

6 Managing the Intelligence

'Intelligence is the product of information which has been taken from its raw state, processed, refined and evaluated. It is information designed for action.'

Metropolitan Police Service Intelligence Unit Manual 1999



Introduction

- 6.1 The police service has long recognised the vital contribution of intelligence in the fight against crime and the last decade in particular has brought the use of intelligence firmly into the mainstream of policing.
- 6.2 There have been a number of studies of policing highlighting the importance of using intelligence methods. Amongst them the HMIC and the Audit Commission reports in 1996, 'Tackling Crime Effectively – Management Handbook (volume 2)' and 'Tackling Patrol Effectively', each emphasising the importance of intelligence in fighting serious and volume crime.
- 6.3 UFSE emphasises the scientific support function in support of intelligence processes. Effective intelligence should be established from a multitude of sources, all of which make a contribution to the whole.
- 6.4 In 1997 HMIC conducted a Thematic Inspection and published a document entitled 'Policing with Intelligence'. This document, a guide to good practice, encouraged forces to be more proactive in their use of intelligence.
- 6.5 'Policing with Intelligence' identified a number of key themes, some of which are similar to those identified during this inspection:
 - ❑ Leadership – policy owned and driven from the top.
 - ❑ Strategy – published and effectively marketed.
 - ❑ Structures – integrated and facilitating the processes.

Leadership

- 6.6 A consistent theme across this and other thematic inspections is the vital role of leadership. Key aspects of translating leadership into action in the context of intelligence are ownership, drive and communication.

- 6.7 The inspection found that forces where leadership on intelligence systems was purposeful and visible were precisely the forces where the majority of staff had a superior understanding of the importance of intelligence and their roles in relation to it.
- 6.8 In Kent, the Chief Constable has developed an intelligence led policing model. It was evident that this model is understood by all. In the West Midlands Police the importance of scientific support in the intelligence process is recognised by strategically placing scientific support in the intelligence unit, with the SSM reporting to the Head of Intelligence.
- 6.9 In the other forces visited there was little evidence of a clear understanding of the importance of scientific support to intelligence and vice versa. Whilst all the chief officers seen spoke of the virtues of the links between scientific support and intelligence, those links were difficult to find at operational level.

Strategy

- 6.10 All forces in England and Wales were asked to provide copies of their intelligence strategies or other relevant documentation relating to such strategies. Of the 26 forces that provided documentation relating to intelligence, it was disappointing to note that only one contained reference to forensic support in any detail and only eight contained even passing reference. There was little acknowledgement of the value of forensic evidence and the contribution that scientific support can make to the development of intelligence. Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned to find that the advice contained in 'Policing with Intelligence' seems not to have been widely followed.

Structures

- 6.11 Two of the forces visited had a strong intelligence ethos and one of them placed scientific support in the force intelligence unit. It is clear that, where the SSM is located as part of the intelligence unit, a very powerful message is sent to the whole force to reinforce the links between scientific support and intelligence. Forces differ, and organisationally this may not be possible everywhere and so no universal template is offered here. What is clear is that, whatever the structure, clear links between the SSM and the intelligence function need to be established and nurtured.
- 6.12 In some of the forces visited it was found that intelligence was a matter primarily left to BCUs with little guidance coming from HQ as to how processes should be structured. This meant that intelligence and its use

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was very localised, with cross border collaboration not fully developed. If this is true of intelligence generally it is of course also true of intelligence relating to forensic science.

- 6.13 The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) has recently developed a national intelligence model which has been promulgated to forces and gives very clear guidance on intelligence matters. The model identifies three levels of intelligence, dealing with serious and organised crime, cross border and local, i.e. force level. The model identifies different sources of intelligence including forensic science and gives advice on analysis and the need for tasking and co-ordination. The importance of forensic science and scientific support to intelligence is, therefore, well documented.
- 6.14 Her Majesty's Inspector urges chief officers to review how the NCIS intelligence model has been established within their force and the impact that it has made on forensic science intelligence.

Scene of Crime Officers as Investigators

- 6.15 The role of the SOCO and the impact that scientific support can have in relation to the gathering and use of intelligence should not be underestimated and is detailed in UFSE.
- 6.16 Respondents to the joint ACPO/HMIC/FSS audit conducted during the course of this inspection indicate that the notion of the SOCO as investigator is well understood within forces. Evidence from the inspection visits shows clearly, however, that there is a gap between perception and reality. Some 36 forces, including five of those visited, viewed the provision of intelligence as a core role of the SOCO. Yet in four of these five forces it was found that SOCO were out of the intelligence loop. They rarely if ever submitted intelligence to intelligence units; their scene reports were often not accessed either by officers investigating or by intelligence units; one intelligence officer said,
- 'it is not my job to look at scene reports'.*
- 6.17 Two of the forces visited responded to the audit indicating that systems were in place to optimise intelligence from the scientific support effort. Visits to these forces showed the contrary to be true. Whilst general intelligence systems were in place and senior officers insisted that SOCOs were an integral part of the intelligence gathering process, Her Majesty's Inspector was unable to find evidence to support this contention.

- 6.18 During the course of this inspection it was found in five of the six forces visited that the intelligence opportunities that SOCOs could provide were not understood and were consequently missed. Indeed the role of SOCO was seen to be more akin to the evidence gatherer than that of investigator. This is a perception held by some SOCOs and others. One intelligence officer said 'SOCO's are specialised in their role and what they consider their roles are, they do not speak to the victims.'
- 6.19 It is difficult to imagine that SOCOs do not speak to victims. What needs to be developed is an understanding that they should listen to what victims and others say and ensure that relevant information is fed to the intelligence desk. Intelligence officers should understand that all staff are a valuable resource able to contribute to the pool of intelligence.
- 6.20 UFSE highlights the implications of the change in the role of the SOCO from evidence gatherer to investigator (see paragraphs 1.4 and 1.37). These are:
- ❑ SOCOs must understand the importance of their role as investigator and that gathering intelligence is a core role.
 - ❑ All staff must see and value the SOCO as an investigator.
 - ❑ Scientific Support Department must be brought into the intelligence loop.
 - ❑ Structures must be in place to support the intelligence gathering process.
- 6.21 The inspection also found that the level of forensic awareness among intelligence officers was very poor with officers being unaware of UFSE and its recommendations. At BCU level only rarely did SOCOs regularly attend tasking meetings. In one force visited the attendance of SOCOs at tasking meetings was for what could be considered housekeeping roles, e.g. costing of submissions, and did not reflect the valuable contribution that these officers could make to the tasking process. This perception of the value of the SOCO is of concern.
- 6.22 The inspection revealed the rarity of investigators using the information provided by SOCO. There were a number of reasons for this:
- ❑ The quality of scene examination reports completed by SOCO was variable, confined often to only a description of marks found or of point of entry.
 - ❑ Information from scene examination reports not entered on crime information or recording systems in a timely manner. Some forces were taking several weeks for this important information to be included in crime systems.
 - ❑ Scene examination reports not being accessed by investigators.
 - ❑ Very few formal links exist between SOCOs and investigators, though some informal links were found, generally where individuals themselves ensured that meetings between parties did occur.

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6.23 These issues identify a number of significant opportunities lost to intelligence gathering. In general, SOCO are able to obtain much more information from scenes than discussed above, e.g.:

- SOCOs often arrive at a crime scene after the investigating officer has left and can frequently be furnished by the victim with further information relevant to the investigation.
- SOCOs are able to link scenes by recognition of methods used by individual criminals.

To realise its value this information should be captured and made available for analysis quickly with results disseminated for action as required. Again close links between SOCOs, detectives and uniform staff is vital.

6.24 It is apparent that SOCOs see themselves as being outside the intelligence loop, with little of value to add to the investigative process. There is a need to develop the role of the SOCO in a way that ensures that they regard themselves as investigators, contributing in every way to investigations. Her Majesty's Inspector stresses the importance of forces having structures in place to ensure that SOCOs are an integral part of the intelligence gathering and tasking process.

Point of Note

Inter-force Co-operation Operation 'Liberal' was an initiative that focussed on travelling criminals who were targeting elderly people. The forces involved were Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and West Midlands. Forensic and fingerprint intelligence were pooled to maximise their effects. Some forces experienced significant results from this operation.

Point of Note

The West Midlands Police SICAR system is located in the force intelligence bureau and run by an intelligence analyst who is trained in the use of SICAR. This allows instant access and reference to other intelligence using the Forensic Lead Intelligence System (FLINTS).

Targeting the Scientific Effort

6.25 The SOCO is a highly trained resource whose time is not limitless. The use of forensic evidence is expensive. It may not be practical for SOCOs to visit the scenes of all crime. Decisions have to be made as to which scenes are likely to yield most in terms of evidence or intelligence. Indeed decisions have to be made based upon which crimes are felt to be the highest priority. Full analysis of intelligence and crime patterns will often yield important information that can help in the tasking of SOCOs.

