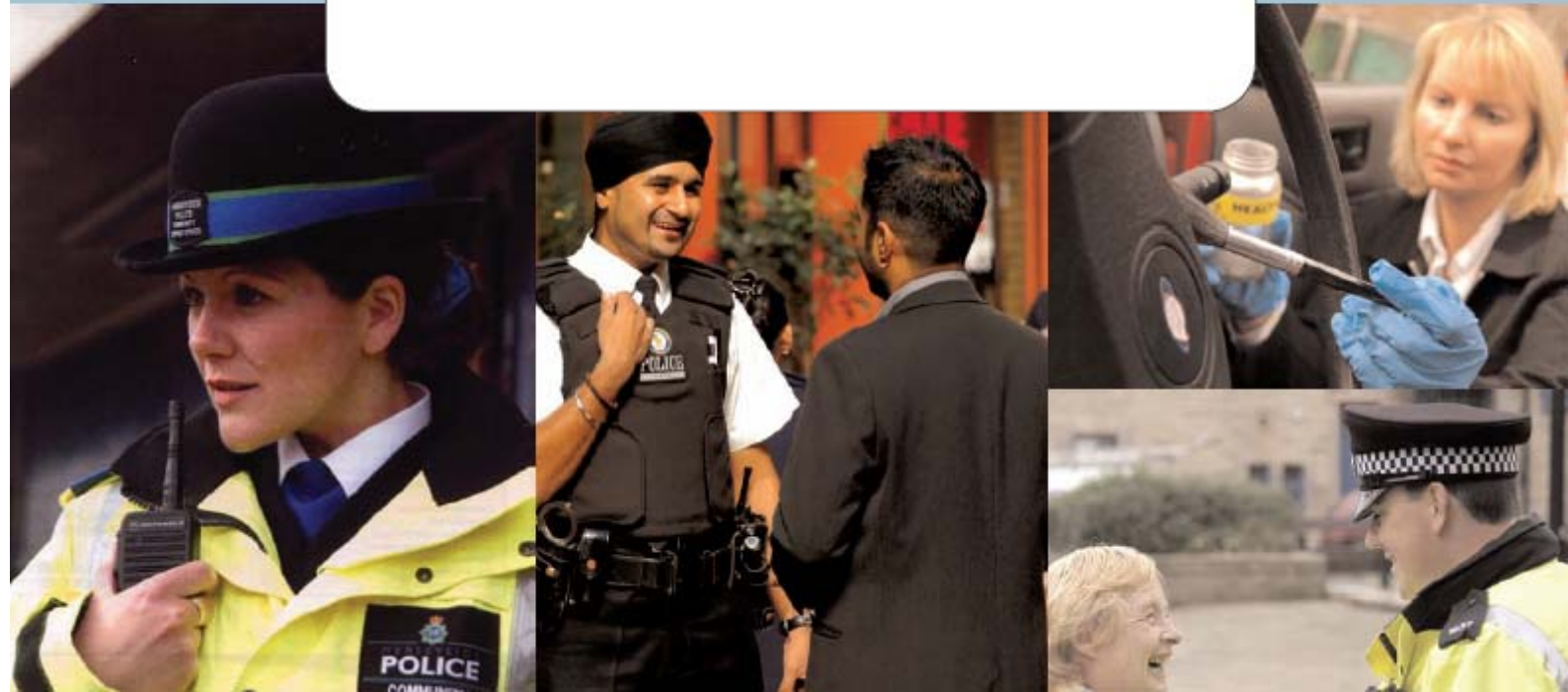


Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



HMIC Inspection Report
Cheshire Constabulary
Neighbourhood Policing
Developing Citizen Focus Policing

September 2008



Cheshire Constabulary – HMIC Inspection

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Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005, and thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking more probing inspections of fewer topics. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/>) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents as phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;

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- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of Neighbourhood Policing.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

The recent Green Paper on policing – *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together* – proposes major changes to the role of HMIC. We are currently working through the implications to chart a way forward, and it will not be until the late Autumn when we are able to communicate how this will impact on the future approach and inspection plans. In the meantime, we have now commenced work covering the areas of critical incident management, public order and civil contingencies/emergency planning – which will conclude in early 2009. In consultation with ACPO portfolio holders and a range of relevant bodies (such as the Cabinet Office in respect of civil contingency work) we have conducted an assessment of risk, threat and demand and, based on this, we will focus on those forces where we can add most value. We will also commence a series of police authority inspections in April 2009, which will follow a pilot process from November 2008 through to January 2009.

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime, Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing in each of the 43 forces of England and Wales.

This document includes the full graded report for the Neighbourhood Policing inspection and Developing Citizen Focus Policing inspection.

Neighbourhood Policing

The public expect and require a safe and secure society, and it is the role of the police, in partnership, to ensure provision of such a society. The HMIC inspection of Neighbourhood Policing implementation assesses the impact on neighbourhoods together with identified developments for the future.

The piloting of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between April 2003 and 2005 led to the Neighbourhood Policing programme launch by ACPO in April 2005.

There has been considerable commitment and dedication from key partners, from those in neighbourhood teams and across communities to deliver Neighbourhood Policing in every area. This includes over £1,000 million of government investment (2003–09), although funding provision beyond 2009 is unclear.

The NRPP evaluation highlighted three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing, namely:

- the consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;
- intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and
- joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.

To date, the Neighbourhood Policing programme has recruited over 16,000 police community support officers (PCSOs), who, together with 13,000 constables and sergeants, are dedicated by forces to 3,600 neighbourhood teams across England and Wales.

This report further supports Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* (2008), which considers that community safety must be at the heart of local partnership working, bringing together different agencies in a wider neighbourhood management approach.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

Citizen Focus policing is about developing a culture where the needs and priorities of the citizen are understood by staff and are always taken into account when designing and delivering policing services.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* emphasised the importance of focusing on the treatment of individuals during existing processes: this is one of the key determinants of satisfaction.

A sustained commitment to quality and customer need is essential to enhance satisfaction and confidence in policing, and to build trust and further opportunities for active engagement with individuals, thereby building safer and more secure communities.

This HMIC inspection of Developing Citizen Focus Policing is the first overall inspection of this agenda and provides a baseline for future progress. One of the key aims of the inspection was to identify those forces that are showing innovation in their approach, to share effective practice and emerging learning. A key challenge for the service is to drive effective practice more widely and consistently, thereby improving the experience for people in different areas.

Latest data reveals that, nationally, there have been improvements in satisfaction with the overall service provided. However, the potential exists to further enhance customer experience and the prospect of victims and other users of the policing service reporting consistently higher satisfaction levels. All the indications show that sustained effort is required over a period of years to deliver the highest levels of satisfaction; this inspection provides an insight into the key aspects to be addressed. It is published in the context of the recent Green Paper *From the Neighbourhood to the National – Policing our Communities Together* and other reports, which all highlight the priorities of being accountable and responsive to local people. The longer-term investment in Neighbourhood Policing and the benefits of Neighbourhood Management have provided an evidence base for the broad Citizen Focus agenda.

Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Diagnostic Indicators

In addition to the inspection of forces, HMIC has drawn on published data in the Policing Performance Assessment Frameworks (PPAFs) published between March 2005 and March 2008 as an indicator of outcomes for both Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing.

The statutory performance indicators (SPIs) and key diagnostic indicator (KDI) that are most appropriate to indicate outcomes for the public and are used to inform this inspection are set out below:

Neighbourhood Policing

- SPI 2a – the percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.
- KDI – the percentage of people who agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area.
- SPI 10b – the percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area

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- SPI 1e – satisfaction of victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime and road traffic collisions with the overall service provided by the police.
- SPI 3b – a comparison of satisfaction rates for white users with those for users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Forces are assessed in terms of their performance compared with the average for their most similar forces (MSF) and whether any difference is statistically significant. Statistical significance can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.' A more detailed description of how statistical significance has been used is included in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

Developing Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected (described as a 'strength') in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces; each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required. HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to be meeting the standard, exceeding the standard or failing to meet the standard.

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the standards agreed with key stakeholders including ACPO, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Home Office as the basis for SGC. The standards for Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing are set out in those sections of this report, together with definitions for exceeding the standard and failing to meet the standard.

Force Overview and Context

Cheshire Constabulary has:

- three basic command units (BCUs);
- 19 Neighbourhood Policing teams;
- 453 officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing; and
- 233 PCSOs dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing.

The force is a member of nine crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) that cover the force area.

Geographical Description of Force Area

Cheshire Constabulary is responsible for policing the county of Cheshire, which includes the unitary authorities of Halton (comprising Widnes and Runcorn) and Warrington. Formed in 1857, the constabulary now polices an area covering 946 square miles. The constabulary is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

The force area is diverse in character, from the Pennines in the east through the agricultural planes to the Dee Estuary in South Wirral. To the west lies the county town of Chester, formerly a roman citadel, which attracts a significant tourism trade. In the north are the industrial towns of Ellesmere Port, Widnes, Runcorn and Warrington. Warrington is undergoing a significant redevelopment programme, attracting major new housing developments and an associated increase in its night-time economy.

Cheshire Constabulary is responsible for policing a significant sector of the nation's motorway network, including the M62, M6 and M56. Within the force area there are 28 top tier COMAH (control of major accident hazard) sites, which is the second highest concentration in the country.

Demographic Description of Force Area

Cheshire Constabulary services a resident population in excess of 1 million people. Because of the major road and motorway networks providing essential arterial routes between the two large cities of Manchester and Liverpool, the transient population is invariably much larger.

Within the resident population, 48.7% are male and 51.3% female; 1.71% of the resident population are black and minority ethnic, with the largest groups Chinese, Indian, and white and black Caribbean. Cheshire also has a significant resident and transient gypsy and

traveller population, with which it shares strong historical links, and a rapidly developing Polish community.

Strategic Priorities

The force has defined its ambition to 'achieve excellence in policing', as reflected in:

- the confidence and respect of the community;
- the reputation of the constabulary within the community;
- meeting customer expectations;
- building strong and confident communities; and
- disrupting, detecting and denying criminality.

This will be achieved through a focus on public safety (policing operations), knowing what works and why (processes and use of information) and people (staff in the force).

The Chief Constable has outlined three key priorities for the year ahead:

- to reduce crime;
- to reduce anti-social behaviour ; and
- to improve quality of service.

The authority and constabulary have developed a series of objectives which describe the force approach to the delivery of services over the next year. The constabulary's operational effort and operational tools, such as the national intelligence model (NIM), will be focused on positively impacting these objectives according to the needs of local communities. As well as meeting national requirements, these priorities are based on extensive community consultation and thorough analysis through strategic assessment. The policing objectives for 2008/09 are:

Crime Reduction: reduce crime to make the force's communities safer – further reduce overall crime, in particular serious violent and acquisitive crime levels, by working with local agencies to identify and solve problems; help reduce re offending; and reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads.

Working with Others: work with others to make communities feel safer – listen, respond to and support communities and work with partners to help reduce the fear and annoyance caused by alcohol and drug related disorder.

Community Policing: increase public confidence and satisfaction – help build stronger communities through positive neighbourhood policing strategies, visible patrol, responding in a timely manner and having a citizen focus to delivering services.

Bringing Offenders to Justice: criminal justice – improve the way the constabulary and its partners bring offences to justice and increase the number of witnesses and victims who are satisfied with the service they receive.

Serious Crime: tackle serious crime – working locally, regionally and nationally to help tackle organised and serious crime and reduce the harm caused by it to ensure the public feel confident and protected.

Resources: improve productivity and efficiency, focus on the outcomes for the public and ensure all activity adds value to front line policing – challenge and improve business processes by knowing what works and why, so the force can provide customers with the best possible service and value for money.

Force Performance Overview

Force development since 2007 inspections

The force has seized the initiative and continues to develop collaborative relationships and arrangements with neighbouring forces and regionally. The constabulary has invested in staff to work on current and emerging initiatives, supported through project management, which include:

- regional strategic roads policing capability (with the Highways Agency);
- a regional level 2 crime taskforce; and
- shared services with North Wales Police, including:
 - air support;
 - scientific support;
 - firearms operations and training; and
 - dog support.

The force is a workforce modernisation demonstration site and is managing this workstream through its change programme. The business case for change has been proposed and was presented to the police authority in June 2008. Further pilot schemes include the 'criminal justice: simple, speedy, summary' review and the 'director's guidance streamlined process' within the criminal justice process and across the all criminal justice agencies in Cheshire.

To address, develop and improve the constabulary's effectiveness in citizen focus delivery, a major reform programme has been undertaken, sponsored and driven by the deputy chief constable (DCC). In September 2006, the constabulary was ranked 43rd out of 43 forces for 'whole experience'. In response, the force introduced customer service desks within each basic command unit. The customer service desk has the responsibility for assessing and allocating crime and for monitoring and measuring victim code compliance. This is further supported by comprehensive market research, carried out by an external company, with clear diagnostics and feedback structures to allow for continual improvement. The customer service desk also has responsibility to act as the point of contact for all existing customers, internal and external, and to update on the progress of an investigation, the aim being to provide excellent customer service.

The DCC has also given his personal commitment to the delivery of citizen focus workshops. He has attended all 25 workshops, which have seen over 1,000 staff attend from the targeted patrol teams and neighbourhood policing units (NPU's). The force has made significant improvements in terms of citizens focus and at the time of writing was a top performer in its most similar force group.

To develop the constabulary's intelligent deployment strategy, the force invited KPMG to assist with the design and process change phase. Operation Quest had four distinct objectives: take forward the force's ambition and policing style; support a problem solving approach in reducing crime and disorder problems which most affect the community; make policing visible and accessible; and improve the confidence and capability in neighbourhoods to be protected and to protect themselves.

Changes include staff being more empowered to make appropriate decisions regarding grade 1 and 2 incidents, and grade 3 incidents now resourced by way of a scheduled appointment at a time to suit the customer. Further developments include the briefing of call

handling staff and the introduction of additional sergeants within the resource deployment centre. Significant performance gains have been achieved and customer confidence and satisfaction levels have increased.

The force is considered as 'lean' by police sector standards and operates on a challenging budget (the sixth lowest council tax precept in England and Wales). The process review and collaborative enterprises are intended to maximise the effectiveness of existing resources in order to enhance the service provided to the communities of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

Neighbourhood Policing

2007/08 Neighbourhood Policing Summary of judgement	Meeting the standard
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Exceeding the standard

During this inspection the force was assessed against SGC in a number of key areas of Neighbourhood Policing. To discern between forces, a moderation process has been applied to determine the grading of the force.

