audit
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Police Data Quality Review

Metropolitan Police Authority

Audit 2006-2007

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Introduction

This report

1   This report presents the results of our review of data quality at the Metropolitan Police Authority (the Authority).

2   The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Authority has robust arrangements in place to secure the quality of key performance data, and whether these arrangements are being applied in practice.

3   The work was undertaken during the period October 2006 to March 2007, as part of the appointed auditor's responsibility to examine the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority's use of resources under section 5(1)(e) of the Audit Commission Act 1998, and in accordance with the Commission's Code of Audit Practice and Standing Guidance for Auditors.

4   The results of the work will contribute to:

- the auditor's conclusion on value for money, published in the annual governance report;

- the 2006/07 PPAF assessment published by the Home Office; and

- an Audit Commission national report on police data quality, to be published in June 2007.This work has been undertaken as part of a partnership between the Commission and the Police and Crime Standards Directorate of the Home Office, with whom the results will be shared.

Background

5   The performance of the MPS in securing sustainable and accurate data quality has been inconsistent, with fluctuations in data quality reflected in audit findings over the past three years.

6   Technical and procedural changes were introduced prior to the 2006 data review and were assessed as having contributed to the improvement in data quality from poor to good.

7   This review takes place against the background of significant and ongoing change within the Metropolitan Police Service as to the operation of the Communications, Command and Control functions. This has involved restructuring at the corporate level and in Borough Command Units and substantial movements of staff including high levels of recruitment of new staff.

Audit approach

8 Our work has included the following elements:

- review of the Authority's overall corporate arrangements to secure data quality, and the way in which it works with the service to achieve this;

- analysis of published performance information, and the systems for producing and reporting this; and

- checks of supporting data at operational level.

9 The focus of the second and third elements of this work has been on data relating to recorded crime and user satisfaction surveys, published as statutory performance indicators in the Home Office's Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF).

10 We have also considered the implementation of the National Standard for Incident Recording, by assessing the arrangements being put in place and testing samples of data. The outcome of this work is summarised briefly below, and has been reported separately to the Authority.

11 Where appropriate, we have applied a proportionate approach to this review, based on the results of our work on data quality in previous years. Wherever possible, we have also drawn on relevant HMIC findings.

12 Our assessments are reported using a four-band rating system, consistent with the categories used in Home Office PPAF assessments.

Table 1   Assessment Categories

AC category	PPAF category	Descriptor
4	Excellent	Arrangements that deliver well above minimum requirements to users, are highly cost effective and fully contribute to the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
3	Good	Arrangements that consistently deliver above minimum requirements for users, are cost effective and make contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
2	Fair	Arrangements that deliver only minimum requirements for users but are not consistently cost effective nor contribute significantly to wider outcomes for the community.
1	Poor	Arrangements that do not deliver minimum requirements for users, are not cost effective and make little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

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Main conclusions

13 The Authority has not sustained the improvement in crime data quality achieved last year, which is now graded as fair. The Authority and Service continue to have fair arrangements in place to secure data quality. Strategies and policies are in place and improvement work is being undertaken. However, there is evidence of variation in knowledge and application of the standard across the Service and that crime data quality is not a consistent operational priority. The action plan agreed in 2006 has not been comprehensively implemented.

14 Overall crime and incident data quality has declined. The deterioration in data quality, whilst marginal in some cases, applies across a broad range of crime categories. There are indications that levels of knowledge and awareness within the Service are mixed: a significant number of new staff having been recruited as part of the C3i[I] programme and that supervision at Metcall Centres and IBO[II]'s is not consistently effective.

15 Arrangements for securing user satisfaction data are sound.

Corporate arrangements for data quality

16 The Authority and Service have maintained fair arrangements for securing data quality against a challenging background which includes a major restructuring of the Command, Control and Communications functions (see Table 2).

Table 2   Arrangements for data quality

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Direction of travel	
Metropolitan Police Authority		■			➡	Stable

Source: Audit Commission

17 Responsibility for data quality has been assigned at the most senior level within the MPS and crime data issues are regularly discussed at the Performance Board, chaired by the Deputy Commissioner. The MPS recently identified crime data quality issues which impact on a number of forces and changes in national recording policies are now expected.

[I] Command, Control, Communication and Information
[II] Integrated Borough Operations rooms

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18 There is an overarching information strategy in place supported by strategies for information management, technology and information systems and which links with departmental plans but there is not an explicit target relating to police crime and incident data quality. Senior staff have a wide range of performance targets, but none addressing quality of data.