6.26 Scene attendance policy was discussed in Chapter 1. Little evidence was, however, found during the inspection to indicate that targeting the attendance of SOCOs by using intelligence is widespread practice. However, there are pockets of activity where some BCUs are attempting to analyse intelligence in order to task SOCOs. At force level the West Midlands Police recently collaborated with neighbouring forces to target the use of scientific support on a series of distraction burglaries. This proved to be successful where other methods had failed.

6.27 ACPO recognises that there are opportunities to generate intelligence through footwear examination systems and has devised a model to ensure the integration of such intelligence. Her Majesty's Inspector supports this view and is concerned to find that only 54% of respondents to a recent survey had any linkage between footwear systems and intelligence systems.¹

¹ ACPO Footwear User Group Survey. From minutes of meeting of National Conference of Scientific Support 20/21 May 1999.

Toolmarks

- 6.28 As with footwear evidence, toolmark evidence also presents intelligence opportunities. Volume crime offenders, especially burglary offenders, use a variety of means to gain access to the property they intend to steal from. Frequently this entry is by force using any of a range of commonly acquired tools.
- 6.29 Tools can leave behind distinctive marks. This presents another avenue of opportunity for the police service to obtain intelligence and evidence at crime scenes from commonly encountered forensic evidence. Toolmarks can be used as the means of provisionally linking scenes, and after expert examination, of providing a conclusive evidential link.
- 6.30 Police use of this type of forensic evidence has remained relatively low. Whilst all SOCOs are trained in the recovery of tools marks, they do so more in the hopeful expectation that an investigating officer might locate the tool that was used and ask for a comparison, than for the compilation of a scene mark database for intelligence purposes.
- 6.31 The development of digital camera technology is providing new opportunities within scientific support for capturing toolmarks. Using such technology alongside traditional recovery methods brings the possibility of compiling local databases and possibly even a national database of toolmarks left at scenes. These could be used to establish scene links enabling the maximum benefit to be obtained from this form of evidence.

Forensic Lead Intelligence System (FLINTS)

- 6.32 FLINTS is a computer-based package developed by the West Midlands Police to assist in the collation of evidence types in order to link suspects with scenes. FLINTS has the capacity to link suspects with crimes that otherwise may not have been linked, e.g. linking chequebook evidence from frauds with that from vehicle crime.
- 6.33 Such linkage is possible provided all crimes are entered onto the database and then firm evidence, e.g. DNA identification, fingerprint identification or footprint information, is entered onto the system. Some successes have already been achieved and there is real potential for this system to be developed, possibly nationwide, in the future. Hard evidence is recorded on FLINTS and this provides the opportunity to link it to intelligence.



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6.34 As FLINTS is developed it should be possible to utilise it to help identify series of offences which can then help to inform the tasking process. Potentially this database provides an exciting tool for crime investigation but it must be supported by systems to ensure that all available evidence is recovered for inclusion on it.

Conclusion

6.35 Guidance to forces on how forensic science can contribute to good intelligence gathering is contained in a number of documents produced over the last few years. Regrettably this inspection has found that much of the guidance has not been followed.

6.36 Few forces have an intelligence strategy that properly acknowledges the importance of scientific support. Structures that are currently in place do not in general support the collection of intelligence from scientific sources. The level of awareness of intelligence officers with regard to forensic matters is poor and many opportunities are being lost to develop intelligence from scientific support or to use it to drive the scientific effort.

6.37 The NCIS intelligence model provides forces with very good advice on the importance of intelligence and the structures required to support an intelligence led style of policing. The FLINTS system being developed by West Midlands Police provides a very useful insight into how evidence and intelligence can be used to link what appear to be disparate crime types and scenes.



RECOMMENDATION 9

6.38 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that chief officers ensure that all intelligence opportunities afforded by Scientific Support are realised, taking cognisance of published guidelines.

7 Managing Technical Support

Development of National Policy

'Covert Surveillance by Police and other law enforcement officers is as old as policing itself'.

Home Secretary – February 2000.



- 7.1 Three reports published in the 1990s¹ – one produced by the Audit Commission, the remainder a product of collaborative work between the Audit Commission, ACPO, HMIC and others – were seminal in prompting a revised focus of police operational effort.
- 7.2 The operational thrust of policing now emphasises the investigation of criminals as well as the traditional focus on individual crimes. This approach is heavily dependent on the gathering and analysis of intelligence. Technical support has a pivotal role as a cost-effective means of gathering intelligence and evidence.
- 7.3 Technical support in the context of this report falls into four broad categories:
- Use of devices enabling visual surveillance (which may or may not record);
 - Use of devices enabling audio surveillance (which may or may not record);
 - Use of devices emitting a signal enabling the tracking of objects to which they are attached; and,
 - Use of devices enabling the interception of communications.
- 7.4 The inspection examined how technical equipment is used by the police to reduce and detect volume crime and as such concentrated primarily on the technical aids that facilitate audio and visual surveillance. It also focused on equipment deployed by Technical Support Units (TSU) and other personnel on a non-permanent basis. The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) generally was specifically excluded. Not only is it ordinarily permanently installed, its use is widespread and the benefits have been extensively researched and debated elsewhere.

¹ *Helping with Enquiries – Tackling Crime Effectively (1993); and, Tackling Crime Effectively – Management Handbook Vol. 1 (1994) and Vol. 2 (1996)(which included a resume of 'Using Forensic Science Effectively')*

Structural Arrangements

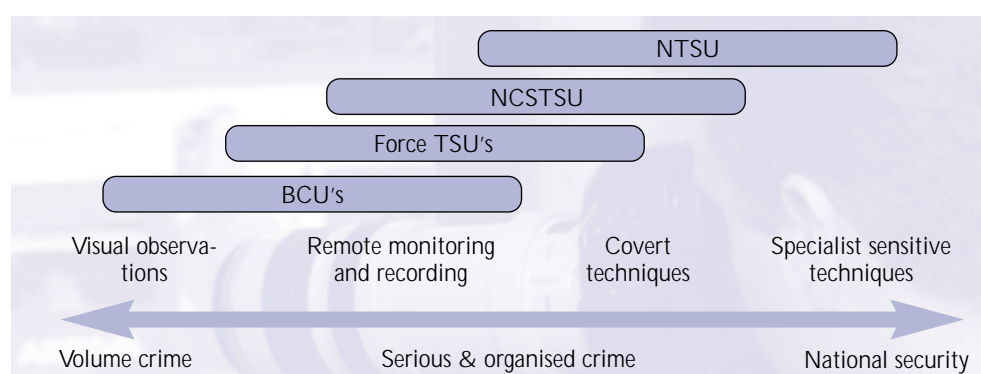
- 7.5 Technical support is delivered through a four-tier system (Figure 14) comprising:
- The National TSU (NTSU), a section of the Home Office Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB), which provides technical advice and holds and deploys high value specialist equipment. It also develops equipment for particular operational needs.



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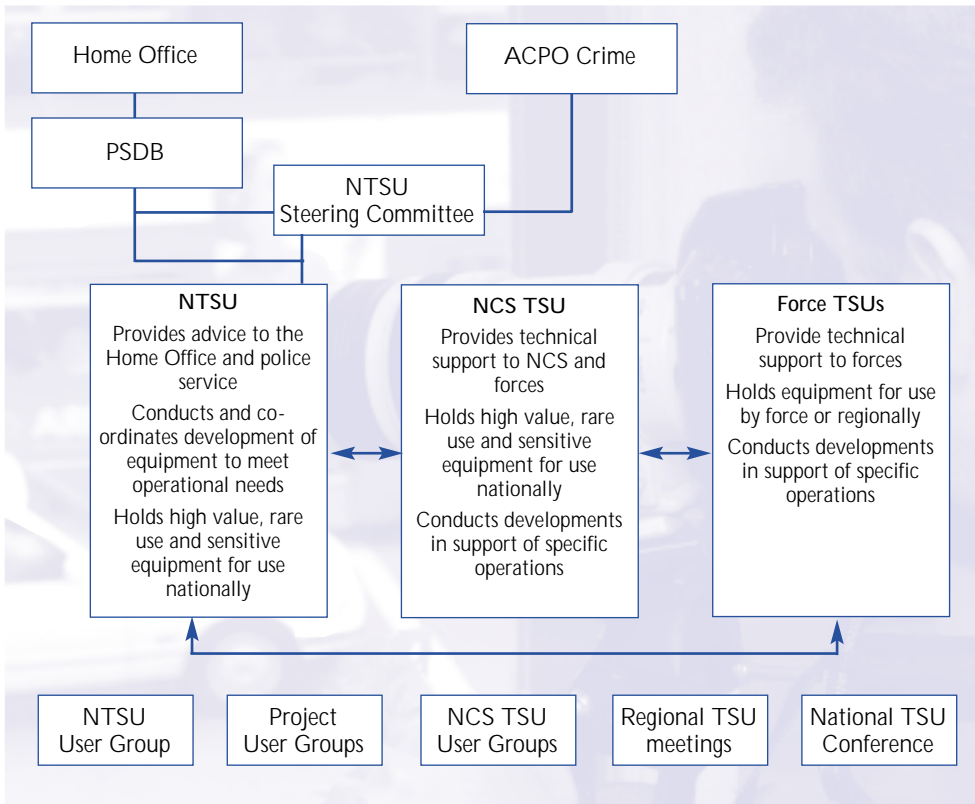
- The National Crime Squad TSU (NCSTSU), which provides support to the NCS and forces on a regional basis
- Force TSU who mainly service their own force needs.
- BCU often have equipment for their own needs.