While the force is not exceeding the standard, it clearly demonstrates that it is meeting the standard and in addition performance in the SPIs/KDI has significantly improved over the last three years, namely the percentage of people who think their local police do a good or excellent job together with the percentage of people who agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matters in their area.

Strengths

- Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 51.9% think that their local police do a good or excellent job, compared with 43.0% in the year ending March 2006.
- Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 51.6% of people surveyed 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area', compared with 42.9% in the year ending March 2006.

Meeting the standard

- Following the moderation process, Cheshire Constabulary was assessed as meeting the standard. Neighbourhood policing has been implemented to a consistent standard across the force.

Neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed (coverage).

Summary statement

The force is deploying across all its BCUs the right people in the right place at the right time to ensure that its neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed.

Strengths

- Neighbourhoods and their boundaries have been clearly defined and are subject to regular review. The force implemented a policing structure that supports Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) principles through the Taking Control programme. This is based on 19 areas, each one served by a neighbourhood policing unit. Each NPU area is subdivided to produce the geographic areas of responsibility for community police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) and further subdivided into identified neighbourhoods.

- The force has embedded standard operating procedures in its NPUs across the three basic command units (BCUs). Each NPU is led by an inspector and includes community action team (CAT) officers, PCSOs and investigation teams who work closely with partner agencies and citizens to develop community cohesion, provide reassurance, reduce crime and address the perception of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Communities were initially mapped by the force, informed by the Jill Dando Institute Vulnerable Localities Indices (VLIs), and that mapping was shared with partners and local NPU staff to test perceptions of fit with actual communities on the ground. The work behind the initial mapping has been further enhanced by the use of community profiling software, which is used to systematically identify and define community demographics, values, crime and incident baseline data. Each NPU has received details of outputs from the new mapping documents, with priority placed on the most vulnerable communities. This has allowed the NPUs to review again their defined communities informed by this data.
- In Northern BCU, neighbourhood management is predicated on three defined areas in each of the two unitary authorities within the BCU. Part of the work to enhance neighbourhood management resulted in the police and key partners reviewing the boundaries applied by each of them to service provision. Following detailed consideration, a number of police boundaries were moved to maximise the opportunities for joint working and to enhance information sharing and joint analysis without compromising local community identities.
- Neighbourhood profiles are used effectively within National Intelligence Model processes, such as strategic assessments, and are subject to regular review. Profiles undertaken take account of a range of data, for example socio-demographics and key local community groups. There are effective protocols in place concerning partner information sharing. In this way, the force is assured that defined neighbourhood boundaries remain correct and new neighbourhoods are identified as required within existing geographic areas.
- The force has invested in an external database that is refreshed on a six-monthly basis and seeks to identify the residents of particular localities based on surname data. This allows the force to refresh neighbourhood profiles with demographic data that is much more recent than previous survey and census data.
- The force and police authority have demonstrated a commitment to sustaining and enhancing NHP. In the current financial year, plans include a growth of 35 officers. Also, when forming the nineteenth NPU, the force critically reviewed posts within the force to provide opportunities for growth from existing resources, with the support of additional funding from the local strategic partnership (LSP).
- The NPU structure aims to improve customer access to services by providing static police points of contact within the force area. Each NPU inspector is responsible for liaising with community representative groups and agencies to assess satisfaction levels. There is a clear accountability framework in place, driven by implementation team meetings and the performance improvement meeting (PIM) process.
- All neighbourhoods have a named contact at police constable/PCSO level. Currently there are 237 PCSOs across the force, over half of whom are supported by financial contributions from partners, including parish and district councils and private companies such as housing associations. Partners fund approximately one-third of a PCSO's total cost, which results in certain manageable expectations on the part of

relevant partners as to the availability of PCSOs. The concept of part-funded PCSOs has been developed within the context of benefiting the wider NHP approach in Cheshire.

- The force uses a variety of marketing methods to identify local officers by name to the public; for example, the local press is used to show NPU inspectors' photographs, and their names, contact details and areas of responsibility are placed on the back of local policing plan summaries (*Your Policing*), copies of which are distributed to every household annually. Additionally, posters and newsletters are distributed to local communities.
- The force website includes a postcode search function that takes members of the public directly to their NPU webpage, where details of their local community officer/PCSO can be found. This page provides contact details, allows emails to be sent to the NPU mailbox with one click, identifies the current NPU priorities, and details the next engagement opportunities. An internal system allows for changes in staffing to be swiftly updated on the website.
- The force has 300 special constables who are allocated to NPUs. While there is a supervisory structure for the special constabulary to manage development, training and welfare issues, this works in conjunction with NPU supervision, which manages the day-to-day activity of all NPU staff.
- NPU posts are regarded as specialist posts and are subject to a minimum tenure of two years, with every supervisor having to apply for these posts.
- A PCSO co-ordinator has been recruited and is now reviewing practice and procedures to assure consistency across the force. All PCSOs are on permanent contracts.
- The force has in place a formalised NPU abstraction procedure, which is applicable to all police constables, police sergeants, special constables and PCSOs. Rather than providing an abstraction target, it applies the presumption that NPU staff will not be abstracted except as a last resort. If NPU staff are to be abstracted to cover response duties, the procedure makes it clear that they should be assigned duties which include policing their own geographic areas of responsibility and that the period of abstraction must be minimised.
- All abstractions from NPU duties are recorded in a standard format and reports are generated every six weeks. These reports are made available to the NPU inspector and BCU commander and inform the force PIM process. While this inspection took place after only two iterations of the six-week cycle, these showed abstraction levels to be in the range of 1% to 2% on a force-wide basis, which was confirmed by reality testing as a reliable figure. The community officers spoken to reported minimal abstractions, while PCSOs reported negligible abstractions over the previous year. NPU inspectors provide relief cover for response colleagues on a rota basis, and this had a limited impact on their role. NPU sergeants were subject to the higher levels of abstraction to cover for their response colleagues.
- Historically, in some areas of the force the abstraction burden placed on NPU staff to cover response duties had been regarded by BCU senior management teams as problematic. Accordingly, as part of the regular strategic review of resources, steps were taken to address the balance of all resources; this involved a number of realignments such as a reduction in the proactive investigation team and, in some cases, small reductions in NPU sizes. In the long term, this approach has helped to

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minimise the abstraction of community officers, providing enhanced continuity to the public.

- The QUEST project reviewed how NPU staff were allocated grade 3 incidents (those which require a slow-time response), and how specific appointments were made with the public at the time of their first call through the use of a diary system for each NPU area. These appointments are resourced by NPU officers who, on a rotating basis, are nominated as the 'appointments officer' for the day. This allows calls for service to be resourced in a more efficient way and ensures that the member of the public will probably be at home, which was often not the case previously, freeing up additional time for individual NPU officers.
- The QUEST project has resulted in a reduction of calls for service being resourced by response officers on the targeted patrol team (TPT). This has increased their capacity to support NPU priorities, with support being driven by TPT supervision that encourages the attendance of their staff at NPU briefings, thereby engendering more cohesive and co-ordinated responses to issues.
- NPU officers are generally deployed in response to neighbourhood profiles, local priorities and demand. This is routinely reviewed as part of the business-planning process, which has resulted in plans to increase the number of officers across the force, the restructuring of BCU resources to maximise staffing levels on NPUs while minimising abstraction burdens, and the introduction of a nineteenth NPU to specifically focus on night-time economy issues in Warrington.
- The force area has a high level of representation from the Gypsy and Traveller community and has dedicated liaison officers in each BCU who forge links with the community and key partners. In Northern BCU, a further two PCSOs are specifically focusing on the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- The force human resources (HR) department has clear focus on recruiting staff to the force who reflect the diverse nature of the population it serves. In this regard it takes positive action to assist under-represented communities. This positive action, which includes assisting with the development of skills to pass assessment processes, is focused through the creation of a database that includes candidates from under-represented groups who have failed assessment processes and individuals flagged to the HR department by NPU inspectors as having expressed an interest in joining the force and who would benefit from support. The vetting process includes a minimum residency requirement, and the database is also used to keep in contact with individuals who have expressed an interest in joining but are unable to meet the criteria at that stage.
- The force identified that there was limited interest from emerging communities in becoming special constables and considered other ways to develop volunteers from these communities. A series of events was held to attract 'community observers', which in one BCU resulted in relationships being built with two individuals who subsequently have applied to join the force as police officers.
- On recruitment, both police officers and PCSOs are deployed to work in policing areas where they live, unless there are objective reasons not to do this, maximising the potential of their developed understanding of local communities.
- The force area has a number of established black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and, in common with many force areas, emerging communities from Eastern European countries. Each BCU has a diversity unit that not only forges links

with each diverse community but also supports BCU colleagues through the provision of training and awareness events relevant to their communities. There are wide-ranging examples of force and local training/awareness-raising activities, such as members of the Gypsy and Traveller community and Polish force employees giving presentations on training days.

- Between January and May 2007, over 400 officers and partners undertook one day of problem-solving training using the SARA methodology as a result of centrally driven activity, while BCUs and individual NPUs have provided training locally on a wide variety of issues including engagement and joint problem solving.
- The force PCSO training programme includes relevant NHP training in issues including joint problem solving and engagement, while the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) modules also include NHP-specific issues. Previously, refresher training for PCSOs was provided through BCU training days, but in response to feedback the force has now introduced bespoke training days for them.
- The force has delivered communications training to every PCSO, and is rolling out this training to community officers, to increase their confidence levels when dealing with the media, for example, or chairing or presenting to public meetings.
- In January 2008, the force appointed a training manager to undertake delivery of NPU training across the force area. To inform this work it completed a training needs assessment, resulting in a number of recommendations for action that are being progressed. In the interim, the force continues to deliver focused training on key issues, with training developed locally by one of the BCU 'champions'.
- The special constabulary has two training officers who are both police trainers and special constables themselves. New recruits undertake 125 hours of structured training, which includes IPLDP NHP modules, while those already in post have received bespoke training inputs through seminars and structured training days such as the special constabulary conference in March 2008, where the assistant chief constable (ACC) (territorial policing) gave inputs on NHP.
- BCU training days and focused, NPU-specific development activity have included a wide variety of topics designed to enhance engagement and joint problem-solving activity; some of this training has been delivered and received by partners. Examples include anti-social behaviour tools and powers, the roles of various partner agencies, deaf awareness and a basic 'signing' course, awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller community (which had a visiting speaker from that community), and presentations by Polish nationals working for the force introducing students to the Polish community, the Polish way of life and attitudes to the police service.
- In Warrington, with the formation of a new NPU to specifically address night-time economy issues, bespoke training was developed to enhance special constables' knowledge of licensing powers and issues. This training was delivered in partnership with Warrington Borough Council, the police and staff from the ArcAngel initiative (the force's and partners approach to tackling alcohol related crime and disorder in Cheshire), with support from local licensees.
- Each BCU has dedicated schools liaison officers; however, out of necessity, much of their work is focused on high schools, with PCSOs providing key links with primary schools. As an example, each of the 157 schools in Northern BCU has an identified

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link PCSO who has received bespoke training from the schools liaison officers to help them better engage with children within the school environment.

- In addition to formal training, there is ongoing professional development of staff to enhance their NHP skills. In one BCU, six NPU sergeants and one inspector had visited other forces to learn how their peers operated, and the chief inspector (NHP) had completed a three-month secondment to an organisation working with socially disadvantaged communities in Manchester, learning about cultural issues and barriers to engagement. This secondment resulted in a briefing paper being written to inform force developments. As a result of visits to and from Cumbria Constabulary, Street Safe initiatives are being undertaken in Cheshire based on experiences in Cumbria.
- A force PCSO development group has been created with four PCSOs from each BCU together with their NPU 'champions' and other interested parties. One of the group's roles includes drawing together good practice for the force and ensuring that developments, such as seeking to draw up memoranda of understanding with bus and train companies to allow PCSOs to travel free while on duty, are undertaken in a consistent way.
- On a quarterly basis, the ACC (territorial policing) hosts a meeting of all NPU inspectors that provides a forum to share good practice and receive updates on force developments.
- The ratio of sergeants and inspectors to NHP staff provides effective community engagement and joint problem-solving supervision. Each NPU is inspector led and supported by sergeants who supervise staff who work within defined neighbourhoods. In one BCU visited, there was a ratio of one sergeant to between three and six community officers, and, including PCSOs, an overall supervisory ratio of one sergeant to 7.77 officers/PCSOs.
- Each BCU senior management team has a superintendent and chief inspector who retain a specific focus on NHP and partnership activity. These individuals have management oversight of joint problem-solving activity on a day-to-day basis, informed by links with key community and partner representatives.
- In each BCU the performance management framework includes regular meetings between NPU inspectors and their line managers. The new NHP performance management framework has become more outcome focused compared with the one it has replaced, which included details of the number of community priorities receiving police-only responses and responses in partnership. Through this process, managers are able to monitor and evaluate activity and identify and promulgate good practice among all NPUs.
- PCSOs who are partner funded produce detailed work records highlighting their day-to-day activity; these are overseen by their supervisor to allow detailed scrutiny.
- The inspection revealed a culture of recognition of good work by supervisors, with formal reward and recognition for delivering positive experiences to customers. A full section of the force's internal newspaper published in May 2008 was given over to celebrating success. This included various special constables, two officers nominated for a bravery award, members of an NPU, and three members of Northern BCU receiving a monthly quality of service award. In one BCU visited, a full section of the notice boards was given over to photographs of a recent BCU awards night.

- The force regularly nominates officers and staff for national awards – including student officer of the year, PCSO of the year and special constable of the year – in addition to force, departmental and BCU commendations and awards.
- The force nominates individuals for the national special constables and police support volunteers awards, and in 2007 one special constable from the force was awarded the Ferrers trophy in recognition of her sustained problem-solving work together with her actions as one of the first officers to arrive at the scene of the murder of a Warrington man.
- To enhance the level of formal reward and recognition, in August 2008 the force held a formal awards night for special constables with financial support from a number of private companies. Included in the awards will be recognition for NHP contribution and best probationer of the year.

