

APPENDIX B

Case Study - Crime Data Integrity

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Summary

This case study provides a summary of the activity undertaken locally over the past three years to increase compliance with the national crime recording standard (NCRS). In simple terms a compliance rate of 90% equates to a crime reduction of 10%. However, failing to record certain incidents as crimes may mean some victims are deprived the support services they need.

In 2014 the Commissioner was made aware that compliance with the standard was an issue locally and nationally. This case study briefly explains what action the Commissioner took and how the Force has responded. It will be seen that the Force compliance rate has improved from a low of 88.6% in 2013/14 (the national average was 79.6%) to 95.9% currently and indications are that it is one of the highest nationally. Whilst crime levels may have increased as a result of improved compliance, we can be assured that all victims are being offered the support they need as this is triggered by a crime record.

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS)

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced to all 43 forces in England & Wales on 1st April 2002, with the aim of:

- promoting greater consistency in the recording and disposal of crime
- and, **crucially**, to take a more victim oriented approach.

It identifies the criteria which must be applied in determining whether or not to formally record an incident as a crime.

The standard is underpinned by the Home Office Counting Rules which set out 'whether and when' a crime should be recorded, the 'classification' to be applied, how many crimes should be recorded, when a recorded crime can be 're-classified' or 'cancelled' and so on. They also govern the application of the crime 'outcomes' framework.

Chief Constables have a legal requirement under Section 45 of the Police Act 1996 to return accurate and timely recorded crime figures to the Home Office.

Confidence in Police Recorded Crime Figures

On 24th January 2013, a report was published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in consultation with the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC), highlighting a divergence between Police Recorded Crime (PRC) figures and the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) statistics.

Briefly, the two series were moving in different directions. The results showed that following the introduction of NCRS in 2002 the two datasets became very close for four or five years, running in parallel, but for the five years or so preceding the report, they had drifted apart, undermining trust and confidence in the figures. HMIC was commissioned by the Policing Minister to find out and report back by the end of that financial year (March 2014).

On 16th October, 2013, a Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) inquiry into the Accuracy of Police Recorded Crime (PRC) data was commenced.

The committee's report 'Caught Red Handed: Why we can't count on Police Recorded Crime Statistics' was published on the 9th April 2014; whilst in the intervening period, based in part on evidence being exposed by the Committee, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) decided in January 2014 to strip PRC data of its designation as 'National Statistics'.

Local Commissioner Action

In Nottinghamshire, as a result of discussions which took place at the Joint Audit and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 18th February 2014, the Commissioner requested Baker Tilly (the NOPCCs Internal Auditors) to conduct an audit review of Nottinghamshire Police, to provide independent assurance around crime recording, the robustness of the governance framework, processes, accuracy and management information.

Baker Tilly reported back on their findings on 9th May 2014. At a time of reducing budgets and competing demands the report ensured that the strategic focus was on maintaining a robust crime management process, when it would have been so easy to have made savings in that area; something that was being seriously considered at the time. Baker Tilly made a number of key recommendations to ensure increased compliance with NCRS. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the recommendations within the report helped to increase NCRS compliance.

On 18th November 2014 HMIC published its final report on the inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales – 'Crime Recording – Making the Victim Count'. Individual force reports were also published on the same date.

In Nottinghamshire, although the overall NCRS compliance rate wasn't good – 87.3% - it compared very favourably with most forces nationally, with the national average being 79.6%, and compliance rates ranging from 97.4% down to 65.8%. Nottinghamshire was ranked 10th best nationally, albeit with work to do.

Similarly, compliance for No Crime decisions made was very good in Nottinghamshire, again when compared to the national figures: Nottinghamshire 92.3% compliant against a national average of 79.5% and compliance rates ranging from 100% to 44.3%. Nottinghamshire was ranked 9th best nationally.

Nottinghamshire Police was identified as 'best practice' nationally for its Rape 'No Criming' processes in that: all requests had to be submitted to a Rape Detective Inspector in the first instance; then if appropriate to the Superintendent Head of Public Protection; and then if deemed appropriate to the Force Crime Registrar for final approval. This was subsequently included as a national recommendation in HMICs report and later mandated as a requirement within the Home Office Counting Rules.

Baker Tilly re-visited Nottinghamshire Police on 2nd March 2015 to undertake a follow up review of the progress the Force has made with implementing the 17 advisory recommendations included within their Crime Recording report in May 2014 concluding that the Force had demonstrated good progress in implementing actions agreed to address internal audit recommendations.