Figure 14: Four tier structure of technical support services



- 7.6 ACPO Crime Committee had no specific sub-committee to deal directly with technical support until in 1999 it adopted the NTSU Steering Committee, which is now chaired by a chief constable (Figure 15). The Steering Committee comprises representatives from law enforcement and support agencies and is primarily concerned with the strategic direction and focus of the NTSU and, through its links with ACPO, technical support nationally. The primary focus of this committee is serious crime. The NTSU User Group has practitioner representatives from all ACPO regions and is focussed at the operational level. These arrangements have enabled ACPO to exert some influence nationally, and particularly at the level of serious crime. Her Majesty's Inspector would encourage the development of ACPO influence further down the tiers of technical support.
- 7.7 On formation of the NCS in April 1998 an SLA was introduced between ACPO and the Director General of NCS. The SLA indicates that the NCS TSU will continue to support forces until April 2003 across all categories of crime, and subsequently, in respect of serious crime and operations involving highly sensitive and/or costly techniques. The SLA is re-negotiated annually. As developments in this area continue, Her Majesty's Inspector would encourage those forces which are moving towards becoming more self-sufficient to liaise with NCS TSU in the early stages of their planning.
- 7.8 The annual national TSU conference attended by practitioners is designed to spread good practice and provides an opportunity to view the latest technologies. The annual conference is arranged on an ad hoc basis with forces volunteering to

Figure 15: Function and organisational relationship of TSUs



host them year by year. Whilst this is commendable and has certainly fulfilled a need in the short term, the time has now come for arrangements to be more structured and links with the earlier comment about the need for ACPO involvement with all tiers of technical support.

Regulation and Legislation

7.9 The use of technical equipment is often the key to the effectiveness of surveillance operations. Despite its importance, there was little regulation or formal guidance to forces in the use of technical equipment and the operation of TSUs until the publication of a Home Office circular in 1984. It stipulated authority levels for the deployment of equipment and was the basis of force policies until January 2000, when Codes of Practice and an accompanying manual of standards were introduced by ACPO and HM Customs and Excise. The codes regulate those aspects of covert policing not covered by the Police Act 1997 and shift the emphasis from the authorisation of specific equipment to the authorisation of the type of surveillance operation to be conducted. The codes apply to all such operations regardless of the crime type and, because of the need to record significant detail, have placed a

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considerable but justifiable administrative burden on forces in providing greater protection to the rights of individuals and better regulation. These codes were introduced in preparation for statutory regulation with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) later this year. The Act will place on a statutory footing the authority to conduct all covert surveillance operations not covered by Part III of the Police Act 1997.

- 7.10 Part III of the Police Act 1997 legislates for surveillance operations directed at serious crime and which involve the need to trespass or interfere with property. It also introduced the appointment of commissioners to authorise some applications and oversee part of the process.
- 7.11 The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 (law from October 2000) will have a major impact on policing. Articles 6 and 8, relating to the rights to a fair trial and respect for privacy respectively, are the most relevant to technical support and surveillance.
- 7.12 During this inspection much evidence was found of professionalism and commitment by key individuals in national agencies, advisory committees and forces, who were striving for the highest standards and to promote technical support as a cost effective and valuable tool for detecting and reducing crime. Her Majesty's Inspector commends the efforts of those concerned. The use of technical support is, however, too important to be left to individuals and ad hoc arrangements.
- 7.13 The recent legal changes and guidance focus mainly on authority levels and operational considerations. There is still no national guidance to forces on organising and running TSUs or the operational usage of technical equipment generally. The majority of TSU managers and personnel identified this as problematic. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that as many force TSUs are in their infancy the time is right to draw up national standards.



RECOMMENDATION 10

7.14 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that:

- ACPO review its committee structure to accommodate the strategic and policy issues arising from the use of covert methods, including technical equipment against volume crime and, that
- The issue of national guidance and standards for force TSU and for the deployment of technical equipment be addressed by ACPO Crime Committee in order to provide a clear framework within which forces can operate effectively.

Policy and strategy

- 7.15 The majority of forces have a TSU facility. Some are equipped to NCS standard and can offer an equivalent service within force, whilst the equipment of others is more limited, with some forces specialising in a particular field. In addition, BCUs have a range of equipment for day to day operations, particularly against volume crime. The responsibility for the investigation of volume crime rests with forces and their BCUs; this inspection is therefore concerned with the issues surrounding the management and use of force TSU and technical resources.
- 7.16 Her Majesty's Inspector was pleased to note in most forces a strong command level commitment to technical support. This commitment was not, however, always articulated in documented crime strategies for the reduction of volume crime. All forces did, however, have some form of policy documentation relating to technical support covering a range of issues including authorities, specific techniques and call-out arrangements. In many cases these were accessible through force Intranet systems.
- 7.17 Use of Intranet systems for such policy matters is obviously sensible and commendable and is surely the way forward. The inspection team were, however, struck by the number of officers of all ranks and specialisms who appeared to lack the skills and the confidence to access and understand the Intranet system. This is something that forces need to monitor carefully.



Managing Technical Support

TSU Policy and Strategy - Management Checklist

- ❑ Is there clear commitment from the command team to the use of technical support to tackle volume crime?
- ❑ Are there clear policies on the use of technical support and the TSU?
- ❑ Are all strategies and policies readily available to all staff?
- ❑ Are policy owners identified?
- ❑ Do force policies accurately reflect the current national regulations and guidance?
- ❑ Is there unambiguous guidance for managers at BCU level in relation to technical support and surveillance operations?
- ❑ Are BCU practices in terms of management of technical support standard throughout the force?
- ❑ When is Technical Support to be the subject of a Best Value review?

Structures

- 7.18 Structurally most TSU are located within HQ Crime Management/Support. Overall responsibility is generally vested in an officer of detective superintendent rank, often within Crime Support/Intelligence. Day to day management is the responsibility of either a police supervisor, normally of sergeant rank, or a senior technician. These arrangements seem sensible given the nature of technical support operations and the need for interaction between TSUs, other departments and BCUs.
- 7.19 At BCU level the local commander generally had responsibility for equipment and the authorising of operations, with day to day management devolved to crime managers (detective chief inspector or detective inspector rank) or officers with responsibility for tasking and co-ordination. Her Majesty's Inspector understands

that differences between and within forces lead to a variety of structural arrangements. Whatever those arrangements are within a force, respective responsibilities must be clearly set out and standardised wherever possible and ownership clearly defined.

Codes and Authorities

- 7.20 Authorities under Part III of the Police Act 1997 and the Codes of Practice can be broadly categorised at two levels. Firstly, those dealing with operations conducted in public places where no intrusion takes place and where confidential material is not sought (often conducted at BCU level to tackle volume crime), requiring authority from inspectors and superintendents.
- 7.21 Secondly, those dealing with operations involving property interference, trespass or surveillance in or into private places and/or where certain confidential material is likely to be obtained – requiring authority from a chief officer, and in some cases the surveillance commissioners.
- 7.22 The methods used to apply for an authority are either paper or computer based with the former preferred by most forces. Logistical problems can arise with paper systems due to the necessity to move forms between applicants, supervisors and authorising officers. Design of the forms was found during the inspection to be problematic, often causing confusion among staff tasked to complete them. There is a need for closer collaboration and national agreement on the design and use of forms.
- 7.23 Few forces used IT based application systems; Devon and Cornwall, however, use their own in-house system and South Wales a commercial system. Both systems have the advantage of virtually eliminating logistical and time problems, the electronic form being transmittable anywhere in the force within seconds. One problem is that of electronic signatures and this was the subject of ongoing technological and legal research at the time of the inspection. In South Wales authorising officers are printing out hard copies of the application for final signature and filing, using the electronic system to notify the originating officer.
- 7.24 Her Majesty's Inspector was particularly interested in the IT based solutions and considers there will be substantial benefits as they develop. The cost implications will need to be carefully considered and balanced against increased efficiency and potential savings in respect of the hidden costs being incurred at present (e.g. operational delay, officer time and fuel costs).