19 A wide range of policies are established at operational level addressing data quality issues and arrangements are in hand for an overarching crime recording policy which will be supported by standard operating procedures.

20 A number of local policies are in use, and whilst most comply with the relevant guidelines or standards, there is evidence of non compliant policies being implemented.

21 The MPS has provided a range of training opportunities to equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills. However, the take up of some training is low and knowledge levels amongst front line call handling staff are variable. This has been reflected in the detailed findings in the data audit.

The police authority role

22 The Authority has maintained its performance in securing data quality. There are good links between members and officers at the corporate level, but the level of proactive and local engagement is mixed (see Table 3).

Table 3   Arrangements for data quality

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent		Direction of travel
Metropolitan Police Authority		■				➡ Stable

Source: Audit Commission

23 The MPA is engaged at a senior level on data quality issues, with a risk based and proportionate involvement in issues such as the detections audit. Informal as well as formal relationships exist with ACPO[I] and senior colleagues. The lead member chairs the Planning, Policy and review Committee.

[I] Association of Chief Police Officers

24   Regular updates on NCRS and other data quality issues are provided to the Planning, Performance and Review Committee and in other fora. The Authority also receives a range of reports on performance issues and is working with the MPS to develop indicators which are outcome rather than input driven. Current work includes the performance framework for Safer Neighbourhoods Teams using a mix of police generated intelligence and response data complemented by surveys of local residents. The Authority also has oversight of the C3i project aspects of which are subject to scrutiny at a number of committees. Systems modernisation issues such as Telephone Investigation Bureaux are amongst topics discussed.

25   However, the role of the Authority has yet to develop into a proactive one. For example, there is little evidence of members having defined the expectations and requirements for data quality in the Service. There is also no evidence of effective scrutiny of the Service's implementation of the action plan arising from last year's audit.

26   The proposed introduction of BCU[I] self inspection of data quality provides an opportunity for the Authority to enhance involvement in oversight of data quality at a local level, but currently the level of engagement of link members is inconsistent.

Results of data testing

27   The overall standard for incident and crime data has declined from good to fair, although the data remains fairly stated for audit purposes. User satisfaction data has been graded as good and is also fairly stated (see Table 4).

Table 4   Data testing results 2006/07

Metropolitan Police Authority	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent		Direction of travel	
Crime data		■				↓	Deteriorated
User satisfaction data			■				Not applicable

Source: Audit Commission

I   Borough Command Unit

Incident and Crime data

28   Seven categories of incident data are directly comparable for year on year performance. In five of these categories (burglary, criminal damage, vehicle crime, violent crime and racial incidents) the same grades were achieved, but with lower percentage levels of compliance. This has had the cumulative impact of reducing overall performance from good to fair.

29   Performance in relation to domestic violence and disturbances has seen a more significant decline and compliance levels for disturbances have been graded as poor. All other categories are rated good or fair.

30   There are a number of potential contributory factors which are described in more detail later in this report. An example is the substantial staffing and organisational change resulting from the implementation of the C3i project, including the recruitment of significant numbers of staff in the three Metcall Centres and Integrated Borough Operations centres in BCUs.

31   Performance in relation to crime data is inconsistent. A good standard has been achieved for crime reclassification, a function undertaken centrally by the Data Accuracy Team. The standard of 'no criming' is poor having deteriorated from 'good' in 2006: this function is undertaken at BCUs and whilst reasons for non compliance vary, a lack of knowledge of Home Office Counting Rules was apparent. Overall, crime data has been assessed as fair.

User satisfaction data

32   We have assessed user satisfaction data and collection arrangements to be good. The Authority uses an experienced survey company to collect victim data and has written agreements with this contractor. The contractor is using the recommended survey structure and sampling methods, and the results are correctly reported. Samples were assessed to reflect user group profiles over the year and were reasonably distributed across boroughs. The Authority does, however, need to improve and formalise its processes for monitoring the contractor's work and ensuring data quality requirements are met.

33   We identified an error in the extraction process used to identify potential survey respondents which resulted in victims who only provided mobile telephone numbers being excluded from the survey. This error has now been rectified, but may have resulted in potentially suitable respondents being excluded from the process.

34   The Authority is currently reviewing the way in which victims are assessed as suitable or not for survey, and efforts are being made to streamline the process.