Work in progress

- The town centre night-time economy activity in Warrington was having a disproportionate impact on crime and incidents in Northern BCU. Working with the LSP, the police considered options to enhance service provision to address these issues in partnership with others. As a result, the option of creating a further NPU to police this compact area was considered. With the support of £840,000 from Local Public Service Agreement Round Two (LPSA 2) reward monies, this NPU, which consists of 16 officers and seven PCSOs, has been agreed and was in the process of being created at the time of the inspection.
- The force has critically analysed its approach to the mapping of neighbourhoods and has sought external expertise in this area. Working with Cardiff University, the force is considering adopting a methodology involving volume crime rates to achieve a platform on which to base further neighbourhood development work.
- The force is aware that many of its PCSOs leave that role to become police officers. In this regard it is reviewing internal processes with a view to posting successful applicants back to their original neighbourhoods to preserve the continuity of local knowledge.
- The force has recognised that there is a good level of representation across many strands of diversity within the special constabulary. The force is seeking support from the Home Office to pilot an accreditation scheme which would give special constables the ability to apply to become regular police officers. One driver for this is to make the mix of regular officers more representative of the communities they serve.
- Having completed a training needs assessment for all aspects of NHP, training courses are being developed. While these are based on the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) modules, they have been amended to better reflect need within the force, where NPU structures, engagement and joint problem-solving activity have been under way for some time. The intention is to provide training locally and, where possible, to include local partners in the delivery and receipt of training.
- The force is in the process of developing a series of packages entitled 'What is my role?' to inform those new to role about the requirements of the function. Packages for NPU staff are among the first to be delivered and will include information on the roles and service conditions of PCSOs.

- The force has developed the NHP performance framework to capture qualitative information as well as the quantitative information that better reflects the work of CATs. A key thrust of this development is self-assessment undertaken by NPU inspectors. This assesses the depth and quality of NHP delivery within each of the neighbourhoods making up the NPU area, based on the concepts of access to policing or community services through a named point of contact, influence over community safety priorities, intervention through joint action with communities and partners to solve problems, and the provision of answers to the community through sustainable solutions, with results of activity communicated to the public. At the time of the inspection the first iteration of the self-assessment had been completed by every NPU. As the process develops, each NPU assessment will be reviewed by the relevant BCU-based chief inspector, peer reviewed by a chief inspector from another BCU, and finally shared with key individuals within the neighbourhoods to quality assure the perceptions held by the police. This will allow community buy-in to the process and will provide independent, quality views on policing performance and engagement

Area(s) for improvement

- The force should keep the provision of weekend custody investigation teams under review to ensure that an appropriate balance is met between NHP and other priorities. On a daily basis, each NPU is required to provide an officer for the grade 3 appointments and at weekends a further officer to resource the custody investigation team. Neither of these duties are recorded as abstractions as the appointments are NPU specific, and the officer should only deal with prisoners arrested for offences within their NPU. In relation to custody investigations, NPU staff can and do deal with prisoners from outside their own NPU area. The staffing levels at weekends are such that often, after providing two officers, none are available for engagement and other core NHP activity.
- The force, together with the police authority, should review the deployment of PCSOs and ensure that they are deployed in response to neighbourhood profiles, local priorities and demand. The approach in respect of the allocation of PCSOs to wards in NPUs has not been scientific and anomalies exist in the allocation of PCSOs on account of funding streams, partner expectation and restricted allocation. Staff profiles and experience should match the neighbourhoods in which they work, wherever possible, and should reflect minority, new and emerging communities and Rich Picture (the understanding of the potential for radicalisation and of extremist activity at a local level) and intelligence requirements.
- The force should consider introducing a database of internally available skills that would allow it to maximise the use of these assets. While the force's HR department is able to identify a number of staff with language and cultural skills from their databases, this is not systematically available to the whole force.
- While the inspection accepts that the force is being proactive in seizing opportunities to access localised training in various aspects of NHP, it should ensure that such bespoke training is captured centrally and monitored effectively, and also that learning is shared and maximised across all NPUs.
- While the force has reviewed NHP training and has commenced the development of modular courses, it should keep the timelines for delivery of this training under review to ensure that appropriate priority is given.

- The force should ensure that supervisors and other NPU staff have a clear understanding of the current, and future, roles and responsibilities of PCSOs. The inspection revealed a mixed understanding of the roles and responsibilities of PCSOs. While PCSOs were receiving central delivery of training in respect of changes to their powers, these were not being cascaded to supervisors and other NPU staff.

Effective community engagement is taking place. Representative communities are being routinely consulted and are identifying local priorities and receiving feedback.

Summary statement

All neighbourhoods in the force area are actively engaging with their local police force and its partners.

Strengths

- Community engagement is undertaken within a framework of strategic and local activity. It includes key stakeholders, such as the police authority, independent advisory groups (IAGs), CDRPs, key individual networks (KINs), minority and new communities, local businesses and Neighbourhood Watch.
- There is clear evidence of the force community engagement strategy being implemented and integrated with the involvement and activity of partners, the community and voluntary support groups. Maintaining a high profile for NHP is achieved through regular positive articles in the local press and on radio stations, responding to letters and, at a local level, placing flyers in residences and shops.
- The top 30 neighbourhoods (known as priority communities) have been profiled and action plans used to stimulate engagement and community intelligence. This utilises VLI and Mosaic data, anti-social behaviour mapped against demographics, Mosaic Origins demographic data (which indicates emerging communities and faiths), organised crime group/Rich Picture mapping and sexual/violent priority offender data. The development of these action plans has been supported by a chief inspector from force headquarters who has been leading on the development of community intelligence and profiling.
- IAGs at both strategic (force) and tactical (BCU) levels are influencing issues across all strands of policing. BCU-based IAGs have a wide membership that represents a number of hard-to-reach groups, including migrant workers.
- Community action meetings (CAMs) have been a key element of engagement activity within the force and are undertaken by local officers and PCSOs. These meetings, which are multi-agency led, provide opportunities for local communities to receive updates and provide feedback to the police and key partners on priorities. At the conclusion of the meeting, those present are asked to vote for their key policing priority, which is then addressed by the NPU and partners, where appropriate, with the results of any activity being fed back to the next meeting. In some neighbourhood management areas the police took the opportunity to integrate their meetings into the neighbourhood action meetings (NAMs) and other neighbourhood management meeting processes, with a similar focus on identifying community priorities, taking action and reporting on that action.

- In some areas, CAMs have proved successful, with the regular attendance of 60 to 70 people, while in others the attendance has been much lower and has often failed to identify any local priorities. Equally, the level of engagement of partners in the process was mixed. Pragmatic solutions have been applied including moving venues, giving specific actions to local councillors/partners and handing the chair of the meeting to other partners; these have made the meetings more effective at addressing local issues. One such approach involved holding a CAM at the local fire station with food and drink provided by the fire service.
- In addition to CAMs, NPU officers hold regular surgeries, attend local special interest group meetings (eg mother and baby meetings) and publicise the location of 'Let's talk' street briefings or other informal opportunities to engage. Overall, the inspection noted that seeking out the most effective method of engagement with the broadest cross-section of the local community was a clear priority for individuals, NPUs and the force as a whole. In this regard the force has developed a community engagement template that is applied to each neighbourhood. It sets out minimum expectations as to the depth of engagement based on the vulnerability of the neighbourhood. This template is integral to the NPU self-assessment framework.
- In June 2007, the force formally reviewed the CAM process in the context of developing a much wider approach to engagement using key individuals, surgeries, street briefings and newsletters. As a result, existing CAMs were realigned with existing neighbourhood management processes, where possible, or replaced with other more appropriate methods. The VLI work informed this review and new CAMs were established in 30 priority neighbourhoods, increasing the number of CAMs to 89 by February 2008.
- As part of the LPSA 2 development, a number of 'place' surveys were completed, linked with the CAM process. The force has revisited those areas and has undertaken more detailed survey work to set a baseline of customer perceptions and to identify the results of activity since the initial work was completed.
- Communities have been engaged on a strategic level to formulate policing objectives, and good use is being made of the police authority's forums, Cheshire Citizens Panel and the IAG. All neighbourhoods have a recorded list of key individuals who are spoken to on a regular basis to give community feedback to the police and in turn circulate key messages. The force has invested considerable effort in redefining key individuals and maintaining regular contact with them.
- There are effective links with the Gypsy and Traveller community that have been forged by Gypsy and Traveller liaison officers and diversity sergeants who are based in each BCU and who link with partners in the local authority. The force hate crime adviser, a diversity unit member and a Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer attended the Appleby Fair to enhance engagement with this community.
- The force hate crime adviser has undertaken work that has allowed the introduction of 49 third-party reporting centres tailored to reflect the needs of the county's diverse communities. One such centre is at the Gypsy and Traveller education centre and another is in the gay and lesbian youth service.
- In one neighbourhood visited as part of the inspection, the business community creates a migration of several thousand people each day into the neighbourhood. The local NPU has been successful in attempts to engage with parts of that community through a high street bank allowing them to have displays and officer/PCSO presence in their offices.

- To enhance engagement with young people, the force has developed various initiatives, including youth CAMs in one high school catchment area and, in another high school, the building being used as a drop-in centre by the local community officer and PCSO, who eat in the canteen on a regular basis. This approach has led to the NPU inspector being asked to attend the school's debating society.
- The force invests considerable effort in diversion activity for children and young people, which also presents significant opportunities for one-to-one engagement. Examples of this include running a fishing competition over the last two years, with over 1,000 children taking part and the Chief Constable presenting the prizes, and football and pool tournaments.
- The community leadership award will see 15 to 20 youths from three wards in Eastern BCU come together as part of a structured 12-week project to enhance community cohesion and develop the individuals through training, for example gaining a food hygiene certificate or first aid qualification. The members are drawn from those identified as being marginal in terms of behaviour. Those who are more extreme in their behaviour can instead take advantage of the opportunities presented by a British Army training team that provides opportunities for self-development in an environment that facilitates engagement with NPU staff.
- The schools liaison officers provide inputs to school children in line with the national curriculum and school priorities and in response to issues identified through joint problem-solving and prevention work, such as firework safety issues. As part of this work, local priorities and issues of concern for the young are often teased out, with direct links then being made with the relevant NPU or partners to address the issues raised.
- In addition to general provision within schools, opportunities are taken to focus engagement activity with identified groups of children. One such initiative is the Kooldown Plus scheme, which involves a variety of partners including the Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, neighbourhood management teams, the community safety partnership and the youth offending team. Young people sign up to school term-length projects that see them spending one day a week out of school undertaking team and confidence-building activity that results in a graduation ceremony and awards.
- In Eastern BCU, opportunities are taken to deliver key messages in high schools through the use of PowerPoint presentations on constant loops being displayed on LCD screens throughout the schools. This medium is used to reinforce the delivery of messages by the schools liaison officer in face-to-face opportunities such as assemblies or to co-ordinate with problem-solving activity being undertaken by NPUs.
- In one neighbourhood, the inspection team was able to see a 'Whatever it takes' event involving the police, the fire service, the local authority, Age Concern, a housing association, youth services, the Healthy Living Network and Connexions. This was taking place over a four-day period and had a high-profile presence in an estate, with wide-ranging initiatives to promote healthier living, improved home safety, improving the appearance of the area and better understanding between the different age groups. Included was a short questionnaire sent to every household with questions from key partners.
- In addition to formal engagement opportunities, the force maximises the benefits of one-to-one meetings between PCSOs, community officers and the public.

- In Crewe, which has emerging Eastern European, Tamil and East Timor communities, the force has co-ordinated many of its engagement activities with partners. The local council community development officer chairs the NAMs and the council has employed two Polish people to assist with community development. They link with the police to address issues as required; for example, when houses are visited by the local PCSO, one of the Polish staff and the community development officer attend in order to address any issues, and they have produced leaflets in pictorial format on issues such as litter bins and vehicle legislation.
- The force has worked with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Crewe to provide a third-party reporting centre. The force pays for the provision of translation facilities; a translator attends on set days and Language Line is available as required.
- The force is seeking to increase trust and confidence with policing among the Polish community to enhance levels of engagement. In Crewe, a Polish association formed by the local authority offers one such opportunity with a weekend events being attended by an off-duty PCSO and their family. A Polish police officer has also been attached to the force and has met key local NPU contacts within the community.
- There is good evidence of effective information sharing between communities and NPUs, resulting in community intelligence. The force undertakes this through face-to-face contact, engagement opportunities in schools and with BME groups in their places of work, key individuals, Neighbourhood Watch, multicultural events and numerous local initiatives.
- The core role of PCSOs is informal community engagement through the development of effective networks with groups of young people, residents, shopkeepers and the elderly. This enables them to gather community intelligence, respond directly to community concerns and feed back actions taken to tackle problems.
- The force has taken steps to enhance information sharing with the public through the use of technology. Activities include the Chief Constable producing podcasts, engaging in web chats and uploading interviews to YouTube, and the development of blog pages for NPU staff.
- To facilitate electronic communication, each NPU has an email address, voicemail and a dedicated area of the force website. The officers also have group emails for members of the community in their neighbourhoods in order to send out bulk messages, including formal newsletters for the NPU.
- The inspection team was able to identify clear links between force- and BCU-level intelligence requirements identified through the strategic tasking processes and outcomes from activity to develop community intelligence. In several proactive operations, community intelligence had been integral to the initiation of targeted activity to combat the activities of organised crime groups.
- In each BCU, the performance management framework includes regular meetings between NPU inspectors and their line managers. As part of this work, packages of data were assembled including the number of, and attendance at, CAMs and details of all other formal engagement that had taken place within the NPU. This was then critically evaluated against the community profile to ensure that appropriate community engagement activity was maximised.