Point of Note

IT Authority Systems

Advantages

- Elimination of logistical problems
- Speed of submission and return
- Ability to network whole force
- Capture of performance/outcome data
- Provides equipment audit trail
- Ability, in some cases, to search other related databases (e.g. informant) and reduce potential for compromise
- User friendly with prompts to guide personnel through process

Disadvantages

- Cost of system
- Potential cost of network upgrades

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Issue of Authorities

- 7.25 Whilst all forces have devolved authorities to superintendents and inspectors at BCU level, not all operated in the same manner even within force.
- 7.26 In forces or BCUs covering large geographical areas the availability of authorising officers was an issue, generally at inspector level. Many of these problems were logistical and could be overcome by the use of IT based application processes. In some forces inspector authorities needed to be obtained from a specific officer, often with responsibility for proactive operations or intelligence co-ordination, with the advantage that such officers acquire a good working knowledge of the codes. A disadvantage is that other inspectors might see little need to improve their own knowledge and awareness, so impairing their ownership of operational issues. Difficulties may then arise in handling urgent or any other authorities in the absence of the 'expert'.
- 7.27 In a number of BCUs, there was a surprising and worrying perception that the use of equipment either borrowed (e.g. from the military) or purchased using funding other than police funds (e.g. partnership or sponsorship) did not require appropriate authorities before use. Collaboration and partnership working are extremely important in efforts to reduce volume crime and are to be commended. However, when such partnership working includes the use of equipment or personnel to conduct surveillance, this use must be sanctioned by the appropriate authority.

Awareness

- 7.28 Surveillance and the use of technical equipment, while not being an exclusively specialist area, is often undertaken by BCU teams whose primary role is the investigation and reduction of crime by pro-active means. Thus, those in more specialist roles, particularly at authorising officer level, usually have more in depth knowledge and understanding of the codes and procedures than generalist officers. It is important, however, that individuals do accept responsibility for their own development in this area and keep up to date with changes, new procedures and rules. The responsibility still remains with supervisors and managers for ensuring that their staff have access to briefing material and understand it.
- 7.29 The issue of authorities by any officer will depend on the awareness and understanding that each participant in the process will have of the obligations imposed, rightly, by the codes. The inspection looked at five levels within force organisations to check on code awareness:
- Senior managers within headquarters (crime management) departments.

- ❑ Managers and staff of force TSU and central authorisation/standards monitoring units.
- ❑ BCU managers (inspector and above).
- ❑ BCU teams whose role entails frequent use of technical support.
- ❑ General operational staff at BCU level.

Senior Management within Headquarters.

7.30 Generally, code awareness ranged from acceptable to outstanding. The majority of those interviewed were aware of the codes and their general provisions and some senior managers had excellent levels of understanding. Some forces, however, relied on one individual expert. Forces need to spread knowledge and expertise to sustain resilience in this respect. Concentration of knowledge in one individual leaves forces vulnerable.

Managers and staff of force TSUs.

7.31 The level of understanding amongst managers within headquarters units responsible for code compliance monitoring and/or authorisations was generally very high. Most forces also operated central teams whose primary role was conducting surveillance operations and awareness within these teams was also high.

7.32 In a small number of forces, TSU staff were regarded as technicians who installed and issued equipment, performing this function in isolation and having little knowledge of the codes or other impending legislative changes. This approach fails to maximise the contribution of these staff and could leave both them and their forces vulnerable in any court proceedings.

BCU managers.

7.33 In most forces awareness was good at superintendent level, with the majority having attended force presentations. Awareness and understanding of the codes at inspector level was poor in all forces visited, with severe criticism being made by inspectors of the input they had received. Awareness also tended to be higher in more urban BCUs, one rural inspector having no knowledge of the codes at all. Many uniform inspectors had received no information and felt this left them vulnerable. Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that the understanding of the codes at inspector level was poor at the time of the inspection, which took place after the codes were introduced, but before they had the legislative backing of RIPA. These officers have a key role in managing the process and forces need to be sure that when the Bill is enacted inspectors have the right level of understanding.

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Point of Note

Kent

The use of officers trained by TSU and having specialist knowledge of technical equipment proved effective in Kent

Area Technical Field Officers (TFOs) hold all area equipment and are responsible for issuing and installation and are also part of the system of routing surveillance applications through the Detective Inspector (Intelligence Co-ordinator). These officers are seen as 'experts' in the field of technical support and the national codes and the system seem to work well with all area based officers having knowledge of the existence and the role of the TFO and Detective Inspector.

Point of Note

Northumbria Police

Practitioners Guide Non-intrusive Surveillance

- Definitions of terms
- Authorisation criteria/procedures
- Renewals, refusals and reviews
- The records required
- Material retention

BCU Teams.

7.34 Most BCUs operate teams whose primary role is conducting pro-active operations against volume crime. There was a lack of material available to personnel to assist them with the codes and few were able to refer to any centrally or locally produced flow charts or aide-memoire cards. In practice, however, there was no evidence of the codes being breached. The apparent contradiction of these findings can be explained by the fact that individuals were aware that there were changes, which led them to seek out more knowledgeable colleagues. There are clear risks attached to reliance upon this approach to learning.

General operational staff at BCU level.

7.35 Operational officers at constable level generally had very poor knowledge of the codes and in many cases were unaware of their existence, or of any changes affecting surveillance. This was also found where BCU cascade trainers had attended force presentations. Even at supervisory level knowledge of the codes was very weak, with instances of sergeants being quite happy to authorise operations which under the codes require a superintendent's authority (observations of a known target in a public place).

7.36 It is particularly worrying to find such diverse understanding of the codes, particularly at BCU level. It is at this level that volume crime occurs and it follows, therefore, that the use of technical and covert methods in these areas can make a significant impact on these problems. Forces will need, however, to consider how they can ensure the integrity of evidence by adherence to the codes and the maintenance of standards. Northumbria Police has produced a guide that has been well received, covering a range of pertinent issues.

7.37 The lack of awareness of the codes follows through to a lack of understanding of what equipment is available and the likely impact of its use. Some forces expect their BCU based technical field officers to raise awareness amongst officers but operational workloads often seemed to prevent this. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on this important activity. The lack of awareness of how technical support can help officers is a cause for concern, given the drive towards proactive crime reduction and the current focus on volume crime², and is an area clearly in need of significant improvement. Some TSU staff were understandably reluctant to publicise specific equipment details but awareness of technical support capabilities can be raised without the need to disclose details of specialist or sensitive equipment.

² 'To reduce local problems of crime and disorder in partnership with other local authorities, other local agencies and the public' – Ministerial Priority for 2000 – 2001.

7.38 The inspection found that inadequate provision was made for the monitoring of activity or standards at BCU level, with little evidence of checks or dip sampling. All forces visited operated some form of central unit in relation to authorities and it was evident that where these units are involved in processing applications very high standards are achieved. It was also clear that these units generally had no remit to monitor compliance or standards at BCU level. This represents a missed opportunity if forces fail to exploit the knowledge and experience of these centres of excellence. There are implications for the resourcing of such units if their remit is extended, but Her Majesty's Inspector considers that both valuable safeguards and overall improvement of standards would justify a widened remit.

RECOMMENDATION 11

7.39 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that chief officers have in place adequate monitoring systems to ensure compliance with codes of conduct and use of technical equipment.

Budgets and Procurement

Budgets

7.40 Budgets, usually controlled by Head of CID/Crime Support, were generally allocated on a historical basis in line with inflation. In no case was it found that allocation was linked to the policing plan, crime strategy or aims and objectives of the TSU. Investment in technical support was generally significant with force equipment budgets ranging from £100K to £200K per annum.

7.41 Once budgets were allocated, forces tended to set limits within which equipment could be purchased without reference to a further approval system. These limits were financial rather than technical; in one force, for instance, any purchase over £5,000 needed HQ approval. At BCU level generally, no specific budgets were set for technical equipment, with purchases made on an item by item basis.

Procurement

7.42 Procurement was handled independently by forces and often by BCU acting unilaterally. In taking procurement decisions most force TSUs indicated that they would consider PSDB recommendations but would not feel constrained by them. PSDB as a development agency provides up to date guidance on the range of equipment that forces are likely to need as well as developing new equipment of increasing sophistication. Their advice and expertise is a valuable resource that should be used by forces.

Managing Technical Support

Point of Note

Kent

A major concern of the force is the time (estimated at over 200 hours per week) personnel spend viewing tapes produced by the increased deployment of video cameras.

A technical video analysis system allows a computer to undertake the bulk of this work. The device can be programmed to 'identify' movement of people/vehicles, etc., in their entirety or in one direction only.

Following the submission of a costed business case the force has purchased a number of these systems and has benefited from:

- The system viewing approx. 75% of tapes
- Savings of around £174,000 per year (based on the above)
- Flexibility to support incident rooms where large numbers of tapes need viewing quickly.

Point of Note

Report on Officer Safety(1998)

Of concern is the lack of consultation in some instances between forces and other agencies when determining the most suitable officer safety equipment. There are cases where the in-depth expert research carried out by the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) appears not to have been heeded, to the advice from what could be best described as 'well meaning overnight experts'. This lack of consultation and common measures has resulted in inconsistent standards and specifications, which may serve to compromise officer safety.