National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR)

35   NSIR is being introduced incrementally, with the Anti Social Behaviour component being in place since August 2006. The absence of the full National Incident Category List (NICL) in the Command and Control system makes it impossible for the MPS to comply fully with NSIR at this time. A distance learning pack has been developed and take up rates are being monitored; other training and briefing material is also in place. However, at this early stage in implementation there are still gaps in knowledge and a lack of understanding as to the purpose of NSIR.

36   The data is not yet of a sufficient standard of accuracy to merit sharing with partner agencies (such as crime and disorder reduction partnerships) but BCUs that we visited have NIM[I] compliant tasking mechanisms in place and data sharing protocols which will facilitate the sharing and use of NSIR data when appropriate.

Published performance indicators

37   Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) were correctly calculated and transposed from records and were fairly stated. The SPIs are collated by an experienced member of staff and there is a clear audit trail to original records and systems. Home Office guidance and definitions have been applied properly and reasonable explanations have been obtained for significant variances between the 2005/06 outturn and the 2004/05 outturn.

Overall conclusion on data quality

38   We conclude that there are proper arrangements in place for ensuring data quality. We will take this into account when issuing our value for money conclusion, which will be reported before the end of September 2007

[I]   National Intelligence Model

Appendix 1 – Summary of results

CRIME DATA REVIEWS 2006 / 07
POLICE AUTHORITY: **Metropolitan Police Authority**

STAGE 1 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR DATA QUALITY

Overall corporate arrangements for data quality	**2**

Direction of Travel	⇔	Stable

1	Governance and Leadership	**2**

2	Policies	**2**

3	Systems and Processes	**2**

4	People and Skills	**2**

5	Data use	**3**

Police authority arrangements	**2**

Direction of Travel	⇔	Stable

Key
4 - Excellent
3 - Good
2 - Fair
1 - Poor

STAGE 2 - COMPLETENESS CHECKS OF SPIs

PPAF Domain SPIs	SPI	Fairly Stated?
Citizen focus	SPI 1a Satisfaction with making contact	Yes
	SPI 1b Satisfaction with action taken	Yes
	SPI 1c Satisfaction with being kept informed	Yes
	SPI 1d Satisfaction with treatment by staff	Yes
	SPI 1e Satisfaction with overall service	Yes
	SPI 3a Satisfaction with victims of racist incidents	Yes
	SPI 3b Comparative satisfaction of minority ethnic groups	Yes
Reducing crime	SPI 5b Violent crime rate	Yes
	SPI 5e Life threatening and gun crime rate	Yes
	SPI 5f Acquisitive crime rate	Yes

STAGE 3 - DATA TESTING - RESULT FOR CRIME DATA REVIEW

Incident Investigation	%	Rating
Violent Crime	84%	Fair
Fire arms related incidents	85%	Fair
Burglary	94%	Good
Vehicle Crime	92%	Good
Acquisitive crime	76%	Poor
Criminal damage	84%	Fair
Disturbance	76%	Poor
Domestic Violence	86%	Fair
Racial Incidents	83%	Fair
Average percentage compliant	**84%**	**Fair**

Crime Investigation	%	Rating
Overall	**87%**	**Fair**

Crime recording overall assessment	Fair

Crime recording direction of travel	⇩	Deteriorated

User satisfaction	Rating
Sample selection	Fair
Survey process	Excellent
Survey data	Excellent

User satisfaction overall assessment	Good

Overall assessment for the purposes of the VFM conclusion

The body has put in place arrangements to monitor the quality of its
published performance information, and to report the results to members.

Yes

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Appendix 2 – Findings and conclusions

Arrangements for data quality

KLOE		Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
1	**Governance and leadership** Has the body put in place arrangements at a senior level to secure the quality of data used to manage and report on performance?	Fair	The Director of Information is a full member of the MPS management board and as chief information officer has overall responsibility for information management, communications technology, ICT, data quality, records management, information security, data protection and freedom of information. There is an ACPO level lead on crime data quality. Data quality issues are addressed at the Performance Board which is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner and attended by all Assistant Commissioners. National Crime Recording Standards are a regular agenda item. Audit activity undertaken by the Data Accuracy Team identified a range of accuracy issues relating to crime data, specifically around non sanctioned detections, and the MPS has subsequently engaged with the Home Office, HMIC and ACPO to identify the scale of the problem and develop a strategy for resolution. The issue was found to have a widespread impact and recommendations are being made as to changes in national policy. The MPS has removed the overall detection rate as a performance target for 2006/07.	Responsibility for data quality has been assigned at the most senior level within the MPS and crime data issues are regularly discussed at the Performance Board chaired by the Deputy Commissioner. The MPS recently identified crime data quality issues which impact on a number of forces and changes in national recording policies are now expected. There is an overarching information strategy in place supported by strategies for information management, technology and information systems and which links with departmental plans but there is not an explicit target relating to police crime and incident data quality. Senior staff have a wide range of performance targets, but none addressing quality of data. There is an audit programme in place focusing on recorded crime data but there has been less capacity to review incident data (although an expanded programme will be implemented from April 2007). A BCU self assessment process is also planned. A number of agreed recommendations from the 2006 review have yet to be actioned. *Recommendation 1* *Establish a target(s) for data quality within the call handling and crime recording systems to support improvement.*