- The force has placed considerable focus on the use of an engagement template for every neighbourhood; this is integral to the new NHP performance management framework. The introduction of quality assurance of self-assessments through police and public structures will further develop the force's understanding of community engagement gaps.
- The force has an awareness of engagement gaps and has taken steps to address these. In one BCU the strategic assessment highlighted the need to increase engagement with young Muslims who did not generally take part in sport, resulting in a PCSO developing a judo activities scheme.
- In Eastern BCU, two of the ward areas have a high level of residents from the Polish and East Timor communities. Recognising the need to ensure that key individuals had been identified in these and other diverse groups within the BCU, the local diversity unit was set specific objectives to quality assure the representative nature of the KIN in the BCU.
- The force has developed a contact strategy at force level that is underpinned by contact plans for each NPU area. The strategy includes detailed consideration of how the force engages with partners, all elements of the public, diverse groups, the young and offenders, and is clearly a living document that reviews what steps have been taken to enhance engagement in the previous year and highlights planned activity for the current year. NPU contact plans include consideration of the population group, key locations/messages, method of delivery, frequency, by whom and method of evaluating activity.
- A detective constable from the force who is attached to the north-west counter-terrorism unit has a specific remit to train and brief all police officers, PCSOs, special constables and identified police staff in respect of counter-terrorism issues, including the Rich Picture.
- Core police training includes role-specific inputs from special branch, for example to PCSOs and student officers.
- The force is able to identify intelligence that has been passed to them by each BCU as a result of this training and has recently introduced formal training evaluation methodology to test learning outcomes.
- The organised crime group mapping process and general intelligence analysis are predicated on intelligence contained on the Atlas intelligence system. There is a detailed level of focus in BCUs on problematic locations that cause harm to local communities through low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, while some residents are identified as organised crime group members.

Work in progress

- The Street Safe process is emerging in areas that are identified as police or partnership 'hotspot' areas. This involves police and partners visiting every house in a defined locality and establishing a baseline of community concerns and priorities. Joint problem-solving activity is then initiated to address the issues and at the conclusion of this activity the process is repeated to establish the outcomes achieved from a community perspective.
- It is recognised that effective engagement with new and emerging communities is a key cohesion issue facing all partners. There is currently a multi-partnership group in

place looking at ways to enhance communication and integration. This is being undertaken at various levels, eg through employers, events for new residents and welcome days. The police take an active part in these initiatives.

- The language barrier has been recognised as a key issue when seeking to develop trust and confidence and then engage with members of the Polish community. A number of NPU staff are to undertake, or have already completed, basic language training in this regard.
- The force is continuing to develop greater focus and understanding of community intelligence among NPU and intelligence staff through centrally driven activity. As a pilot, one BCU has now appointed an officer from an NPU post to the intelligence unit, with a specific remit of developing community intelligence. A key element of this is increasing knowledge of what forms community intelligence and how it can best be developed and used to inform strategic and tactical intelligence products.
- To promulgate the contact strategy and enhance the NPU contact plans, a member of the communications department meets with NPU inspectors and helps to develop bespoke plans that reflect the nature of communities. While at the time of the inspection only 25% of these plans had been developed with central support, it was clear that this approach had the potential to maximise engagement opportunities in a corporate manner.
- The top 30 neighbourhoods (known as priority communities) have been profiled and action plans used to stimulate engagement and community intelligence. A chief inspector from force headquarters has provided support to the relevant NPU inspectors when developing these plans, and as part of this approach has focused on organised crime group intelligence and Rich Picture development. This approach will strengthen the focus on the development of intelligence in the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force could take steps to maximise engagement with key individuals by introducing a formal structure to record contact with them. A standard approach should be developed to identify key community priorities with KINs, and then to revisit individuals to establish the community perception of the success or otherwise of joint problem-solving activity. This approach will allow the force to assess the impact of activity in conjunction with other forums.
- The force should strengthen its investment in the development, analysis and sharing of community intelligence across all BCUs, building on pilot development in one BCU. While there is some evidence of effective information sharing between communities and NPUs resulting in community intelligence, the force should seek to develop this through a variety of methods that may include interactive websites, emails, text messaging and face-to-face contact. Importantly, there should be the capacity to test the outcome of activity.
- The force is making considerable investments in the level of survey activity being undertaken by customer service desks (CSDs) to assess service delivery as part of a clear drive to enhance public satisfaction with the crime and incident-handling process. The force should keep the nature and subsequent analysis of this survey work under review to maximise its potential to inform strategic development issues, for example by including questions of policing priorities and identifying variations in satisfaction based on issues such as race, age and socio-economic data.

- The force should consider enhancing survey work by developing methods of two-way communication with customers through the use of IT systems. Examples might include encouraging those visiting police station front counters or being contacted by CSDs or through links on the website to subscribe to NPU newsletters. This will entail customers providing personal email addresses and will offer opportunities to circulate surveys and key messages on a periodic basis. In this way a broader base for customer surveys could be established in a cost-effective way while emphasising links to NHP through the communication of key messages on a regular basis.
- The force should introduce a more robust approach to test and map the level and quality of community engagement across the force area. These local plans should have direct links to the engagement shortfalls identified in the force strategic assessment or business plan, such as those relating to new and emerging communities. While the force has promulgated engagement-planning templates for every neighbourhood, which are to be subject to self-assessment, it lacks oversight at a BCU and force level.
- The force should undertake activity to establish why individuals have disengaged from engagement processes such as KINs and community meetings, asking people from communities in high crime and incident areas not identified in the neighbourhood profile whether they are engaged with their NPU, and talking to young people aged between 14 and 18 and to people from Eastern European communities in high crime and incident areas to test whether they are engaged with their NPU. This will allow the force to test the quality and depth of engagement being achieved.

Joint problem solving is established and included within performance regimes.

Summary statement

Joint problem solving involves the police with partners and communities across all neighbourhoods. Joint problem-solving activity is partly evaluated and demonstrates significant problem resolution at neighbourhood level.

Strengths

- There is a strong desire to engage with strategic and tactical partners and the force has been successful in developing and embedding effective relationships to jointly problem solve in many parts of the force area. Evaluation of key activity has been undertaken and will be continued, linked specifically to current neighbourhoods. A common problem-solving model is being used by the police and key partners based on the SARA approach, which measures the impact of joint problem solving.
- The force has in place a well-established ArcAngel campaign which is integral to the NHP ethos. Working with a number of key partners, such as health authorities, trading standards and local authorities, the brand is widely marketed and focuses activity to: encourage responsible drinking; discourage binge drinking and drinking in public; target hotspot locations; target prolific and persistent alcohol-related violent crime offenders; help reduce the number of incidents of alcohol-related serious wounding, common assaults and accident and emergency admissions; improve care and support for victims and witnesses of alcohol-related violent crime; help people feel safer during a night out; and raise public awareness of alcohol-related violence and disorder and the penalties that will be imposed against offenders.

- The force uses the PROMS database to record problem-solving activity using the enforcement, prevention, intelligence and communication model.
- Each BCU senior management team has a superintendent and chief inspector who retain specific focus on NHP and partnership activity. These individuals retain management oversight of joint problem-solving activity on a day-to-day basis and are informed by links with key community and partner representatives.
- In each BCU the performance management framework includes regular meetings between NPU inspectors and their line managers. The new NHP performance management framework has become more outcome focused compared with the one it has replaced, which included details of the number of community priorities receiving police-only responses and responses in partnership. Through this robust process, managers are able to monitor and evaluate activity and identify and promulgate good practice among all NPUs.
- Both the CAM and NAM processes include the allocation of actions to police and partners to resolve community priorities. Integral to this process is reporting back to the next meeting on the result of these actions. In this way the community has an influential voice in evaluating joint problem-solving activity at neighbourhood level.
- The quarterly NPU inspectors conference provides opportunities to promulgate learning on all aspects of NHP, including joint problem solving, while the regular NHP ‘champions’ meeting provides a similar forum to share learning.
- The force undertakes evaluation of joint problem-solving activity with partners. One such example is a multi-agency response to youth disorder, criminal damage and alcohol-related disorder in Northern BCU which resulted in a three-week operation with registered social landlords, neighbourhood wardens, youth outreach workers and the police. Crime and incident data, referrals to partners and intelligence reports were formally assessed and the agencies were involved in a multi-agency debrief of the operation.
- The force has accredited one youth diversion scheme through the Duke of Edinburgh (bronze) process in addition to long-term monitoring of participants by youth services and the youth offending team. Recognising the potential for issues in Wilmslow NPU, a 12-week programme to raise awareness among young people about the negative consequences and impact of ‘gang culture’ in the local community was initiated. During the project the young people learnt about the different consequences of gang-related crime from a variety of sources including the police, the fire service and people from various communities, including those who had been affected.
- The Chief Constable chairs the stronger safer communities group, which includes representation at a strategic level of all key partner agencies. He has successfully utilised this forum to articulate his vision and received buy-in for NHP in partnership across the force area.
- The ACC (territorial policing) as the force lead for both NHP and strategic partnerships holds regular meetings with key partners where he has been able to actively influence strategic developments.
- The local government landscape in the force area has required the force to engage with a wide variety of partners across a number of CDRP areas. As a result of a recent local government review (LGR), the partnership landscape within the force

area is to change. The force has invested in a superintendent post to manage opportunities presented and to minimise the risks associated with significant changes in local government structures.

- There is evidence that partners are part of strategic tasking and co-ordination meetings in BCUs and are seen as adding value to the process. Partners included are the fire service, CDRPs and local authority community safety and housing departments. Various strategic meetings take place to allow BCUs to consult and liaise with key partners, ie CDRPs, LSPs and local area agreements (LAAs).
- The CO-STAR project was initiated to draw together data from as many key partners as possible in a manner that both facilitated the sharing of data and maximised the information available to those undertaking strategic and tactical analysis for their organisations, governed by information-sharing protocols. While most partners readily engaged in the developments, in one area the Chief Constable personally intervened at the highest levels to encourage partners to support this work. Phase 1 of the project has been completed and has data sets from the police, fire and ambulance services to full postcode level. This has been enhanced by the provision of hospital admission data and licensing data that can be overlaid.
- Senior officers in each BCU engage with partners on a regular basis. One such example is in Northern BCU, where they are engaged with partners at a strategic level and on the relevant neighbourhood co-ordination boards. There is strong support by the police for neighbourhood management development and their drive and leadership has resulted in NPUs, partners and the community actively working together in neighbourhood co-ordination areas and making a demonstrable improvement to local outcomes. Multi-agency problem-solving groups are in place and include primary care trusts, the police, the probation service, trading standards, Connexions and youth services.
- A number of neighbourhoods within Crewe have been highlighted as requiring more intensive partnership activity to address issues. While there has been no specific funding, a neighbourhood renewal panel has been formed, with the police as an active member, and a NAM meeting has taken place. In one area a pilot of more intensive neighbourhood management activity involving police, fire, borough council, county council and housing association partners is being undertaken and will be subject to evaluation.
- ROAM is an IT application that allows staff to access the force's IT network from any external location. This requires a small payment to purchase a security tag and set up access and then allows staff to access force systems from partner premises. While there is a limited number of users who can be logged on to the portal at any one time, this has been used to good effect.
- NIM principles are systematically embedded in the joint problem-solving process. Joint strategic assessments reflect LAA/LSP priorities. Joint strategic assessments have been devised in all three BCUs, together with their relevant CDRP, and NIM processes reflect identified priorities, which routinely include community priorities.
- The force has increased the visibility of NHP within the intelligence process through the inclusion of neighbourhood priorities in all three BCU control strategies and amendments to the level 2 control strategies to allow staff to see where they add value in relation to NHP.

- The intelligence processes have been realigned to apply greater focus on community priorities by providing visibility within the TCG process. NPU inspectors identify the top three priorities for their whole NPU and feed these into the level 1 TCG, where they are considered and bids for additional resources to support the NPU activities are received as appropriate. This includes the option to bid for level 2 support in addition to level 1 assets.
- The process of tasking and co-ordinating assets to joint problem-solving activity varies between NPU areas, but all provide a responsive process that delivers tangible results. Where the NAM format is in place, this is used as the platform for joint tasking, supported by regular dialogue between partners, while in other areas there are formal joint tasking meetings. In every case the local partnership inspectors are an integral part of the process. In addition to short-term responses, these processes can result in long-term problem-solving activity, for example the development of a neighbourhood management project in the Bromley Farm area which followed a decision at a community TCG meeting.
- The force has enhanced the briefing process to allow an individual to identify what their particular role/geographic area of responsibility for the tour of duty they are commencing will be. Once they have submitted this information, a bespoke briefing package is presented to them. One example of this is that staff working within the call-handling function receive tailored briefings that include local community priorities and information on initiatives to address these issues; they can then use this to prioritise calls for service and demonstrate clear understanding of local issues to members of the public. To reinforce this knowledge, the call-handling centre has a series of TV screens that are used to constantly display priority briefing items for each BCU.
- Through the CAM process the community is able to formally sign off priorities when significant progress has been made and highlight new priorities for action at the end of the meetings. Likewise, at NAM meetings the community receives updates on activity and is in a position to hold the various agencies to account for their successes at resolving the issues raised.
- Often, community priorities for action are identified by police and partner analysis of data, such as a number of reports of anti-social behaviour in an area from a variety of individuals resulting in proactive activity to address the problem. Results of such activity are fed back to the community through contacts with key individuals, informal one-off contacts, a wide variety of engagement meetings, and circulation of newsletters and press releases.
- In Northern BCU, a number of the most deprived neighbourhoods have neighbourhood management boards with membership made up of both partner agency representatives and local members of the public in a 50:50 split. These boards receive updates on partnership activity and drive forward activity. In this way the local community is able to apply an influential voice to the activity of the police and partners.
- Between January and May 2007, some 400 officers and partners undertook one-day problem-solving training using the SARA methodology as a result of centrally driven activity, while BCUs and individual NPUs have provided training locally on a wide variety of issues including engagement and joint problem solving.
- In January 2008, the force appointed a training manager to undertake delivery of NPU training across the force area. To inform this work it completed a training needs

assessment resulting in a number of recommendations for action which are being progressed. In the interim the force continues to deliver focused training on key issues, with training developed locally by one of the BCU 'champions'.

- BCU training days and focused, NPU-specific development activity have included a wide variety of topics designed to enhance engagement and joint problem-solving activity; some of this training has been delivered and received by partners. Examples include anti-social behaviour tools and powers, alcohol awareness, restorative justice and the roles of various partner agencies.
- In Warrington, with the formation of a new NPU to specifically address night-time economy issues, bespoke training was developed to enhance special constables' knowledge of licensing powers and issues. This training was delivered in partnership with Warrington Borough Council, the police and staff from the ArcAngel initiative, with support from local licensees.