It was essential that governance arrangements improved, culture changes are embedded and training takes place. It is pleasing to report that these significant findings have either being fully addressed, or are in the process of being fully addressed. Culture changes will take time, but early indications highlight the positive steps being made. Changes and clarifications around the governance, leadership and ownership of this particular area have taken place.

Force Activity

In response to the Commissioner's leadership a lot of hard work was undertaken and continues to be done in Nottinghamshire Police to change the culture with regards to crime recording in line with the national and local recommendations; driven by the Command Team and more specifically the various

NCRS Chief Officer leads – ACC Jupp, followed by DCC Torr and currently DCC Barber. They have enjoyed the complete support of the Police and Crime Commissioner throughout and continue to do so. Ongoing activity includes the following:

- Clear and unequivocal Communications Strategy including the development of an internal NCRS website for reference and support
- NCRS training delivered to all staff (over 70 x 2 hour inputs delivered in person by the FCRs; opened by the Chief Officer lead) Training continues.
- Robust centralised independent audit, crime validation and intervention process.
- Strong Governance and oversight regime – Quarterly Crime and Incident Data Quality Board chaired by the NCRS Chief Officer lead – with representation from the OoPCC

As a result, overall NCRS compliance increased by the end of 2014/15 to 95.8% from **88.53%** in 2013/14. That excellent level of compliance was maintained in 2015/16 at 95.6%.

The Current Position

HMIC is currently engaged in completing a 4 year programme of ‘unannounced’ Crime Data Integrity Inspections of all Forces in England and Wales. To date the results of 14 forces inspected are in the public domain. Of these, 7 have been graded as ‘Inadequate’, 4 ‘Requiring Improvement’ and only 3 graded as ‘Good’. None of the forces inspected to date have received a grade of ‘Outstanding’. Please see **Annex 1** for a breakdown of their results.

Although Nottinghamshire Police has still to be inspected, it is anticipated that the Force will receive a favourable report and grade as it continues to maintain very good overall NCRS compliance – **95.9%** this year to date.

New staff are being recruited into the proposed NCRS Compliance Team. In addition to the daily checks and validation activity outlined above, the team are also now reviewing all open incidents with a ‘vulnerable’ or ‘domestic’ marker and recording crimes where appropriate.

In order to ensure that excellent data quality in all areas of the Force’s business is achieved and maintained, a Force Data Quality Strategy and Improvement Plan is currently being developed by the new Data Quality Working Group reporting to DCC Barber. It will incorporate a Performance Management Framework to address on-going prioritised issues including NCRS Compliance.

Nottinghamshire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and partners are committed and determined to ensure that victims of crime and the communities of Nottinghamshire continue to receive the tailored service they expect and deserve.

ANNEX 1

HMIC Crime Data Integrity Inspections – Summary Results of Forces Inspected

(Reports Published between 25th August 2016 and 7th September 2017)

FORCE	GRADE	OVERALL COMPLIANCE	Overall - Estimated under recording per year	VAP recording rate	VAP - Estimated under recording per year	Sexual offences (inc Rape) recording rate	Sex off's - Estimated under recording per year
Sussex	Good	94.6%	5,300+	95.7%	1,100+	95.6%	130+
Northumbria	Req. Improvement	92.7%	7,300+	93.7%	1,400+	91.9%	240+
Staffs	Good	91.0%	6,700+	90.0%	2,500+	94.7%	120+
Wiltshire	Good	90.9%	4,100+	87.7%	1,800+	97.8%	30+
Avon & Somerset	Req. Improvement	89.6%	13,700+	88.5%	4,000+	91.9%	270+
North Wales	Req. Improvement	88.3%	5,300+	82.9%	2800+	96.9%	50+
Cambridgeshire	Req. Improvement	87.8%	7,000+	80.0%	2,900+	91.1%	130+
GMP	Inadequate	85.5%	38000+	75.4%	16,800+	91.7%	500+
Merseyside	Inadequate	84.2%	19,200+	81.4%	5,600+	91.2%	220+
West Mids	Inadequate	83.8%	38,800+	77.9%	13,600	91.4%	440+
Kent	Inadequate	83.6%	24,300+	79.2%	10600+	90.2%	400+
Cheshire	Inadequate	83.6%	11,600+	80.9%	3,800+	84.8%	280+
Devon & Cornwall	Inadequate	81.5%	17,400+	76.1%	7,700+	85.2%	470+
Leicestershire	Inadequate	75.8%	21,200+	65.8%	7,900+	79.4%	400+