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KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
		However, there is not an explicit target for achieving data quality, although there is an aspiration that crime data is of sufficient quality not to be 'capped' under the Police Performance Accountability Framework (PPAF).	
		Senior corporate and BCU staff have a wide range of performance targets but none addressing quality of data The focus of management scrutiny continues to be on achievement of quantitative crime related targets with less explicit focus on data quality.	
		There is an overarching five-year information strategy in place and data quality has been identified as a priority within the risk management process.	
		A number of the agreed actions from the 2006 Review of Crime recording are now being taken forward, for example, the introduction of BCU based quality assurance activity on a 'self assessment' basis and the reintroduction of ethical health checks. However there has not been a structured approach to implementing agreed recommendations.	
		At the strategic level there are positive links between the business groups represented at the Crime Recording Oversight Group and this is reflected operationally in an increasing but not yet universal acceptance of the role of the Data Accuracy Team and an understanding that Home Office Counting Rules have primacy over local policies.	
		There is rolling Bi-annual audit process in place focusing on crime records and whilst auditing of incident data has not recently been undertaken, a new audit programme incorporating NCRS and NSIR will begin in April 2007.	

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	KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
			User satisfaction data is formally reviewed and signed off by senior management on a quarterly basis, through completion of the ADR return to the Home Office. These returns are also provided to the SPI coordinator who keeps a separate record which is authorised by senior management prior to SPI submission. The Research and Survey Team representative has access to i- Quanta which is used to review the Authority's performance against comparative data.	
2	**Policies** Has the body defined its expectations and requirements in relation to data quality?	Fair	The Service is currently developing an overarching policy for crime recording which will be supported by a range of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) applying to specific crimes. The Head of Data accuracy and his team are engaged in developing this policy. BCUs currently have a range of SOPs in place covering priority crimes such as Robbery of the Person, Theft from the Person and Residential Burglary. Policies to identify and address perceived false reporting are also in place on some BCUs. Most crime recording SOPs that we examined were fully NCRS compliant, stressing the need for ethical and victim focused crime recording and providing detailed guidance for officers. However, we saw two examples of policies where allegations of thefts of mobile telephones would not be recorded if the victim/loser could not provide an IMEI[III] reference, a means by which the telephone can be identified and disabled. Policies such as this are not compliant with NCRS. Whilst the Data Accuracy Team challenges such practices when brought to notice, and some policies are voluntarily referred for comment, there are no processes in place to ensure that crime recording policies are routinely checked for NCRS compliance (Audit Commission recommendation 13/2006).	A wide range of policies are in place at the operational level addressing data quality issues and arrangements are in hand for an overarching crime recording policy which will supported by standard operating procedures. A number of local policies are in use and whilst most policies comply with the relevant guidelines or standards there is evidence of non compliant policies being implemented. Policies are widely available to staff through a range of media and relevant staff are generally aware of the content and where to find guidance. *Recommendation 2* *Review and revise local BCU crime recording policies to ensure compliance with relevant data quality standards (repeat of 2006 recommendation)*

[I] International Mobile Equipment Identity

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KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
		Nevertheless, there is evidence that crime recording staff are increasingly relying on Home Office Counting Rules to establish criteria for recording and that these are seen as taking priority over local policies.	
		The Service is providing guidance to officers as to a corporate approach, for example, by publishing 'Responding Safely Together' which explains how the Central Communications Command and BCUs can work together and sets standards for performance, including responsibility levels for accuracy of data.	
		Policies are widely available on the Intranet and staff generally know where to seek guidance although levels of awareness varied. There was a high level of awareness and acceptance amongst senior staff and specialist crime recording staff at BCUs as to the role of the Force Crime Registrar as final arbiter for crime data quality issues.	
		Home Office guidance on user satisfaction sampling and surveys has been used throughout the process. The Authority has defined its requirements and expectations in relation to data quality to its external contractor, There is, however, no evidence to show that the Authority formally monitor the contractor's compliance with these requirements.	