Work in progress

- The force has introduced the Atlas system as a key intelligence and tasking platform. The force is migrating current IT systems in a prioritised manner. As part of this work the force is considering how best to record joint problem-solving activity.
- Phase 1 of CO-STAR is live and allows partnership access to shared data. The force is supporting the development of phase 2 of this project, commencing in August 2008, which aims to allow the public access to appropriate elements of this data and to the services of partners via a portal.
- It has been recognised that there is potential for cross-over between the work of analysts employed by the police, CDRPs and other key partners. In Northern BCU, work is under way to consider how the activity of all these individuals can be aligned to maximise outputs that benefit all key stakeholders.
- There are currently joint strategic assessments for each CDRP area in the force and a key element of the LGR change management process is the production of joint strategic assessments for the new areas. These will be produced by October 2008 with shadow CDRPs for the two new unitary areas by Christmas 2008, prior to their formal establishment in April 2009.
- The recently developed NHP performance management framework includes a section specifically focusing on how the community is updated on progress against community priorities that they have influenced. This framework highlights the varying levels of quality of this activity and provides a clear direction on continuous improvement in this regard.
- The force is in the process of introducing Street Safe activity in specific localities. This involves the police, with partners, visiting all homes within the area and identifying community priorities that are then responded to in partnership. After activity has been conducted, the Street Safe process is completed again and the community asked if the activity has resolved the priorities that they raised.
- Throughout 2008, the number of neighbourhood management boards within Northern BCU is to increase so that every neighbourhood co-ordination area in Warrington will be serviced by a board that includes partnership and public membership.

- Having completed a training needs assessment for all aspects of NHP training, courses are being developed. While these are based on the NPIA modules, they have been amended to better reflect need within the force, where NPU structures, engagement and joint problem-solving activity have been under way for some time. The intention is to provide training locally and, where possible, to include local partners in the delivery and receipt of training.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force should develop an agreed recording mechanism for problem-solving activity, which is consistently applied and is flexible enough to allow the recording of detailed long-term activity as well as short-term routine responses. The inspection highlighted a mixed approach to the threshold of problem-solving activity that would generate a record on the PROMS database and a fall-off in the use of that system in anticipation of Atlas developments. This will allow supervisors and managers to develop systematic oversight of the joint problem-solving activity undertaken, testing the level and quality of police activity.
- The force should systematically evaluate outcomes and promulgate good practice resulting from police and partnership activity in undertaking joint problem solving to address local community priorities.
- The force should seek ways to maximise returns from the development of a joint problem-solving database. These could include integration with the mobile data project and allowing partners to record their activity directly onto the system to further engender joint ownership of solutions to problems.
- Although a broad vision of neighbourhood management is understood by senior managers, the force and police authority should ensure that all relevant staff, in particular BCU commanders, are aware of the corporate direction and strategic developments being driven with key partners. This will ensure that consistent messages are delivered and that development at a local level is in line with corporate requirements.
- The force should ensure that development of neighbourhood management continues under the umbrella of the safer and stronger communities unit (SSCU), which provides a common link between all BCU implementation teams. Currently, a proactive approach is being applied with a view to improving the effectiveness of ongoing arrangements, fully recognising the value of partnership input.
- The force should systematically monitor and enforce formal community sign-off of priorities when they have been resolved, when significant progress has been made, or when a key milestone has been met. The inspection revealed a varied approach to communities formally signing off priorities resolved outside the CAM process. Formal sign-off must be from a person who raised the problem and, where that sign-off is verbal, it should be endorsed in writing by a supervisor.
- As emergent processes for neighbourhood management develop, the force should assess the training needs of key partners, the community and the police and formally evaluate any resultant training in the same manner as that applied to internal police training. This will ensure that all key partners and the community are best positioned to contribute to joint problem-solving initiatives.

The outcomes of Neighbourhood policing are being realised by the surveyed public.

	SPI 2a Percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job		KDI Percentage of people who agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area		SPI 10b Percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour	
	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change
Cheshire	+1.2pp	+8.9pp	+2.0pp	+8.7pp	-1.0pp	-1.5pp

*'pp' is percentage points.

Summary statement

The SPI/KDI data shows that force performance is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

The SPI/KDI data also shows that force performance is significantly improved compared with two years ago.

Context

The SPI and KDI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These figures are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'The difference in force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of how statistical significance is used at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

As part of the BCS, approximately 1,000 interviews are undertaken in each force area in England and Wales. Included in the survey is the individual's assessment of whether the local police are doing a good job, whether the police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in their area, and whether anti-social behaviour in their area is a problem.

Strengths

SPI 2a – percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.

51.9% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think that their local police do a good or excellent job, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 51.9% think that their local police do a good or excellent job, compared with 43.0% in the year ending March 2006.

KDI – percentage of people who agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area.

51.6% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 51.6% of people surveyed agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area, compared with 42.9% in the year ending March 2006.

SPI 10b – percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour.

13.2% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 13.2% of people surveyed think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, compared with 14.7% in the year ending March 2006.

Force-level and local satisfaction/confidence measures are used to inform service delivery.

Summary statement

The force understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are systematically made to improve local service delivery.

Strengths

- To address, develop and improve the force's effectiveness in citizen focus delivery, a major reform programme has been undertaken, sponsored and driven by the deputy chief constable. This programme was developed against the backdrop of the force having the lowest level of customer satisfaction for the 'whole experience' in figures released in the summer of 2006.
- The force has introduced CSDs within each BCU with responsibility for assessing and allocating crime, acting as the point of contact for all existing customers for updates on the progress of investigations, and monitoring and measuring compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

- Operation QUEST is a Home Office-sponsored programme focused on operational process improvement and capability building. Following initial piloting, with rigorous evaluation, the process changes in one BCU have now been rolled out to the force. These included a review of how the force managed grade 3 (slower-time response) calls for service, which were generally resourced by NPU officers many days after the initial contact. Process improvements have resulted in a more timely response by NPU officers using an appointment system; it may be inferred that in part this is directly responsible for increasing confidence and satisfaction levels among the public.
- Through the QUEST project, the force has built on the level of performance data considered at force and BCU PIMs, which previously had drawn in the main on BCU- and force-level SPI data for satisfaction and confidence. There is a systematic approach to establishing service users' views, with at least 1,000 calls each month being made to users of each BCU-based CSD. Both positive and negative feedback is recorded on a corporate spreadsheet and, when negative comment is made, focused activity is undertaken to recover the situation. The feedback is graded to reflect levels of satisfaction identified. Each BCU submits its survey to the monthly citizen focus working group (CFWG) chaired by the DCC, which allows the force to systematically consider 3,000 sets of feedback each month.
- In addition to police data, the force makes use of partnership survey data to better understand communities and the impact of police and partnership responses. One such survey is the annual household survey completed by Stronger Together in Warrington, which uses a citizens panel of 177 residents and asks repeat questions year on year to assess perceived changes in the area.
- The SSCU oversees the implementation of a localised public perception survey delivered as part of the LPSA 2 agreement for Cheshire. This is conducted in the 19 areas/neighbourhoods serviced by the CAM process and is designed to give the force an understanding of how big a problem the public perceive crime and anti-social behaviour to be within their local areas, in addition to gaining feedback on feelings of safety and how the police might best engage with the public to deal with issues raised.
- The police authority receives regular updates from the force on confidence and satisfaction survey results and over time has demonstrably held the force to account for improvements through its service improvement panel. Additionally, there are two police authority members on the force's public safety and people programme boards.
- In one area of Widnes, to address a long-term problem with anti-social behaviour, the police and partners drove forward co-ordinated activity, including the use of dispersal orders, to improve the quality of life for residents in both the short and long term. As part of this activity, which was driven by the CDRP, detailed survey work was undertaken to assess impacts; this included PCSOs visiting households and completing a structured questionnaire.

Work in progress

- The force has recently developed an NHP performance management framework that reviews the contribution not only of NPUs but also of other resources to the delivery of NHP. This framework includes consideration of satisfaction and confidence at BCU levels and additional data sources, such as that provided by Stronger Together in Warrington.

- While survey activity for the 2008/09 element of the LPSA 2 ended on 31 March 2008, an additional 1,500 people were also surveyed before 20 April in a bid to boost response rates and to provide the force with more meaningful data. The results of these additional surveys and those already conducted will form a key part of the performance framework for NHP. The force hopes to extend the scope of this survey across the whole of Cheshire as opposed to just the CAM areas, to ensure that the perceptions of other neighbourhoods are also heard and taken into account by the force. However, the force's ability to do this is dependent on its ability to meet targets set within this LPSA, at which point it will receive a reward grant that could be used to extend the scope of the survey.
- The force is in the process of introducing Street Safe activity in specific localities. This involves the police, with partners, visiting all homes within the area and identifying community priorities that are then responded to in partnership. After activity has been conducted, the Street Safe process is completed again. In this way the force will be able to assess the impact of activity to improve confidence and satisfaction in policing within defined areas.

The force demonstrates sustainable plans for Neighbourhood Policing.

Summary statement

The force and the police authority have convincingly shown that Neighbourhood Policing will be sustained beyond April 2008.

Strengths

- The force policing plan and corresponding BCU business plans place the provision of NHP as the foundation stone of service delivery. In April 2005, the force undertook a major restructure with a focus on delivering NHP, and in 2006 introduced the Safer and Stronger Neighbourhoods project to provide the force with an opportunity to move from NHP to neighbourhood management in partnership with local authorities and other key stakeholders. To drive the Safer and Stronger developments within the force beyond the life of the project, an SSCU was introduced within the force operations directorate. Operational since January 2007, the role of the SSCU is to lead the force in the development of neighbourhood management and NHP, partnership working and community engagement.
- The force and police authority have demonstrated a commitment to sustaining and enhancing NHP. In the current financial year, plans include a growth of 35 officers. To resource the nineteenth NPU, the force critically reviewed posts within the force to provide opportunities for growth from existing resources, with the support of additional funding from the LSP. The police authority has a reserves policy as part of the budget-setting process to ensure that reserves do not fall below 3% net revenue expenditure.
- The force committed to partnership funding arrangements for PCSOs as a commitment to partnership-based problem solving with partners including parish councils, district councils, registered social landlords, educational establishments, town centre partnerships, charities and other private companies. The force has 237

PCSOs, over half of whom are partner funded, and service level agreements (SLAs) have been introduced to cover issues such as funding and deployment arrangements. While many partners agreed to rolling contracts for a minimum of two years, others have made three-year fixed-term commitments. The appointment of a PCSO co-ordinator post within the SSCU reflects the force's commitment to maintaining this vital resource element of NPUs, with part of their remit being to address the issue of funding the outstanding posts, as well as securing future funding.

- In January 2008, the force appointed a training manager to undertake delivery of NPU training across the force area. To inform this work it completed a training needs assessment, resulting in a number of recommendations for action that are being progressed. In the interim, the force continues to deliver focused training on key issues, with training developed locally by one of the BCU 'champions'.
- The ACC (territorial policing) effectively drives progress of NHP in an operational context, together with BCU commanders, and is responsible for effective service delivery, reinforced through the performance framework.
- The force has an NHP development action that is owned at a strategic level by the ACC (territorial policing) and supported by the SSCU. This is informed by the 2007 HMIC inspection, the NPIA and self-inspection. The force development plan is managed by performance development through a force implementation group meeting every fortnight to review activity against key milestones. There is clear evidence that the plan has resulted in demonstrable progress being made and that there is effective leadership at both force and BCU level, with NPU staff clearly engaged in the development process.
- The public safety programme board, chaired by ACC (territorial policing) and with force, police authority and partnership membership, oversees the development of NHP. Activity is directed through regular 'champions' meetings, which have representation at chief inspector level from each BCU. The force plan is translated into action through BCU business plans, which are underpinned by BCU action plans that are driven in BCUs by the 'champion'. As an example, in Eastern BCU the local action plan is driven forward by weekly meetings; all NPU inspectors attend, in person or via video conferencing, and one inspector, who was previously an NPU inspector, is dedicated to developing local responses and supporting force development requirements such as training packages.
- The police authority takes an active interest in the development of NHP at both strategic and tactical levels. A clear and strong response followed the outcome of the previous NHP inspection conducted by HMIC. The police authority has recently changed its governance arrangements to include an engagement committee chaired by the lead for NHP, who is also an active member of the force's public safety board.
- The police authority receives regular updates from the force on confidence and satisfaction survey results and over time has demonstrably held the force to account for improvements through its service improvement panel. Additionally, there are two police authority members on the force's public safety and people programme boards.
- The police authority has a contact plan, which is regularly reviewed and has specific action plans, detailing its approach to engagement with opinion formers, opinion leaders, community representatives and diverse groups. The plan sets out the various methods of contact and the responsibility of the police authority's engagement committee to monitor and develop activity.

- All police authority members have a link with one or two NPUs and take an active part in the scrutiny of local NHP activity and its development. Member links are with the respective BCU commanders and NPU inspectors; in addition, focus groups with community officers and PCSOs are facilitated in NPUs by members and allow the members to focus on satisfaction and confidence performance and activity at a local level.

Work in progress

- The force was adopted as an NHP national demonstration site for workforce modernisation (WFM) within NHP and developments are being progressed. The key objective of the NHP WFM project was to produce more efficient and effective ways of providing NHP than existing resource methods allow, by introducing re-engineered processes and different workforce configurations.
- The ACC (territorial policing) has engaged with key internal stakeholders to develop a strategy to embed NHP across all disciplines within the force. This work has involved holding workshops and visioning sessions with staff from NPUs, call management, response and other areas to determine current perceptions of policing style and to reinforce key aspects of the NHP philosophy. From this an action plan has been developed to roll out a programme for embedding cultural change within NHP.

Developing practice

See Appendix 2.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

<p>2007/08 Developing Citizen Focus Policing Summary of judgement</p>	<p>Meeting the standard</p>
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Exceeding the standard

During this inspection the force was assessed against SGC in a number of key areas of Developing Citizen Focus Policing. To discern between forces, a moderation process has been applied to determine the grading of the force.

The force demonstrates that it meets the standard, and in addition the force has developed activities that lead to improved outcomes by systematically driving a reform programme which included significant changes to call management and resource deployment processes. The force's performance in the SPIs/KDI has significantly improved compared with its performance two years ago, namely the satisfaction with the overall service provided.