It is Her Majesty's Inspector's strongly held view that separate research by 'in force experts' does not provide value for money, is time consuming and renders equipment chosen by that process vulnerable to unnecessary criticism and possible litigation. If PSDB has carried out work on behalf of the service, there seem few, if any, reasons why individual officers should seek to second guess it.

- 7.43 Before any procurement decisions are taken it is important that TSU consult with their customers at BCU level to determine their needs. This will allow for informed decisions to be made that will provide a high quality service to those BCU. The inspection found, however, only limited consultation between TSU and BCU.
- 7.44 Although TSU accepted the benefits of co-operative and bulk purchasing, few examples were found of such active collaboration. The need for co-operation in purchasing equipment was said to be rare as many purchases related to single transactions because of differing force or BCU requirements.
- 7.45 Good practice was found in a group of forces, one of which was South Wales Police, where TSU have developed collectively beneficial arrangements, not only for purchase, but also for the sharing of equipment, training and even personnel. This approach is commendable but its effectiveness across forces is reduced by lack of central control or co-ordination over procurement at BCU level.
- 7.46 The inspection found that in forces that purchase cost was often an overriding consideration, with value for money being interpreted in some cases as meaning the cheapest. One example involved an item of equipment being developed by PSDB at a cost likely to exceed £1,500, with a superficially similar device being available through a private manufacturer at a cost of £100. The savings to be made in this instance needed to be carefully balanced against the reduced integrity of the evidence that the latter device produces, and the potential damage to all evidence of that type, not just that produced by the cheaper device. There may also be other unforeseen costs such as the need to continually produce expert witnesses to prove evidential integrity. Whilst Her Majesty's Inspector recognises the expertise of TSU staff and the need for economy, it is important to recognise the expertise of those in recognised development bodies such as PSDB.
- 7.47 Whilst important, VFM is not the only consideration in this context. Unilateral equipment research in forces will lead to inconsistent standards of equipment particularly if the acknowledged expertise of PSDB is not exploited, at least through consultation. The quick fix, however innovative, is unlikely to prove the lasting solution.
- 7.48 Many of the issues relating to the procurement of technical equipment are not dissimilar to those highlighted in the HMIC document 'Report on Officer Safety' published in 1998. Comments made in that document (relating to the procurement of officer safety equipment) are reproduced in the box at the left. Her Majesty's Inspector considers that they remain highly pertinent to the purchasing of technical equipment today.

RECOMMENDATION 12

7.49 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that ACPO and the PSDB develop and provide a list of approved technical equipment for use by forces and that procurement of such equipment by forces follow the guidance provided.

- 7.50 The inspection found that TSU generally maintained the bulk of their own equipment, although neither maintenance nor equipment renewal was subject to specific plans or catered for within budgets. The costs can be significant and forces should allow 10% per annum of the purchase price to be set aside for maintenance for the lifetime of the equipment.
- 7.51 Failure to have robust systems to check that equipment remains serviceable and fit for purpose puts operations at risk, with consequential impact on police effectiveness and officer morale. The records of such checks need to be kept and supervised. This is particularly important where equipment is devolved geographically to facilitate accessibility.
- 7.52 Disposal of redundant equipment was not usually problematic. One good example was found of a force passing saleable items to the Ministry of Defence for auctioning, with proceeds being put back into the equipment budgets.
- 7.53 As stated earlier it was found that there was very little control over equipment being procured by BCUs. In one force there was a policy stipulating mandatory contact with the force TSU before purchasing equipment; this was not always complied with, nor was it policed. Partnership working and other sources of funding have created opportunities, with some very expensive and sophisticated equipment being purchased and held at BCU level. In some cases there was also evidence of parochialism developing, with BCUs holding equipment of limited use to them but of potential benefit to the force as a whole.



Managing Technical Support

Management Checklist – TSU Budgets and Procurement

- ❑ Will the force be self sufficient in terms of technical support for tackling volume crime by April 2003?
- ❑ Is contact needed with NCS to plan for this?
- ❑ How is the level of funding for technical support determined?
- ❑ Are budgets determined on the basis of the policing plan and crime strategy?
- ❑ Regarding procurement, does force TSU consult with:
 - ❑ Neighbouring forces?
 - ❑ NCS TSU?
 - ❑ PSDB/PITO?
- ❑ How does the TSU consult with areas on their equipment needs?
- ❑ What control is there over procurement at area level?
- ❑ Do areas consult with TSU over technical equipment purchases?
- ❑ Does all equipment purchased comply with relevant legislation (including type, approval of radio transmitters, etc)?
- ❑ How is the maintenance/obsolescence of technical equipment planned for?

Tasking and Deployment

Integration

- 7.54 If staff do not 'think technical' as a matter of routine, and unless there is a widespread understanding of the capabilities and availability of force TSU and what it can offer, it is unlikely that there will be extensive and effective use made of it.
- 7.55 Technical support needs to be fully integrated into policing rather than being treated as a peripheral function, considered as a last resort or on an 'operation-by-operation' basis. Regional, force and BCU tasking meetings have an increasingly important role to play. In most forces there was no representation of TSU at force level tasking meetings and in one force visited there was no force level tasking process at all.
- 7.56 Tasking meetings are held at BCU level in most forces and are generally chaired by BCU commanders or crime managers. TSU staff attend few of these and as a result the use of technical support is often only considered when its benefit is recognised by operational officers present. The lack of ongoing representation denies tasking meetings the opportunity to consider the potential of technical support in other operational situations.

Point of Note

One force held tasking meetings on a regular basis, chaired by the DCI (Intelligence), who also had responsibility for the TSU and Scientific Support. Staff felt that this improved integration and provided an effective forum for the interchange of ideas. Unfortunately the meetings ceased when the DCI moved on.

Equipment

- 7.57 The inspection found that technical equipment in forces was available both centrally in force TSU, and in BCU, where the amount and sophistication of equipment available varied widely from the most basic (a few pairs of binoculars) to levels comparable to and in some cases better than the force TSU.
- 7.58 The storage of equipment in secure conditions is an important issue that forces need to consider in order to ensure that unauthorised use does not occur. The inspection found security arrangements for equipment at force TSU to be excellent. Her Majesty's Inspector does, however, have concerns relating to the supervision of equipment at BCU level. In two cases in different forces the equipment storage cabinets were not secure, there was no register of use and there was concern that officers would be able to readily take and use equipment without authority should they so desire.
- 7.59 Very few forces or BCU were able to indicate what piece of equipment had been allocated to what operation. Although no force cited any instances of equipment audit trails being called into question by the courts, it is clearly an issue that forces need to address. As the use of technical methods is likely to increase to combat volume crime, a

Managing Technical Support

review of systems is desirable to prevent the unnecessary loss of cases at court through a technical issue. To help this process it would be useful for forces to ensure that full inventories of equipment held centrally and locally are compiled and maintained. The inspection found that in general TSU had such inventories; most BCU visited did not.

Point of Note

Central equipment storage policy

Advantages

- Greater control over issue and use
- Compatibility assured
- Legal and other issues considered
- Control over procurement

Disadvantages

- Logistics of collecting equipment may deter use
- Time to respond to urgent request

Point of Note

West Midlands

Varying uses of technical equipment over a 12 month period

- Cameras used to monitor movements of a drug dealer for 6 weeks. Considerable savings in deployment of surveillance teams at between £3,000 and £7,000 per day.
- Tracking devices used widely on pedal cycles resulting in large numbers of arrests for similar offences in identified 'hot-spots'.
- Innovative covert vehicle fits used extensively and to good effect by area officers to combat local nuisance crime problems.

Availability

7.60 Two problems were generally cited in relation to equipment. These are the amount and availability of TSU equipment and the logistical difficulties in obtaining it.

7.61 The latter problem was particularly relevant in forces covering a large geographical area, where some officers indicated that they would dismiss the use of technical equipment because of the need to travel long distances to collect it. This was particularly so in one force, which had a policy of total centralisation of equipment in order to control and regulate its use. This policy may be actively preventing the more widespread use of technical equipment in this force.

7.62 Equipment does need to be controlled but this needs to be balanced with accessibility. Forces operating such policies, unless the distances involved are relatively small, may find significant improvement in the use of technical equipment if certain low-level items are made available to officers at BCU level.

Deployment

7.63 A number of issues need to be considered before any deployment can occur:

- Appropriateness of equipment to be used (technical).
- Feasibility.
- Existence of appropriate authorities.
- Skills and abilities of those using the equipment.

Appropriateness

7.64 All personnel should be encouraged, particularly where it is intended to use equipment held at BCU level, to contact their TSU for appropriate advice. There may be more effective and efficient ways to tackle a problem on which TSU staff will be well placed to advise. Failure to seek such advice can lead to money, time and effort being wasted. One force had made such contact a policy, prior to the use or installation of any technical equipment, though there was little evidence that this actually happened in practice.