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	KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
3	**Systems and processes** Are there effective systems and processes in place to secure the quality of data?	Fair	The MPS has tried and tested systems and processes to collect record and analyse information and is also making a significant investment in new systems and processes to enhance its call receipt and deployment functions. However, there are indications that some systems/processes are not delivering improved performance in data quality. The MPS is in the latter stages of a major restructuring of its Command, Control and Communications facilities involving significant technological changes, the opening of 3 new 'Metcall' Centres to replace the Central Command Complex and changes to how BCUs manage and deploy 'front line' operational staff. Large numbers of staff have been redeployed and new staff are being recruited. The management of systems and processes, especially in recording incidents and crimes should be viewed in the context of this major structural and cultural change process. The introduction of 3 Metcall Centres will have a positive impact on business continuity and service resilience. The new system also provides the opportunity to collect a range of data on call handling performance. [I] Some systems such as CAD and CRIS[II], whilst updated, are still in place and are generally very popular with staff that are familiar and comfortable with their function. Other, newer systems, such as CHS[III], are less familiar to staff, and are currently perceived as less reliable and user friendly. The NCRS Special Message Format, introduced last year is still widely used, but it has not been extended to incidents recorded on the Call Handling System (AC recommendation 8/2006).	There are well established systems to collect and record data and there is also major restructuring work underway to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and resilience of call handling and deployment processes. Some weaknesses in systems, working relationships and processes have been identified and improvement initiatives are being put in place. Arrangements are in place at corporate and to a lesser extent BCU level to review the quality of data, but more work is needed at the operational level to further develop a 'right first time' approach. *Recommendations* *3. Enhance the Call Handling System to include the equivalent of the NCRS Special Message Format (repeat of 2006 recommendation).* *4. Encourage a 'feedback loop' between IBOs and Metcall to develop a 'right first time' approach.* *5. Review the proposed NSIR audit programme to incorporate an holistic audit of call handling quality issues to get maximum benefit from the audit process.* *6. Develop proposals to improve the quality of initial classification and no crime decision making.*

[I] Computer Aided Despatch
[II] Crime Recording Information System
[III] Call Handling System

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KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
		The new call handling process requires that incidents are closed within a Metcall Centre, that closure being checked by a 'Queue Supervisor' and the closure decision is ratified with the relevant BCU Integrated Borough Operations facility which manages the 'back office' support functions to locally support operational officers. Our examination of the data indicates varying degrees of knowledge and understanding within Metcall together with limited challenge or scrutiny being applied at BCU level. In essence, despite there being two points of supervision in place, there has been a general, if relatively slight, decline in the quality of incident data. When incident closures are changed within the IBO there is limited feedback to the call handler and so learning opportunities are being lost.	*7. Review how incidents passed to Safer Neighbourhood Teams are actioned and outcomes achieved to ensure that victim needs are met and relevant intelligence obtained.*
		There are also indications that working relationships and practices between Metcall Centres and BCUs are still developing and are not yet satisfactory at every location. The Service has recognised this and has begun an intensive programme of support.	
		Some BCUs have introduced local quality control mechanisms to improve quality and Metcall Supervisors have quality control targets, although the degree to which they are implemented and monitored is not clear.	
		There is no standard role for a 'Data Quality Champion' at BCUs and there is a significant variation as to the rank, grade and role of staff holding a 'quality' remit on BCUs. A paper is being prepared on the development of a local approach to assuring data quality (this links to AC recommendation 7/2006).	
		An annual audit programme focuses on recorded crimes, but CAD incidents are currently not routinely monitored. From April 2007 daily NSIR audits compliance will be in place and comparative data available. These audits will also report on those NCRS issues coming to notice. Consideration is also currently being given to the reintroduction of ethical health checks (AC recommendation 11/2006).	