Strengths

- To address, develop and improve the force's effectiveness in citizen focus delivery, a major reform programme has been undertaken, sponsored and driven by the DCC. This programme was developed against the backdrop of the force having the lowest level of customer satisfaction for the 'whole experience' in figures released in the summer of 2006.
- A key element of this programme has been the delivery of citizen focus workshops. To date, the DCC has led all 25 of these workshops, which have been attended by over 1,000 staff from the TPT and NPUs.
- The force has introduced CSDs within each BCU with responsibility for assessing and allocating crime, acting as the point of contact for all existing customers for updates on the progress of investigations, and monitoring and measuring compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.
- Operation QUEST is a Home Office-sponsored programme focused on operational process improvement and capability building. The force was in the second group of three forces nationally to undertake a QUEST project; the project provided a team of consultants working in the force, with a force project team, for five months. Following initial piloting, with rigorous evaluation, the process changes in one BCU have now been rolled out to the force.
- Operation QUEST had four distinct objectives: to take forward the force's ambition and policing style; to support a problem-solving approach to reducing the crime and disorder problems that most affect the community; visible and accessible policing; and to improve the confidence and capability in neighbourhoods to be protected and to protect themselves. Capability work concentrated on skills transfer via on-the-job training, establishing robust performance metrics, building project management skills, and the development of a change team to build capability for roll-out.
- Additionally, the aim of the QUEST project in Cheshire Constabulary was to develop a team approach to building force-wide capability to drive, evaluate and sustain new

operational process improvement. This has led to significant changes in the way officers and staff are empowered to make appropriate decisions regarding grade 1 and 2 incidents (those requiring an emergency and within-the-hour response), with the focus very much on customer satisfaction. Grade 3 incidents are now resourced by way of a scheduled appointment within 24 hours of the call being made, at a time to suit the customer.

- A further development includes the briefing of call-handling staff, with a clear focus on three primary objectives for each BCU. This has been supported by the introduction of 15 sergeants, with specific responsibility for allocated BCUs, within the resource deployment centre (RDC). The sergeants are predominantly TPT sergeants, bringing experience and credibility to the process. Their role is to ensure that appropriate grading and response are given to every incident. Further flexibility allows them to re-grade any incident and ensure that the correct response attention is given.
- Significant performance gains have been achieved: grade 1 and 2 response times have improved, there are fewer grade 3 incidents, customer confidence and satisfaction levels have increased through the appointments process, and there has been an overall reduction in the number of incidents from a peak of 32,206 in August 2007 to 25,248 in April 2008.
- While a key focus for the force was to improve the quality of customer experience when reporting incidents to the police, business benefits are being realised in parallel with this through the increased use of telephone resolution and scheduled appointments. The external consultants, KPMG, during an early review of the project, suggested that these may result in £3.45 million of annualised benefits in staff time.
- Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 81.7% of people surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 73.5% in the year ending March 2006.
- Analysis of the improvement between the years ending March 2006 and 2008 for all forces in England and Wales reveals that Cheshire Constabulary demonstrated the second highest percentage increase in satisfaction with overall service.

A Citizen Focus ethos is embedded across the force, establishing an initial baseline.

Summary statement

The force understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are systematically made to improve local service delivery. The force comprehensively communicates the National Quality of Service Commitment standards, the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime standards and the force corporate/accessibility standards to its communities.

Service users' views are sought and are used to improve service delivery.

Strengths

- The force routinely uses a range of methods to identify users' views and to make demonstrable improvement to service delivery. Performance data, surveys, the

CFWG, direction and control complaints, environmental scanning and media articles are used effectively.

- The qualitative ('Feel Safe') element of the force's strapline 'Be Safe Feel Safe' requires the force to regularly measure how safe the public in Cheshire 'feel' or perceive themselves to be. The SSCU oversees the implementation of a localised public perception survey delivered as part of the LPSA 2 agreement for Cheshire. This is conducted in the 19 neighbourhoods serviced by the CAM process and is designed to give the force an understanding of how big a problem the public perceive crime and anti-social behaviour to be within their local areas, in addition to gaining feedback on feelings of safety and how the police might best engage with the public to deal with issues raised.
- There is a systematic and proactive approach to establishing service users' views, with at least 1,000 calls each month being made to users of each BCU-based CSD. Both positive and negative feedback is recorded on a corporate spreadsheet and, when negative comment is made, focused activity is undertaken to attain service recovery. The feedback is graded to reflect the levels of satisfaction identified. Each BCU submits its survey to the monthly CFWG chaired by the DCC, which allows the force to systematically consider 3,000 sets of feedback each month. The DCC writes to the officer or staff involved in those incidents that resulted in the highest praise from the customer.
- The Cheshire Citizens Panel was established in 2003 with the aim of providing an easily accessible source of feedback on policing matters from non-service users. Current membership of the Citizens Panel stands at 750 people. There is a concentration of members in smaller towns and in rural areas, rather than in the more urbanised areas of Warrington, Halton and Chester. Citizens Panel members have been surveyed on a variety of issues since the panel was established, ranging from perceptions of gender equality within the force to opinions on police service restructuring. A series of surveys on NHP have been completed, the first following restructuring in 2005, with follow-up surveys in August 2006 and again in June 2007. The aim of the second survey was to revisit the issues raised by the first and to measure any shift in opinion. The results showed a generally positive view of local policing and an improvement in perceptions of levels of crime.
- In addition to the routine surveys above, the force also conducts a number of impromptu surveys throughout the year. These surveys are ad hoc in nature and cover specific subjects of interest to the force. For example, the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership has recently conducted a survey with over 1,000 residents from Cheshire, Halton and Warrington, asking their views on road death and associated injury. The overall aim of the survey was to produce a baseline audit of public attitudes to road safety.
- Every victim of domestic burglary receives a package that includes a survey in which various aspects of the customer experience are explored. The results of this survey, which include qualitative statements from victims, are used to inform service delivery improvements through the CFWG.
- As part of the considerations for the council tax precept of 2008/09, the force engaged MORI to conduct a poll of 300 people to establish what policing services they would like to see improved and how much they would be prepared to pay for this. In addition to its primary purpose, this poll provided the force with information to inform day-to-day activity. These results were used to inform policing plan developments.

- The police authority conducts statutory community forum liaison meetings in all areas of the force. Feedback is used to inform relevant strategic and tactical decisions.
- IAGs at both strategic (force) and tactical (BCU) levels are influencing issues across all strands of policing. BCU-based IAGs have a wide membership and represent a number of hard-to-reach groups.
- The communications department undertakes daily media scrutiny at force level while the BCU press liaison officers monitor local media and produce monthly analysis in the form of a balanced scorecard showing positive and negative issues at NPU level; these are fed to each NPU inspector.
- The force works with Greater Manchester Police and Lancashire Constabulary to complete environmental scanning which informs business planning and strategic developments in a systematic manner.
- The force call-handling centre has been restructured to introduce a CSD within the structure for dealing with non-emergency calls to the force. All such calls are answered by the switchboard, which directs the caller to the appropriate place in the force to best respond to the nature of the call. The force identified that some callers, rather than wanting to report a new incident, were seeking updates on progress of crimes/incidents they previously reported or were making other requests that were time consuming and having an impact on the overall call-handling service. By dedicating a small number of staff to addressing these issues, the callers received a quality service without adversely affecting the overall speed of recording new calls for service. The introduction of BCU-based CSDs is seeing a reduced demand for the call-handling CSD, with the initiative being taken to inform callers of crime numbers and investigating officer details and updating them as crimes progress.
- As part of the QUEST project, the RDC within the call-handling process has had an increase in supervision of three sergeants, 24 hours per day, briefing all call-handling staff on BCU priorities. These sergeants are BCU resources and constantly review the calls for service within their own BCU. Their local focus and knowledge allow them to prioritise calls and deploy resources in a more effective manner than when call-handling staff alone were managing the response. An example of where this has added value is the deployment of specialist investigators, such as those within public protection units, direct to incidents where from the outset it is apparent that their skills will be required.
- The force has clear call-grading policies that define the level and speed of police response to particular types of incident. Historically, these policies were rigidly applied, which, although creating a consistent approach, did not allow for local flexibility of application to meet the needs of the customer or key local priorities. A key element of the QUEST project was to empower officers and staff to make appropriate decisions regarding call grading, with the focus very much on customer satisfaction. Equally, calls that would generally have been referred to NPU staff for slow-time response, such as reports of anti-social behaviour, can be elevated to a faster-time response in line with community priorities.
- Before the QUEST project, grade 3 incidents (requiring a slower-time response) were created by call-handling staff, the customer was given only a broad, and often unreliable, expectation of when officers would respond, and the call was passed to the relevant BCU to manage. The project delivered a system of fixed appointments that are made with the customer at the time of their first call and resourced by NPU

staff who are dedicated to appointments for specific tours of duty within their area. In this way the customer is clear about the time of the police response; this has been influential in improving public satisfaction.

- The CSDs within each BCU are effectively resourced, with an inspector leading a team of sergeants and police officers/staff including a dedicated researcher/performance analyst. These have seven-day-a-week opening and are tasked with evaluating crimes and incidents and informing the customer on how the issues they have raised will be dealt with. CSD staff attend daily TCG meetings, not only to ensure that they are appropriately focused but also to identify 'good news messages', such as arrests for priority crime types, which can be used to add value to discussions with customers throughout the day.
- The force has developed standard operating procedures for the CSDs, which provide clarity and focus to those involved in the call and incident management process. These set out roles and responsibilities and minimum staffing levels across their opening hours and provide a clear focus on internal and external customer service while ensuring that appropriate police responses are deployed to ensure public safety and bring offenders to justice.
- Each CSD makes between 1,100 and 1,400 contacts with customers per week and activity is prioritised with a key focus on violent crime, hate crime, domestic burglary, anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime, and a secondary focus on criminal damage incidents. A key focus of the CSD is proactive contact with customers to update them on their crime or incident in line with defined timelines. In general terms, the target is to update a victim of crime within 24 hours if the matter is to be investigated and within a maximum of seven days if the matter is to be finalised with no further police action.
- In addition to the formal survey work undertaken by the CSD researcher, every contact with a customer involves an element of establishing customer satisfaction. A key focus is to be proactive in service recovery, with CSD staff seeking to resolve issues directly or through escalation within the supervisory structures of the CSD.
- The force has developed an approach to use text messaging when undertaking missing person enquiries. As part of this work, the force is able to text in a variety of languages, which assists in removing barriers to communication with some people.
- The force has taken action over time to enhance the provision of customer service when deploying crime scene investigators (CSIs). Allocation to BCU areas and use of the Airwave system allow officers to contact a CSI direct for advice and establish the likely response times when setting expectations for victims of crime. Once an officer identifies that a CSI response is appropriate, the CSI is informed by radio and the details of the incident are sent direct to their BlackBerry. The approach has changed from a CSI attending as soon as possible to the CSI contacting the victim at that stage and making an appointment. If the incident is reported overnight, the CSI mailbox receives the tasking request and an appointment is made with the victim through contact the following morning. This approach is being performance managed and had seen an increase to 78% of responses being made by appointment at the time of the inspection. Making an appointment is not relevant in every case, eg when the CSI and victim are in close proximity.
- The senior CSIs review the work of their staff in a formal manner by reviewing at least six scene attendances per month. Part of this review includes contacting the

customer and using the same survey methodology as that applied to all reports of burglary.

- The police authority receives regular updates from the force on confidence and satisfaction survey results and over time has demonstrably held the force to account for improvements through its performance panel. Additionally, there are two police authority members on the force's public safety and people programme boards.
- The police authority takes an active interest in the development of NHP at both strategic and tactical levels, and therefore also an interest in levels of satisfaction and confidence. A clear and strong response followed the outcome of the previous NHP inspection conducted by HMIC. The police authority has recently changed its governance arrangements to include an engagement committee chaired by the lead for NHP, who is also an active member of the force's public safety board.
- The police authority has a contact plan, which is regularly reviewed and has specific action plans, detailing its approach to engagement with opinion formers, opinion leaders, community representatives and diverse groups. The plan sets out the various methods of contact and the responsibility of the police authority's engagement committee to monitor and develop activity.
- All police authority members have a link with one or two different NPUs across the force and take an active part in the scrutiny of local NHP activity and its development. Member links are with the respective BCU commanders and NPU inspectors; in addition, focus groups with community officers and PCSOs are facilitated in NPUs by members and allow the members to focus on satisfaction and confidence performance and activity at a local level.

Work in progress

- While survey activity for the 2008/09 element of the LPSA 2 ended on 31 March 2008, an additional 1,500 people were also surveyed before 20 April in a bid to boost response rates and to provide the force with more meaningful data to work with and for the proposal of future developments. The results of these additional surveys and those already conducted will form a key part of the performance framework for NHP.
- The force has developed the NHP performance framework to capture qualitative information as well as quantitative information, the key thrust of this development being self-assessment undertaken by NPU inspectors. At the time of the inspection, the first iteration of the self-assessment had been completed by every NPU. As the process develops, each NPU assessment will be reviewed by the relevant BCU-based chief inspector, peer reviewed by a chief inspector from another BCU, and finally shared with key individuals within the neighbourhoods to quality assure the perceptions held by the police. This will allow community buy-in to the process and will provide independent, quality views on policing performance and engagement.
- APACS (assessment of policing and community safety) introduces a new series of perception measures. Performance against these measures (at a local authority level) will be obtained through the implementation of a new local government 'place' survey, which is scheduled to be conducted every two years beginning in late summer/autumn 2008.
- Currently, Cheshire only reports customer satisfaction performance in terms of the national SPIs; however, it is the intent of the force to develop its reporting capability during 2008/09 to identify the drivers for satisfaction and dissatisfaction at BCU level

through the use of further diagnostic questions. For example, of the total number of respondents who reported that they were either 'completely', 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the way in which they were treated by Cheshire Constabulary, how many reported that the officer or member of staff: listened to what they had to say; dealt with them sympathetically; treated them politely; made an effort to understand their enquiry; or appeared to take the matter seriously? In January 2008 this approach was piloted, and the force identified a number of drivers such as that: 32% of dissatisfaction relating to ease of contact was caused by the victim not knowing which telephone number they were to use; 81% of dissatisfaction relating to follow-up was caused by customers wanting more information regarding their investigation; and 60% of dissatisfaction relating to treatment was caused by a lack of empathy and a feeling that their crime/incident was dealt with as a matter of routine by the staff member. This additional level of reporting will enable BCUs to determine what actions or behaviours drive customer satisfaction, thus enabling the force to inform and train staff to ensure that they are included as minimum standards for customer contact.