Feasibility

7.65 Proper assessment is needed of the feasibility of deploying equipment in given locations to prevent loss or compromise and ensure effective working and officer

safety. Assessments were generally conducted in relation to all force TSU installations but in a small number of forces it was found that authorities were being signed to deploy equipment before full risk assessments had been made.

Existence of Authorities

- 7.66 Safeguards are needed in relation to the issue of equipment by TSU and in some cases evidence was found that TSU issued equipment on verbal indication that authority had been given without seeing written or electronic (e-mail) confirmation. Other forces had systems in place that prevented this happening. South Wales would only issue equipment after viewing an electronic authority.

Skills and abilities of those using equipment

- 7.67 In all but one of the forces visited civilian technicians, supported by police officers, staffed the TSU. One TSU was staffed completely by police officers. TSU have previously been identified by HMIC as departments suitable for civilianisation and forces will need to consider carefully the appropriateness of their own arrangements.
- 7.68 Evidence was found that arrangements for training were informal, often negotiated and delivered locally with private sector companies and to varying standards. A particularly weak area was that of Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Examples were found in forces of officers installing equipment, including domestic electrical installations (for which staff should be qualified) and sophisticated equipment, without being trained to do so or any reference to the force TSU. There was considerable doubt as to the effectiveness of the training personnel had received. In one force only the TSU manager had been trained and in another the TSU manager stated that the training received by his staff could be better described as 'awareness input'.
- 7.69 The current work by the NTSU Steering Committee and the NTCSSCI on the proposed National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system will help to establish national standards and Her Majesty's Inspector would welcome its early introduction. Should the NVQ system be introduced, forces will need to ensure that any non-TSU staff using and installing equipment are trained to the appropriate standard. ACPO recommends³ that only trained officers should be deployed for surveillance/observation operations and there is concern that in some forces untrained staff are being used. There was also evidence of officers having received no training or instruction in the use of specific items of equipment prior to use.

Point of Note

Standard Operating Procedures

The NCS and the West Midlands force have produced their own 'Standard Operating Procedures' for TSU officers.

The latter provides a series of points for staff to consider and includes a range of operational areas including:

- Equipment
- Pre-operational considerations
- Deployment issues
- Post operational considerations

³ ACPO Report 'The Police Use of Surveillance' (1994)

Managing Technical Support

Management Checklist – TSU Equipment and Deployment

Awareness

- ❑ How does the force raise awareness of staff at all levels of the benefits of using technical support?
- ❑ How is technical support promoted at force and area tasking meetings?

Equipment

- ❑ Is there an inventory of all equipment held at TSU and area level?
- ❑ Is inappropriate equipment being held at area level?
- ❑ Are security arrangements for equipment at TSU and areas adequate?
- ❑ Is equipment readily available to personnel?
- ❑ What arrangements are in place to check the serviceability and fitness for purpose of the equipment? How are these checks registered?

Deployment

- ❑ Do operational teams contact TSU prior to deployment of area equipment?
- ❑ Are key personnel trained in risk assessment?
- ❑ Are TSU staff adequately trained in:
 - ❑ Technical matters (video, audio, etc)?
 - ❑ Safety matters (electrical, H&S, railway working)?
 - ❑ Legislative issues?
- ❑ Do force systems ensure that equipment is not available to personnel without suitable authority at both TSU and area level?
- ❑ Is there a record of equipment issue, use and movement at TSU and area level?
- ❑ Does the force comply with ACPO recommendations and ensure that only trained personnel are deployed on surveillance/observation operations (including area personnel)?
- ❑ Does the force have adequate safeguards in place to reduce the possibility of compromise of other operations?

Performance and Effectiveness

- 7.70 The inspection was again frustrated by the lack of performance information, particularly in relation to outcomes. The absence of such information is a barrier to forces being in a position to answer critical questions about themselves:
- ❑ What has technical support contributed to the force aims regarding volume crime?
 - ❑ What worked well: what less well?
 - ❑ At what cost?
 - ❑ What was the impact of technical support when compared to other policy approaches?
 - ❑ How does the force achieve more from the same technical support resource?
- 7.71 Forces need to be able to answer these questions amongst others through analysis of performance information to assess their own efficiency and effectiveness. Best Value will require critical analysis of the technical support function, particularly as it is resourced by a monopoly provider. Without meaningful and comparable information on performance it is difficult if not impossible to benchmark against the achievements of other forces.
- 7.72 There was little evidence of tangible aims and specific objectives for TSU or targets to be achieved. The performance approach to establishing the relationship between clients (in this case operational units and BCU) and providers (the TSU) on a businesslike footing is by properly negotiated SLA. Where the parties are in no doubt as to the nature of the relationship there can be no confusion and no conflicting expectations. Whilst most forces had documents purporting to be SLA, such value as they had was undermined by a lack of knowledge of their existence by actual or potential users. Carefully drafted SLA are essential to ensuring that support departments respond to need and that users are fully aware of what service they can expect.
- 7.73 Both TSU managers and their staff were convinced that the bulk of deployments related to volume crime. Self-estimates ranged from 40% to 80%; for BCU facilities the figure was nearer 90%. The fact that the figures for TSU are estimates and the width of the range itself underline the need for the proper collection of meaningful data. It is believed that a high proportion of the volume crime deployment concerned drug offences but there are no reliable figures from which to extrapolate reliable percentages for the house burglary and vehicle crime elements.
- 7.74 Some forces had imaginatively provided a feedback system for officers to record their assessment of equipment and/or TSU service. It was

Point of Note

Devon and Cornwall Police

Results from authorised surveillance operations:

1998

£170,549 worth of drugs recovered

£55,145 worth of property recovered

16 firearms recovered

227 Arrests made

1999

£902,420 worth of drugs recovered

£87,295 worth of property recovered

28 firearms recovered

467 Arrests made

It is interesting to note the dramatic increases in all categories in 1999.

Point of Note

Kent

Operation Cherish

A broad range of technical equipment deployed during a three week drugs operation resulted in:

❑ £50,000 worth of drugs recovered

❑ £1,100 worth of stolen property recovered

❑ 17 suspects charged with offences including drug supply, burglary and theft

❑ 27 Domestic burglaries detected

This operation cost an estimated £27,000 and would not have been possible without the use of technical support.

Managing Technical Support

disappointing that rates of return from users were sometimes too low to provide an accurate picture. This is a blot on the professionalism of officers and supervisors. Constructive feedback is an essential link in the chain of service improvement. By not giving feedback officers deny themselves operational advantage and dent the morale of the very people who seek to help.

- 7.75 Forces need to address these criticisms and observations. Confronting these issues is fundamental to securing technical support firmly within a performance-related regime. The disciplines of Best Value will provide an additional imperative for the suggested improvements. Nevertheless, Her Majesty's Inspector has not the slightest doubt that technical support can and does make a substantial contribution to the effort against volume crime. It is incumbent on forces to assemble the evidence to prove it.



RECOMMENDATION 13

7.76 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all forces implement an effective means of performance measurement for technical support at force and BCU level.

Conclusions

- 7.77 Technical support has developed nationally in an ad hoc manner and has not benefited from such useful guidance as given to forensic support by way of UFSE. National guidance from the Home Office and a strong lead from ACPO are required to redress this situation and lead to a more solid framework within which the integrity of police actions in respect of covert methods is maintained.
- 7.78 Many of the problems found are process related, caused by the numerous recent and impending changes to procedures nationally. The pace of change emphasises the importance of making staff aware of new procedures quickly. The important task for forces of ensuring the maintenance of standards will also need to be extended to include the monitoring of compliance with the codes.
- 7.79 This inspection has revealed that awareness, not only of the codes but also of the capabilities of technical equipment, is fundamental to the successful deployment of such methods against volume crime. This lack of awareness has led to a situation where the full potential of these methods is not being realised in many areas. This is exacerbated to some extent by the commonly held perception that there is insufficient technical equipment to meet needs and this perception was more prevalent in those areas where access to equipment was more limited. Whilst forces

must ensure they have robust policies and systems in place to control technical support they must ensure that operational staff are aware of the codes and are au fait with what can be achieved using technical equipment. This will require equipment being available to maintain operational flexibility

- 7.80 The inspection found that whilst all forces appeared to be using technical support to combat volume crime, little information was available for determining the extent of such use or whether it was effective, economic and efficient. These deficiencies can only be addressed by improved, outcome focussed, performance information.
- 7.81 There were numerous and encouraging examples of effective and innovative use of technical support. Technological advances will result in even greater sophistication of the support available in the future and the service must ensure that it is in a position to utilise this capability to its fullest extent. The emphasis on reducing volume crime will require the most innovative use of all available resources, and the improved and increased use of technical support is set to play a vital role in future policing.



