional audits were carried out during the audit period.

Investigation 2

- 2.14 All divisions indicated overall compliance rates of 100% from a total of 10,470 records.

Classification of Crime

- 2.15 Divisional Crime Management Units have overall responsibility for the correct classification of crime. Overall, all divisions were above the 90% compliance rate.
- 2.16 An audit has been conducted of the Police CARE database which deals with referrals concerning offences committed against children. The reports are dealt with by the Child Central Referral Unit. This audit is conducted at Force level. An excellent showing of 95.% compliance has been achieved in this quarter.

Audit of Detection Methods

2.17 The areas covered are Cautions, Penalty Notice offences, Cannabis Warnings,. Please see **Annex C and D** for chart details.

Cautions

2.18 A total of 62 files were audited for compliance with Home Office guidelines. Overall 94% compliance was found which was an improvement on the previous audit (88.75%). However, a recurring problem appears to be on caution Form 234 part 2, which involves gravity scores. The indication was that the scores were not shown to have been taken into consideration when deciding on the disposal. Although numbers were minor, it is an area that requires attention by all divisions. Appropriate action has been taken and guidance has been circulated force wide.

Penalty Notice Offences

2.19 A total of 54 files were available for audit. The inspection was conducted in accordance with Home Office guidelines. Overall compliance rates were excellent. Please see **Annex C**.

Cannabis Formal Warnings

2.20 A total of 33 files were available for audit, overall compliance with the Home Office guidelines was again excellent.

Offences Taken into Consideration (TIC)

2.21 The bi-annual audit of TICs was carried out on 11 available file. All files were found to be compliant with guidelines.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That members note the contents of the report.

Attachments: Annexes A to E