- The force is in the process of reviewing key IT systems within the call management process. One consideration is the purchase of a customer relationship management system that will enhance the awareness of call-taking staff by allowing them to systematically identify when a caller has previously contacted the police and also by prompting them about key issues that may be relevant to this caller, for example that the nature or location of the incident requires an enhanced level of response because of local initiatives.
- The IT system used to record scene attendance by CSIs has recently changed. Performance analysis functionality is allowing the force to systematically monitor forensic management as an end-to-end process and will include new information on the time taken to attend scenes by category. This information will be given visibility, along with other key investigative data, within the force PIM.
- The force shares its head of forensics with North Wales Police, which allows organisational good practice and learning to be shared. In North Wales, university students have been engaged in assessing customer satisfaction with CSI attendance. Cheshire Constabulary has piloted an approach to the tasking of CSIs where an experienced operator undertakes a telephone assessment of crime scenes that have already had CSI requests from officers and some that have not, and uses this assessment to prioritise response. Following attendance by the CSI at the scene, further contact is made to establish customer views and test policy compliance, such as providing advice on cleaning the scene.
- The force received ISO accreditation for all its forensic processes in December 2007 and is building on that achievement with the development of systems to monitor, record and action both positive and negative feedback. This is being achieved by the introduction of a single mailbox to record results of customer feedback.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force is making considerable investments in the level of survey activity being undertaken by CSDs to assess service delivery as part of a clear drive to enhance public satisfaction with the crime and incident-handling process. The force should keep the nature and subsequent analysis of this survey work under review to maximise its potential to inform strategic development issues, for example by including questions on policing priorities and levels of engagement and identifying

variations in satisfaction based on issues such as race, age and socio-economic data.

- The force should consider enhancing survey work by developing methods of two-way communication with customers through the use of IT systems. Examples might include encouraging those visiting police station front counters or being contacted by CSDs or through links on the website to subscribe to NPU newsletters. This will entail customers providing personal email addresses and will offer opportunities to circulate surveys and key messages on a periodic basis. In this way a broader base for customer surveys could be established in a cost-effective way while emphasising links to NHP through the communication of key messages on a regular basis.

Quality of service complaints are dealt with effectively.

Strengths

- Within the Cheshire Police Authority Policing Plan (2008–11), the Chief Constable contextualises the National Quality of Service Commitment (NQOSC) and the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime by setting out his intention to 'achieve excellence in policing', and the plan includes specific reference to compliance with both victim and witness codes.
- Service standards are communicated in the local policing plan summary (*Your policing*), which is circulated to every household in the force area annually and is also available on the internet. The plan is available in audio format for those who require it and can be translated into seven different languages on request. The 2007/08 edition includes a major section entitled 'Making sure you're satisfied', which, although not setting out the NQOSC and the Code of Practice for Victims, contextualises them. The summer 2008 edition contains a leading article explaining why delivery of service standards is important and outlining the key organisational changes that have been made to deliver them.
- The force produced 360,000 copies of a document that explained how to contact the police, including the call-grading process, as well as tkey partners. These were delivered to every household in the force area and included feedback sheets asking customers to comment on ease of contact; 400 responses were received, with the results being used to inform service delivery.
- The force website includes full details of the NQOSC, the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the Witness Charter. Additionally, there is a section specifically highlighting what service victims and witnesses can expect from the police, which also includes details of a webchat where questions were answered by the Chief Constable and partners about The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.
- All victims of crime are given a leaflet that explains in broad terms what help is available, how the investigation will be conducted, how to get compensation, what will happen if it goes to court and who else to contact for help or support. This leaflet is also available on the force website, where it is available in a further eight languages.
- The force website has clear information on how to use the RNID typetalk service, which enables deafblind, deafened, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired people to

communicate with hearing people and explains how calls to the emergency services will be handled.

- The force has consistently worked with all the diverse communities within the force area to enhance service provision in a manner that is responsive to their specific needs. An example of an outcome from this activity is the introduction of 49 third-party hate crime reporting centres, to enhance access to services for vulnerable groups.
- Citizen focus standards are communicated to the public through dialogue with callers. QUEST has provided significant improvement and the flexibility to provide a better response to customer needs, particularly evident through the appointments system.
- The force uses information from quality of service complaints to improve service delivery; the information includes trends, causes and gaps in service, and action is implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness. All complaints are assessed by the head of the professional standards department (PSD) or their deputy to assess whether they relate to individual conduct or a service issue and are allocated for action accordingly. The force has established clear standards for dealing with direction and control complaints; the complainant is written to by the PSD to acknowledge receipt and identify what action is being taken, there is a target time for a final response of 28 days direct from the relevant local commander or PSD, and all cases are overseen by the PSD.
- All types of complaints are analysed to identify causation factors and categories at the conclusion of the investigation. This results in a front-sheet summary to every complaint file which includes a section for organisational learning. All such learning is recorded on a central database and is then tasked out to relevant policy holders to review and take necessary action.
- The information security and integrity group meets twice a year, chaired by the DCC, with membership drawn from a variety of departments including the PSD, HR, learning and development and the staff associations. This group considers organisational issues and is able to direct activity to address responses in a systematic way.
- The PSD provides standing inputs on courses for student officers, PCSOs and supervisors to increase awareness of responsibilities for each role and to provide learning from complaint issues.

Work in progress

- While the force systematically identifies organisational learning from complaints issues, there is no feedback loop to ensure that action is taken; instead, the person tasked with the issue is responsible for deciding on any response. The intention is that the performance review department will take ownership of reviewing activity by relevant policy owners to ensure that appropriate responses are delivered.

The force is monitoring its compliance with the National Quality of Service Commitment.

Strengths

- The force introduced a quality of service project to manage the introduction of the NQOSC in a systematic way, with the project subsequently closing when the required activity was embedded as business as usual for the relevant areas of the force.
- The force recognised that, over time, customer satisfaction levels recorded by SPI data had failed to improve, despite activity to try and address this throughout the force. In June 2007 the force formally recognised the importance of citizen focus policing and placed it at the heart of the force mission, ambition and core values with the development of a citizen focus strategy. The strategy's aim is to secure and maintain high levels of satisfaction and confidence through the consistent delivery of a first-class policing service that meets the needs of individuals and communities.
- The CFWG was introduced to oversee the various strands of activity that were being undertaken. Its terms of reference include: to determine what 'citizen focus' means to Cheshire Constabulary and communicate this definition to the organisation; to examine all internal and public-facing elements of police service delivery; to examine the extent to which it is citizen and customer focused; to proactively identify opportunities for service improvements; to oversee action plans for improvement; and to oversee and co-ordinate the development of a citizen-focused culture.
- The CFWG reports to the chief officer group via the 'knowing what works and why' programme board and has responsibility for developing the citizen focus delivery plan, co-ordinating activity and monitoring progress towards achieving the strategic aim and compliance with the NQOSC.
- The force recognises the importance of keeping the caller and/or victim up to date on the progress of their enquiry and achieves this through the customer contacts undertaken by the CSDs in each BCU. These proactive contacts, supported by correspondence by letter seek to ensure that the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime is complied with for all screened-out crimes and crimes allocated for investigation.
- Longer-term compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime remains the responsibility of the member of staff in charge of the investigation. While the force does not have a technical solution for measuring this compliance, or indeed for preventing non-compliance, it has given priority to raising awareness of the requirements of the Code of Practice to all investigative staff and to challenging non-compliance when identified through dip sampling or finalisation of the investigation by the CSD. The DCC has been integral in raising awareness of these issues through the delivery of citizen focus workshops, and the CSD does not finalise a crime enquiry until the victim has been informed of the result.
- There is a witness care unit in each BCU charged with ensuring that both victims and witnesses to offences that proceed to court are kept up to date and are assisted to attend court and give evidence, and with providing results of cases to victims in a timely manner. A review of workload across the force highlighted that in one area a lower level of service was being delivered due to higher workloads. As a result there was a successful growth bid for eight additional staff.

- All local criminal justice boards are asked to complete a quarterly self-assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The force completes this self-assessment, which allows it to systematically review its processes to deliver every element of compliance with the Code. This drives activity to seek to improve practices, processes and procedures.

Work in progress

- The force has recognised the need to enhance its compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in certain areas, in particular informing the victim of the result of a case that has not proceeded to court, eg a caution; the responsibility for this currently lies with the investigating officer. This, together with keeping victims updated on the state of the enquiry, is receiving a greater focus. This area is being managed by the force crime gold group and is to feature on the corporate risk register.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force should encourage the police authority to develop a more robust approach to overseeing the citizen focus agenda and the relevant development of the force in this area of business. It would be an advantage if the police authority nominated a lead member to develop a more thorough understanding of the various strands and interdependencies surrounding the provision of an acceptable customer experience.
- When progressing IT development projects, the force should seek to maximise opportunities to include systematic monitoring of compliance with service standards in a way that minimises bureaucracy. While the force invests considerable effort in dip sampling crime reports and direct survey work with users of policing services, the legacy IT systems do not allow systematic monitoring of compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime for investigations and with the NQOSC for other contacts with the force.

The force has integrated Citizen Focus and operational activity, such as contact management, response, Neighbourhood Policing, investigation and through the criminal justice process.

Summary statement

The force has implemented corporate service standards expected of all staff when dealing with the public. Satisfaction and confidence performance is fully integrated into BCU and force performance management processes.

The Force is striving to ensure it provides a positive experience to every person whom it has contact.

Strengths

- The force has implemented corporate standards for the way in which staff are expected to deal with everyone with whom they have contact; these standards are placed at the heart of the force mission, ambition and core values, which are clearly articulated through publications, posters and the overall managerial ethos of the organisation.

- Through its mission statement, the force is striving to provide a positive experience and aims to make sure that the people of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington are safe and feel safe. In line with this statement the force has an ambition which is to achieve excellence in policing, to maintain the confidence and respect of the community and to meet customer expectations. The force's core values are integrity, service, compassion, professionalism, fairness and equality.
- The inspections revealed a clear understanding of and buy-in to the placing of customer satisfaction and confidence at the heart of all activity. The systematic re-contacting of customers by the CSD, follow-up surveying of customers by the CSD and an emphasis on service recovery if the previous contacts had not achieved customers' expectations are all integral parts of the force's ability to deliver a positive experience to customers.
- The force has implemented corporate standards around staff accessibility. A central database is kept up to date for every member of staff and shows their department, role, skills and office telephone number.
- The force has a voicemail system, the use of which is governed by guidance that was widely circulated in spring 2007. This identifies when voicemail accounts should be created, the standard words to be used on messages, how often these accounts should be checked each day, the inclusion of absence messages to redirect the caller if the message will not be listened to within two working days and the responsibility of supervisors to ensure compliance with this guidance.
- As part of the force's customer satisfaction project, 'mystery shopping' of NPU voicemail accounts was completed. This involved leaving messages and assessing response times. These results have been used to inform activity to improve service delivery, which was found to be in need of development.
- Police station front counters have corporate opening hours and an intercom system is available out of hours to connect the public with the call-handling centre, which arranges an appropriate response. Front counters are designed to provide facilities including separate interview rooms. In one police station visited during the inspection (Warrington), despite the age and layout of the building a double entry system provides a private location to speak with customers, and a telephone that provides a direct link to the force crime-recording bureau is provided to allow members of the public to make a report direct rather than through the front office staff member, thereby providing increased efficiency.
- The force is training its staff on how to deliver the corporate standards and this is integrated across functions with strategic drive provided by the citizen focus strategy.
- Every member of call-handling staff has received recent refresher training on the police public assistance standard, together with an update on the QUEST project, which has introduced an increased element of empowerment for call-handling staff to step outside rigid call-grading criteria to deliver a bespoke response meeting the needs of the customer.
- The initial training process for all call-handling staff includes elements of soft skills training, which are then developed through a period of tutorship with experienced members of staff prior to the new staff member working alone.

- Each BCU has a number of helpdesks that provide the front counter service. When these were introduced, all staff undertook bespoke training that included elements of soft skills training.
- The force has training days built into the shift patterns of TPT and NPU staff. These have been used to deliver ongoing training; for example, training in Northern BCU included presentations on the Witness Charter in spring 2008, building on the refresher training on the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which had been delivered some months earlier.
- To address, develop and improve the force's effectiveness in citizen focus delivery, a major reform programme has been undertaken, sponsored and driven by the DCC, who has also given his personal commitment to the delivery of citizen focus workshops. He has attended all 25 workshops, which have examined business processes across the force and, through staff involvement, have sought out barriers to improvement. The content of these workshops has been locally cascaded to other key staff in the force by the CSD inspectors.
- The force mission, ambition and core values are clearly articulated through publications, posters and the overall managerial ethos of the organisation. The inspection revealed a consistent understanding among all staff of the drive to improve customer satisfaction levels through reviewing and improving practice, process and the general attitude of all staff.
- Compliance of communications staff with call-handling standards is undertaken in a systematic way, with a member of staff nominated to conduct a review of three incidents per month for every operator. The reviews use a defined framework that focuses on all aspects of call-handling skills. Results from this activity are fed to line managers to inform the personal development review process and are also viewed in terms of team performance.
- The inspection revealed a culture of recognition of good work by supervisors, with formal reward and recognition for delivering positive experiences to customers. A full section of the force's internal newspaper published in May 2008 was given over to celebrating success. This included various special constables, two officers nominated for a bravery award, members of an NPU and three members of Northern BCU receiving a monthly quality of service award. In one BCU visited, a full section of the notice boards was given over to photographs of a recent BCU awards night.
- The force regularly nominates officers and staff for national awards – including student officer of the year, PCSO of the year and special constable of the year – in addition to force, departmental and BCU commendations and awards.
- Through CSD practices, positive customer feedback is collated and, where appropriate, the DCC personally contacts members of staff to praise good service.
- The force nominates individuals for the national special constables and police support volunteers awards, and in 2007 one special constable from the force was awarded the Ferrers trophy in recognition of her sustained problem-solving work together with her actions as one of the first officers to arrive at the scene of the murder of a Warrington man.