Managing Technical Support

Management Checklist – TSU Performance Management

- ❑ Who is responsible for TSU performance?
- ❑ Does the TSU have an SLA with testing, measurable, performance targets?
- ❑ What management information does the TSU collate and publish to show how it is being effective?
- ❑ How does the force monitor the use of technical support at area level (including performance information)?
- ❑ Do the performance measures used capture outcome information in addition to outputs:
 - ❑ Numbers of arrests made?
 - ❑ Value of property recovered?
 - ❑ Reduction in criminal activity?
 - ❑ Production of useable product by equipment?
- ❑ How else does the force monitor the use and effectiveness of technical support?
- ❑ Does such monitoring occur at area level?
- ❑ Is effective use of the information made:
 - ❑ To inform procurement decisions?
 - ❑ To apprise managers of the effectiveness of local tactics?

Introduction

- 8.1 The British police service has an enviable reputation for pioneering, innovative and effective training solutions to improved police performance in relation to:
- ❑ Crime scene management.
 - ❑ The gathering and preservation of forensic evidence.
 - ❑ The identification of offenders with the aid of scientific and technological processes, procedures and equipment.
 - ❑ The fair presentation of evidence in a court of law.



- 8.2 Her Majesty's Inspector believes that training has a pivotal role in ensuring that the police service not only maintains its historical position, but also maximises the benefits of the constantly and rapidly developing advances in forensic science and technology. A repetitive feature of this inspection was the lack of awareness amongst operational police officers and their supervisors of their role in the process and how to fulfil it. The arrangements for training of SOCO and fingerprint experts were found to be anomalous in the context of total police training.

Awareness Training

- 8.3 Operational officers and their supervisors are fundamental to effective crime scene preservation and the effective deployment of scientific and technical support services. Theirs is the first contact with the victim and the first professional assessment of a crime scene. They set the investigative scene in which specialist scientific and technical support staff later assume the lead roles. It is crucial, therefore, that those officers are confidently aware of what the science and technology has to contribute and are updated regularly as the sciences and the technologies develop. Without this confidence in their awareness it is at best a problematic and at worst an instinctive approach to their dual roles in:
- ❑ Providing the trigger for the deployment of specialist staff to a crime scene.
 - or
 - ❑ Acting as 'gatekeeper' and preventing the deployment of specialist staff.
- 8.4 A number of reports published over the past 20 years have highlighted the deficiencies in 'awareness' training. The Audit Commission, for example, in 1993 reported:



Managing the Training

"One reason why detectives spend much of their time on less serious crime work is that uniformed officers lack expertise in some of the key tasks required at the scene of a crime."

"Helping With Enquiries. Tackling Crime Effectively".

- 8.5 As recently as 1996 the Police Research Group described a lack of awareness of forensic science within the police service. The report suggested that this gap in knowledge inhibited the optimal usage of forensic science. In the same year UFSE commented that the knowledge base of forensic science of operational officers was inadequate and suggested that there should be training for all such officers in physical evidence procedures, which should be tested at regular intervals.
- 8.6 On inspection Her Majesty's Inspector was both surprised and disappointed to find that, despite repeated reminders in successive reports from diverse sources, there is no national policy that operational staff receive 'awareness' training at regular intervals in such an important aspect of their daily work. Despite several revisions of the content of training for inspectors and sergeants, national supervisory training for those ranks does not at present provide any input on scientific and technical support.
- 8.7 Evidence was found in the forces visited that operational staff were rarely given 'awareness' or refresher training on those issues which were for the most part absent from force training plans. The majority of staff interviewed confirmed that they had not received such training and, in consequence, lacked confidence to carry out this part of their daily duty. Such findings in the forces visited were generally confirmed by responses to the ACPO/HMIC/FSS audit.
- 8.8 In all but one of the six police forces visited, SOCOs expressed concern about the forensic science knowledge base of police officers in general. In one force which operated crime desks within BCUs, a police sergeant the unit manager, had received no forensic training. In another force 'scene assessors' were used to visit crime scenes with the intention of improving decision-making surrounding the subsequent deployment of specialist staff. It was found during the inspection that this force had not trained all staff fulfilling this role before they were deployed.
- 8.9 Her Majesty's Inspector believes there is little point in chief constables investing considerable resources in the training of specialists in new advances and techniques if:
- The members of police staff advising the victim of a burglary either over the telephone or at the crime scene are unaware of the technology available.
 - or
 - Staff are unaware of the circumstances and conditions that must prevail if there is to be a chance of recovering usable evidence.

- 8.10 If the service, with the co-operation of its partners, is to deliver against demanding reduction targets for volume crime, it is essential that it has the right people in the right place, with the right skills, at the right time. The right people with the right skills can only be achieved through timely and appropriate training. Now is the time for the service to get it right in its awareness training of forensic and technological possibilities.

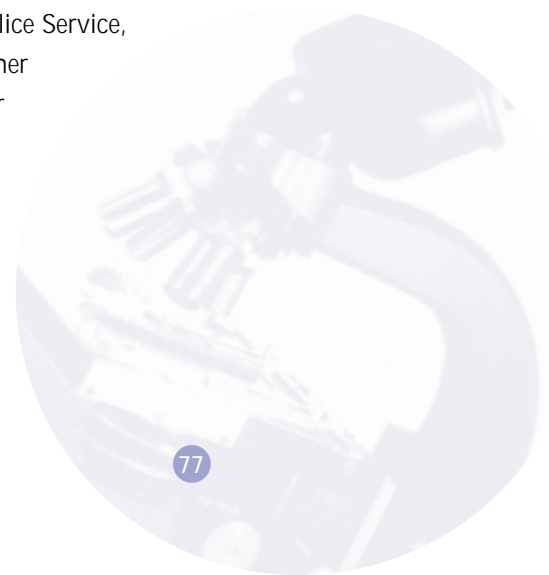
RECOMMENDATION 14

8.11 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that awareness training in relation to scientific and technical support be given to all police staff appropriate to their roles during the following key stages of human resource deployments:

- At the time of joining the service.
- During initial training for role.
- During training for specialist roles.
- During managerial and supervisory training.
- As part of general refresher training.

The Training of Specialist Scientific and Technical Support Staff

- 8.12 In 1990, at the request of ACPO, the Durham Police Authority created the National Training Centre for Scientific Support to Crime Investigation (NTC) to provide a much-needed forensic training service to police officers and support staff employed in the police forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 8.13 The Centre is located in two sites within the Durham Constabulary force area: at Harperley Hall, which formerly was the Durham Constabulary Training Establishment, and at Durham Constabulary HQ.
- 8.14 The majority of forces within England, Wales and Northern Ireland send their students to the NTC for training as scenes of crime officers or to develop as fingerprint experts. There is, however, no requirement for forces to use the NTC and several forces run their own in-house training. The Metropolitan Police Service, for example, provide their own training as well as training the staff of other forces. There is no national mandate for the NTC to provide training for those members of staff who are employed within technical support units. NTC has laudably plugged an historical gap.
- 8.15 There are no processes and procedures in place nationally to ensure that training by forces or other providers in scientific and technical support is delivered to a common minimum standard. Her Majesty's



Managing the Training

Inspector believes there is a need to ensure that effective and relevant scientific and technical support training is delivered to such a nationally agreed standard, irrespective of where it is delivered. It is hoped that the current work by ACPO will deliver this over-riding objective and include the need for ongoing evaluation.

- 8.16 The standard should be mandatory and apply to those who are recruited or selected to fulfil the role of scene of crime staff, fingerprint staff and those who deploy and use technical support equipment within forces. This training should not only include role specific training for the specialist role, but also 'awareness' training which covers the work of all other specialist and generalist roles including those of partners with whom they will be required to interact during their day to day work.



RECOMMENDATION 15

- 8.17 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that ACPO develop an agreed national common minimum standard for all training in relation to scientific and technical support and ensure that it is effectively evaluated.

The National Training Centre for Scientific Support to Crime Investigation

- 8.18 The NTC, although a national centre, is not part of National Police Training (NPT), operates totally separately to Durham Constabulary Training Department and is self funding (£1.3 million turnover 1999/2000). The NTC receives no national funding from the Home Office or other forces. Subsequently, although the centre is NPT accredited, it is not bound by NPT operating procedures, performance management framework or quality control systems. Whilst the centre does have in place limited performance indicators it would benefit from adopting a performance management framework similar to that used by NPT.
- 8.19 The Centre aims to recover the cost of all operations through student fees. Almost 1000 students per year attend residential training courses, which deliver knowledge and skills with the purpose of maximising forensic evidence recovery and evaluation. The management board, which is made up entirely by Durham Constabulary senior staff, formulates the NTC's annual training plan using a combination of the following criteria:
- ❑ Historical demand.
 - ❑ Future requests for training from forces.
 - ❑ Environmental scanning.
 - ❑ Specific requests from ACPO Crime Committee & ACPO FSS Consultative Group.

- 8.20 Whilst this approach has been successful in the past, Her Majesty's Inspector believes that there needs to be a greater degree of involvement by ACPO and the Home Office in the following functions of the Centre:
- ❑ Ensuring that capital funding is adequate and sufficient to allow future development and expansion.
 - ❑ Setting standards for the delivery of training at the centre.
 - ❑ Establishing future training and development needs.
 - ❑ Carrying out thorough and effective training needs analysis.
 - ❑ Establishing a performance management framework and performance indicators.
 - ❑ Design of training and methodologies used.
 - ❑ Evaluation of training to measure improvement in workplace performance.
- 8.21 Whilst some of the facilities at Harperley Hall are not ideal, the Durham Constabulary has done a great deal to improve the buildings and site. It has built new temporary classrooms and developed and improved existing classroom and laboratory accommodation. However, as the number, range and technical nature of new training courses required by the police service has increased over the years, the demand for training has outstripped the original accommodation. The only way the NTC has been able to expand its business and provide extra facilities to meet the demand has been by borrowing funds from the Durham Constabulary. This has been done on a proper business footing, with the NTC repaying the loan through the force revenue budget over a number of years. The cost of the loan is recouped through college fees in subsequent years, and this impacts on course fees. The total risk of not being able to repay the loan falls on the NTC and the Durham Constabulary and not the police service nationally.
- 8.22 Her Majesty's Inspector believes the present financial arrangement is fragile and places an unnecessary burden on the centre and indeed on the Durham Constabulary. The current arrangements:
- ❑ Expose NTC to the vagaries of the market place as it tries to predict future force demand.
 - ❑ Place NTC at a disadvantage when compared to those forces and organisations that also deliver training in this field but which are not required to provide a national service.
 - ❑ Stifles the ability of the director to plan for the future, as he is required to cover any shortfall in running costs by generating extra income within year by offering 'non-core business' training courses using a fixed staffing level.
 - ❑ Restrict NTC's ability to operate as a truly national centre as it does not have the resources to carry out full environmental scanning, research and training needs analysis and to explore alternative means of delivering the curriculum.

Managing the Training

- 8.23 It is to the credit of the present director, his staff and the Chief Constable of the Durham Constabulary that this national centre has remained viable. Her Majesty's Inspector believes that without the ability to access capital funding in future the centre may not be able to continue to meet the future training needs of the police service. For example, as has been seen earlier in this report, there is a need for the police service to develop a national training package for those staff who are employed within 'technical support units'. This work could be carried out by the NTC covering such areas as:
- ❑ Legislation and Codes of Practice.
 - ❑ Assessment and feasibility of use of Technical Support.
 - ❑ Equipment installation.
 - ❑ Health and Safety considerations.
- 8.24 At this time, however, the NTC does not have the resources to:
- ❑ Carry out the training needs analysis.
 - ❑ Establish the common minimum standard for training.
 - ❑ Design the curriculum.
 - ❑ Deliver the training.
- 8.25 Since its inception the NTC has gained national and international recognition as a centre of excellence for which the Durham Police Authority and Constabulary should take great pride. Her Majesty's Inspector believes the police service owes a debt of gratitude to the effort and commitment of Durham Police Authority, Durham Constabulary and the staff of the NTC. Through their commitment, professionalism and foresight they have positioned the college so that it is well placed to contribute significantly to crime reduction and detection, and to the future success of the criminal justice system as a whole. There is, therefore, no actual or implied criticism of the past work of NTC: indeed it has filled an important void. Her Majesty's Inspector believes, however, that the present situation is no longer acceptable.
- 8.26 Police training nationally will be one of the cornerstones that support improved performance in relation to crime reduction. Scientific and technical support training should be a vital part of the whole. It is both anomalous and anachronistic that scientific and technical support training continues to be beyond the auspices of National Police Training. This structural anomaly has practical consequences in that the NCT is unable to exploit the expertise of NPT.
- 8.27 In order that a successful national co-ordinated approach to crime reduction be developed, the police service must have in place a national centre of excellence for scientific and technical support capable of training and developing the staff who will play a key part in that approach. The national centre must be able to integrate with and enhance the work being carried out at the national crime faculty.

RECOMMENDATION 16

8.28 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the Home Office and ACPO examine the provision of forensic and technical support training nationally and bring the National Training Centre within the auspices of National Police Training.

Conclusion

- 8.29 As part of its national approach towards ensuring the best possible chance of securing, recovering and preserving evidence and effectively using technical support, the police service must have in place the following:
- ❑ An effective national crime training strategy.
 - ❑ A national training centre (centre of excellence) based at one or more sites.
 - ❑ A nationally agreed training and development policy for specialist staff.
 - ❑ A national competency framework for each rank and role linked to the above.
- 8.30 The national strategy must provide an effective and complementary balance between:
- ❑ The training that specialist scientific and technical support staff receive.
 - ❑ The basic knowledge, understanding skills and abilities that all police staff require to carry out their role (competences and competencies).
 - ❑ The 'awareness' training that should be part of a programme of refresher training that every member of police staff receives.



9 Conclusions

- 9.1 This is the first detailed inspection by HMIC of either scientific or technical support. It is not, however, the first time that scientific support has been the subject of in depth examination and comment. Indeed since 1983 there has been a great deal of analysis of this very important subject and guidance offered on the way forward to derive maximum benefit from the service's scarce scientific support resources. The advances in science and technology in the prevention and detection of crime have been substantial and sometimes startling. The service needs to work hard to develop the process necessary to keep pace.
- 9.2 UFSE at the time of publication was regarded as a seminal document providing guidance on a range of matters scientific; most if not all of its recommendations remain valid today. The service is now at a watershed: it must not miss again the opportunities identified in this report if it is to make progress against volume crime. Government concern to reduce volume crime puts the service under increasing scrutiny to satisfy the public that all possibilities for detecting offences and reducing crime are fully exploited.
- 9.3 Covert methods including technical support need careful management and supervision if the integrity of evidence and the confidence of public opinion is to be maintained. The impending legislation governing covert methods represents a major challenge for the service. The new safeguards are a necessary protection for the public: they should not deter forces from accepting the challenges they pose.
- 9.4 Scientific and technical support can provide essential evidence and intelligence to facilitate effective investigations of both crimes and criminals. At the present time, however, the findings of this inspection show quite clearly that they are too seldom considered an intrinsic part of the investigative process. To raise the profile of scientific and technical support chief officers will need to provide strong leadership and ensure that scientific support managers have a role in setting strategies. Indeed leadership throughout all levels of the service will be required to bring about full integration of SOCO into the investigative process. Team working is essential. Whilst fingerprint bureaux usually sit organisationally within the scientific support function, this inspection has found that in practice there is sometimes a void between fingerprint bureaux and the remainder of scientific support. Fingerprint bureaux must be fully integrated into the mainstream of the scientific support function. It is pointless encouraging teamwork between scientific support functions and the wider organisation if it is absent within scientific support functions themselves.



- 9.5 A repetitive feature of this report is a lack of meaningful performance indicators. How chief officers will be able to make judgements, contrast and compare as required by the Best Value regime without those indicators, is a real concern. Nevertheless, Best Value should introduce a new rigour to the methods forces employ to determine the value and cost of various investigative processes. This rigour when applied to scientific and technical support resourcing may well show that increased levels of activity could indeed lead to more effective investigation and ultimately to reductions in volume crime.
- 9.6 Processes for dealing with DNA sampling and subsequent identifications have been found to be lacking in rigour. The situation with fingerprint identifications is similar. The public deserves better. The government is entitled to a return on its investment of extra funds to expand the NDNAD. These justifiable expectations will not be met unless the service recognises the criticisms of the way it handles the collection of CJ DNA samples and identification of suspects.
- 9.7 Her Majesty's Inspector intends to revisit the investigative use of DNA and fingerprints within the next 18 months.
- 9.8 The lack of awareness across the service, at all levels, regarding what scientific and technical support can deliver in terms of crime detection and reduction is a major concern and can only be tackled by a systematic training needs analysis followed up by appropriate training. Training at both the specialist level and at the level of the operational officer is crucial and fundamental to developing effective investigative techniques.
- 9.9 The evidence of the inspection strongly suggests that when more crime scenes are attended the proportion of evidential samples collected remains the same. Similarly, the more samples submitted for forensic examination by experts, the more identifications of suspects there are. It is clear that the logic of more attendance equals more actual samples being obtained leading to more detections poses a fundamental question about staffing for chief officers to address. There are strong reasons for chief officers to consider strengthening scientific support functions, in particular the recruitment of more personnel. Such decisions are never easy to make because the money has to come from somewhere else, but this report does offer a real way forward in the important business of reducing volume crime.
- 9.10 There are major strategic issues represented in this report but even more important are those issues of management, supervision and process that now need to be addressed. When the systems are working smoothly the necessary foundations for existing developments and new technology will have been truly laid.