Work in progress

- As part of the force's customer satisfaction project, detailed consideration was given to the management of NPU voicemail accounts. Following initial baseline assessment of performance, a pilot was introduced in one BCU with the management of its six NPU voicemail accounts being passed to the CSD. In February and March 2008, the 'mystery shopping' was repeated, which allowed comparative analysis of performance across all three BCUs. The force accepts that there is still significant room for improvement and is exploring a number of options for change, including the introduction of voicemail accounts for individual officers and staff.
- The force has commenced a formal review of its contact strategy, which is being driven forward by the DCC.
- The force is committed to developing the skills of call-handling staff in order to improve the customer experience. One such mechanism has been the introduction of coaches among the workforce who help colleagues to develop their skills, while another is encouraging staff to achieve an NVQ in contact management. In this regard, 25 staff have commenced the process with 12 staff trained as A1 assessors.
- To enhance the level of formal reward and recognition, in August 2008 the force is holding a formal awards event for special constables with financial support from a number of private companies. Included in the awards will be recognition for NHP contribution and best probationer of the year.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is scope to continue citizen focus workshops to instil commitment to and understanding of the citizen journey within Cheshire Constabulary. The force should identify all outward-facing functions, such as witness care bureaus, helpdesks and CSIs, and include staff in a second tranche of presentations or workshops to communicate key messages.

Performance processes partially include local satisfaction measures and locally established priorities.

Strengths

- Through the QUEST project, the force has built on the level of performance data considered at force and BCU PIMs, which previously had drawn in the main on BCU- and force-level SPI data for satisfaction and confidence. The systematic survey work undertaken by the CSD researcher/performance analyst identifies the nature of the incident and those involved in the policing response, allowing focused review of individual and team performance to be undertaken.
- In addition to police data, the force makes use of partnership survey data to better understand communities and the impact of police and partnership responses. One such survey is the annual household survey completed by Stronger Together in Warrington, which uses a citizens' panel of 177 residents and asks repeat questions year on year to assess perceived changes in the area.
- The SSCU oversees the implementation of a localised public perception survey delivered as part of the LPSA 2 agreement for Cheshire. This is conducted in the 19

areas/neighbourhoods serviced by the CAM process and is designed to give the force an understanding of how big a problem the public perceive crime and anti-social behaviour to be within their local areas, in addition to gaining feedback on feelings of safety and how the police might best engage with the public to deal with issues raised.

Work in progress

- The force has recently developed an NHP performance management framework that reviews the contribution not only of NPUs but also of other resources to the delivery of NHP. This framework includes consideration of satisfaction and confidence at BCU levels and additional data sources, such as that provided by Stronger Together in Warrington.
- While survey activity for the 2008/09 element of the LPSA 2 ended on 31 March 2008, an additional 1,500 people were also surveyed before 20 April in a bid to boost response rates and to provide the force with more meaningful data. The results of these additional surveys and those already conducted will form a key part of the performance framework for NHP. The force hopes to extend the scope of this survey across the whole of Cheshire as opposed to just the CAM areas, to ensure that the perceptions of other neighbourhoods are also heard and taken into account by the force. However, the force's ability to do this is dependent on its ability to meet targets set within this LPSA, at which point it will receive a reward grant that could be used to extend the scope of the survey.
- The force is in the process of introducing Street Safe activity in specific localities. This involves the police, with partners, visiting all homes within the area and identifying community priorities that are then responded to in partnership. After activity has been conducted, a follow-up Street Safe survey is undertaken to allow the force to assess the impact of activity undertaken to improve confidence and satisfaction.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force should review BCU performance management processes to ensure that they use sub-BCU satisfaction and confidence information, including partnership data and local priorities, to improve local service delivery. The impact of local policing and partnership activities on local people should be tested periodically to assess people's satisfaction and confidence before and after specific problem-solving activity is undertaken.

The force can demonstrate that the relevant SPIs remain relatively stable.

	SPI 1e Satisfaction with the overall service provided		SPI 3b Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided	SPI 3b Gap – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided
	Difference from MSF	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	2005/06 to 2007/08 change	+/-pp
Cheshire	-0.4 pp	+8.2 pp	-4.4 pp	+6.1 pp

**pp' is percentage points.*

Summary statement

The SPI data shows that force performance is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

The SPI data also shows that force performance has significantly improved compared with two years ago.

Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided has not changed significantly.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 6.1% less satisfied. The force has evidenced that it is taking action to understand and narrow this gap.

Context

The SPI statistics are obtained from the PPAFs to March 2008. These statistics are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'the difference in the force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of the statistical analysis methodology at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

Victims of crime and users of police services are surveyed using Cheshire Constabulary's own user satisfaction surveys, which comply to national standards and thus allow comparison with other forces. Surveys are based on a sample size of 600 interviews per BCU.

Strengths

SPI 1e – satisfaction with the overall service provided.

81.7% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 were satisfied with the overall service provided, which is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

Force performance significantly improved in the year ending March 2008; 81.7% of people surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 73.5% in the year ending March 2006.

Analysis of the improvement between the years ending March 2006 and 2008 for all forces in England and Wales reveals that Cheshire Constabulary demonstrated the second highest percentage increase in satisfaction with overall service.

SPI 3b – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Force performance has not changed significantly in the year ending March 2008; 75.2% of users from minority ethnic groups were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 79.6% in the year ending March 2006.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 6.1% less satisfied.

The difference between the satisfaction of white and BME victims with the service provided is monitored by the force's diversity monitoring and review group, which has police authority and IAG representation. As part of understanding this gap between satisfaction levels, in one round of surveys the force asked customers if they wished to have a survey in a foreign language and none stated that they would.

Developing practice

See Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
APA	Association of Police Authorities
APACS	assessment of policing and community safety

B

BCS	British Crime Survey
BCU	Basic Command Unit
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic

C

CAM	community action meeting
CAT	community action team
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CFWG	citizen focus working group
CSD	customer service desk
CSI	crime scene investigator

D

DCC	Deputy Chief Constable
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H

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HR	human resources

I

IAG	independent advisory group
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IPLDP Initial Police Learning and Development Programme
IT information technology

K

KDI key diagnostic indicator
KIN key individual network

L

LAA local area agreement
LGR local government review
LPSA 2 Local Public Service Agreement Round Two
LSP local strategic partnership

M

MSF most Similar Force(s)

N

NAM neighbourhood action meeting
NHP neighbourhood policing
NIM National Intelligence Model
NPIA National Policing Improvement Agency
NPU neighbourhood policing unit
NQOSC National Quality of Service Commitment
NPRR National Reassurance Policing Programme

P

PCSO police community support officer
PIM performance improvement meeting
PP percentage point
PPAF Policing Performance Assessment Framework

PROMS problem management system
PSD professional standards department

R

RDC resource deployment centre

S

SARA scanning, analysis, response, assessment
SGC specific grading criteria
SLA service level agreement
SPI statutory performance indicator
SSCU safer and stronger communities unit

T

TCG tasking and co-ordination group
TPT targeted patrol team

V

VLI Vulnerable Localities Index

W

WFM workforce modernisation

Appendix 2: Developing Practice

TITLE: Remote access service – ROAM

PROBLEM:

- The force wanted to allow access to its IT systems by authorised users through a secure system that was cost effective enough to allow it to be widely available and flexible enough to support modern applications such as command and control.

SOLUTION:

- The Cheshire Constabulary ROAM provides the ability to securely access normal programs and information remotely, using the internet as the common connection mechanism. Once connected, the user effectively gets a 'desktop' on their home PC as though within the office environment, and access to most 'normal' facilities, including email.
- While internet connection at the remote end is necessary, the way in which the user connects to the internet is flexible: broadband, GPRS, G3 (modern mobile phone technology), corporate network etc all work. The GPRS/G3 capability means that the scheme can be used with portable PCs from almost anywhere, including mobile incident rooms, search teams etc.
- Any authorised user with a good business requirement or criminal justice partners (eg local authorities) who can gain (reasonably secure) access to the internet from their remote location can use this application.
- Part of the security requirement is to avoid unauthorised ingress or egress of information; the police service does not want inappropriate information left on home or transient partners' computers. Thus no file transfer or copying or printing is supported. All emails and attachments remain within the force.
- No access is allowed or enabled to information valued above restricted according to the Government Protective Marking Scheme, while access from internet cafes or similar insecure locations is disallowed.
- Cheshire Constabulary can currently support up to 200 users, up to 48 simultaneously. Further growth requires investment in infrastructure technologies and internet bandwidth.

EVALUATION:

- The scheme was accredited through police standard risk assessment mechanisms. The system has been part of annual health checks and accreditations.

OUTCOME(S):

- In addition to supporting home working by staff, this system supports staff working within the buildings and using the IT networks of partner organisations:
 - Local authority staff (within the Cheshire Constabulary area) utilise this to access accident information.
 - Cheshire officers temporarily attached to other forces use this to maintain access to Cheshire Constabulary systems.
 - Officers detached to local authority premises/liaison use this to maintain access to Cheshire Constabulary systems.
 - Officers detached to youth offending teams use this to maintain access to Cheshire Constabulary systems.

- ROAM has proved a popular, rapid and cost-effective mechanism for low-level/ad-hoc, but secure, access. It also provides a basic access service for 'emergency situations' where numerous staff may be unable to attend headquarters.

FORCE CONTACT:

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TITLE: Operation QUEST (Cheshire) intelligent deployment

PROBLEM:

- Below MSG average customer satisfaction within the incident management process.
- Concerns about resources available to respond to incidents, impacting on team morale and the ability to deliver NHP.
- Concerns about waste and inefficiency within the incident management process.
- The incident response service not delivering a citizen-focused service in line with force values.

SOLUTION:

- Operation QUEST – part of a national pilot, supported by KPMG and the Home Office. Applying the principles of ‘Lean’ to the business process.
- Team formed from practitioners across the business process, to develop an ‘end-to-end’ view, teamwork approach and outcome focus. Also to instil force values within decision making during that process.
- Developed concept and model of ‘intelligent deployment’. Decisions are based on values within the framework of core standards.
- Initial call handlers trained and encouraged to use discretion when grading calls, based on their knowledge about the incident, local intelligence, judgement of the caller’s needs and professional knowledge.
- Reintroduced the principles of command and control within the call management structure that had become disjointed as a result of reorganisation and business changes over many years.
- Addressed inconsistencies within deployment options and terms of reference for units available to respond. Introduced an appointments system to resolve incidents that did not need an immediate deployment but that required a service – which previously the business process did not allow to be offered.
- Introduced clearer ownership of the process from end to end, with a framework of performance information. Introduced user forums to address issues within the process and to build cross-force teamwork.

EVALUATION:

- The project was evaluated by KPMG, which has estimated annual efficiency gains of £3.2 million. These figures are now being re-evaluated against a longer period of comparison, and the initial indications are that further efficiency savings have been achieved.
- The performance improvement has included an increase in the number of incidents dealt with (for no increase in response resources), a reduction in the number of incidents overall, an increased utilisation rate of response staff, faster servicing of slow-time incidents and improvements in customer satisfaction.

- There have also been improvements in the morale and attendance rates of call-handling staff. Feedback from response and neighbourhood teams has also been largely positive.
- This feedback has been supported during recent HMIC inspection and user forums.

OUTCOME(S):

- Recorded improvements in incident performance and efficiency. A new practice of servicing slow-time incidents by appointment has been introduced. The command and control process has become more robust.
- NPUs are able to address local issues more promptly, both through the fast-time response service (eg to those anti-social behaviour incidents that require a fast-time response) and to slow-time incidents (eg less immediate problems that require problem-solving approaches). It has also allowed the appropriate staff to be deployed at the right time (eg the use of PCSOs where appropriate).
- Discretion has been encouraged within a framework of standards and the reinforcement of the force values.
- Cheshire is now running QUEST intelligent investigation, looking at processes of investigation and offender management. Having built up skills from QUEST intelligent deployment, which was managed by a team from KPMG, the new QUEST is being managed in force with some limited support from KPMG to ensure that the force can develop skills in house to take forward the QUEST approach to other processes and development opportunities in the future.

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Appendix 3: Assessment of Outcomes Using Statutory Performance Indicator Data

Context

The HMIC grading of Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus for each force takes performance on the key SPIs as a starting point. These are derived from the PPAF and are survey based.

The survey results come from two different sources:

- **Neighbourhood Policing**
Results come from the BCS, which questions the general population. The annual sample size for the BCS is usually 1,000 interviews per force.
- **Developing Citizen Focus Policing**
Results come from forces' own user satisfaction surveys. The annual sample size for these user satisfaction surveys is 600 interviews per BCU.

Understanding survey results

The percentage shown for each force represents an estimate of the result if the whole relevant population had been surveyed. Around the estimate there is a margin of error based on the size of the sample surveyed (not on the size of the population).

This margin is known as a **confidence interval** and it will narrow or widen depending on how confident we want to be that the estimate reflects the views of the whole population (a common standard is 95% confident) and therefore how many people have to be interviewed. For example, if we have a survey estimate of 81% from a sample of approximately 1,000 people, the confidence interval would be plus or minus 3 and the appropriate statement would be that we can be 95% confident that the real figure in the population lies between 78% and 84%.

Having more interviewees – a larger sample – means that the estimate will be more precise and the confidence interval will be correspondingly narrower. Generally, user satisfaction surveys will provide a greater degree of precision in their answers than the BCS because the sample size is greater (1,000 for the **whole force** for the BCS, as opposed to 600 **for each BCU** for user satisfaction).

HMIC grading using survey results

In order to **meet the standard**, forces need to show no 'significant' difference between their score and the average for their MSF or against their own data from previous years. Consequently, force performance could be considered to be 'exceeding the standard' or 'failing to meet the standard' if it shows a 'significant' difference from the MSF average or from previous years' data.

HMIC would not consider force performance as 'exceeding the standard' if SPI data were travelling in the wrong direction, ie deteriorating. Likewise, credit has been given for an upward direction in SPI data even if performance falls below the MSF average.

Understanding significant difference

The calculation that determines whether a difference is statistically significant takes into account the force's confidence interval and the confidence interval of its MSF.¹ The results of the calculation indicate, with a specified degree of certainty, whether the result shows a real difference or could have been achieved by chance.

This greater level of precision is the reason why a difference of approximately two percentage points is statistically significant² in the case of the user satisfaction indicator, whereas a difference of around four percentage points is required for the BCS indicators. If the sample size is small, the calculation is still able to show a statistically significant difference but the gap will have to be larger.

[Produced by HMIC based on guidance from the NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit, Victoria Street, London.]

¹ The BCS results are also corrected to take account of intentional 'under-sampling' or 'over-sampling' of different groups in the force area.

² It is likely that there is a real, underlying difference between data taken at two different times or between two populations. If sufficient data is collected, the difference may not have to be large to be statistically significant.