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KLOE		Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
			The improvement in performance last year, attributed in part to the restriction of classification and no criming decisions to Crime Management Unit staff, has not been maintained. The Service is currently considering a paper on the introduction of a centralised decision making process, removing the responsibility from BCU based staff. This would have the impact of distancing the recording of crime from the local performance regime which focuses on crime reduction and detection.	
			The restriction on crime reclassification to the Data Accuracy Team continues to work well and, whilst there has been a slight decline in performance, the overall standard remains good.	
			Antisocial behaviour data and incidents, especially concerning long term problems where an immediate response was not required, are being deployed to Safe Neighbourhood Teams. The current process is to close such incidents at the time of referral to the SNU teams. It was not clear from our interviews on BCUs how the allocation of these incidents is followed up nor how action is initiated, supervised or results achieved.	
			Telephone Investigation Bureaux continue to provide a valuable service by directly recording those crimes not requiring the immediate attendance of a police officer, although there are some indications that the volume of calls is such that the NCRS target for timeliness is not always being met.	
			Manual manipulation of user satisfaction data has been kept to a minimum and access to this data is restricted and password protected. Formal agreed arrangements between the Authority and the external contractor are in place regarding obtaining, storing and transferring data.	

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	KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
4	**People and skills** Does the body have the resources in place to secure data quality?	Fair	There are a wide range of mechanisms in place to train and inform staff as to the importance of data quality and how to achieve it but large scale recruitment is placing pressure on training resources and priorities. The Data Accuracy Team continues to work with Territorial Policing Command to deliver an input on data quality at seminars for sergeants. A wide range of information is available on the intranet, and updates and bulletins are regularly circulated by 'e' mail. There are also 'special interest groups' where detailed technical updates are provided. Conventional methods such as team meetings and briefings also take place. The DAT are working with the Probationer Training Team to introduce NCRS/NSIR awareness at appropriate stages during the probationary period. This will commence in April 2007. The DAT has also been working with the National Centre for Applied Learning Technology (NCALT) to develop a distance learning package incorporating NCRS and NSIR. This is now available as a pilot scheme with take up rates being centrally monitored. Between November 2006 and the end of February 2007 approximately 130 staff have taken the opportunity to participate in the training. Less than 2 per cent of Metcall staff have undertaken training and the BCU take up rate is less than 10 per cent. In addition, the NSIR team have been training Metcall staff, but take up rates at Metcall Centres have been very low. Our review of incident data quality, together with interviews with call handling staff, indicate that levels of knowledge have not improved since last year and that operational pressures have reduced the number of team training days. The situation has been exacerbated by large scale recruitment of staff for Metcall Centres and IBOs.A lack of knowledge amongst inexperienced staff was a common factor identified to us by BCU and Metcall staff.	The MPS has provided a range of training opportunities to provide staff with the necessary knowledge and skills. Specialist staff attend seminars at which data quality issues are discussed and the focus on training supervising officers continues. However, knowledge levels amongst front line call handling staff are variable and this has been reflected in the detailed findings in the data audit where there has been a general, if sometimes marginal deterioration in data quality across a wide range of crime categories. Data quality is highest when activity is undertaken corporately by the Data Accuracy Team. There has been a significant influx of new staff, increasing the demand for training. However, operational pressures are restricting the provision of training opportunities scheduled in duty rosters. A recently introduced remote learning package, NCALT, has had a low participation rate. *Recommendation 8* *Require all call handling staff in the Central Communications Command and IBOs to undertake the NCALT remote training package.*

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KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
		NCRS is covered in training for Crime Management Unit staff and also at seminars held for those specialist BCU staff with a quality remit for the reporting and investigation of priority crimes, colloquially known as 'Gatekeepers'.	
		There are a range of performance targets and indicators in place for call handling and CMU staff, the majority of which are quantitative rather than qualitative.	
		In BCUs we found a variety of mechanisms in place to inform and train staff and evidence of feedback loops whereby CMU staff would inform staff and if necessary supervisors as to crime input errors.	
		Data quality remains highest when activity is undertaken corporately by the Data Accuracy Team.	
		NSIR is acknowledged to be in the early stages of development and staff awareness is relatively low. A variety of prompts and training materials have been provided, but it will be necessary to reinforce training and awareness when the full NSIR National Incident Category List is implemented in the MPS.	
		A formal agreement is in place between the Authority and the external contractor undertaking user satisfaction surveys and this includes staff training on data quality. We have not obtained evidence that the Authority verifies that these requirements are met. Reliance is placed on the contractor's internal arrangements and the skill of staff conducting surveys.	
		Within the Authority, raw data on crime victims is now cleaned and filtered by crime and performance analysts.	

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	KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
5	**Data use** Are there effective arrangements and controls in place for the use of data by the body?	Good	There is evidence that focus on delivering crime performance targets remains a priority and that a wealth of performance information is obtained and used for this purpose. However there is not a formal target in place for ensuring the accuracy of data although there is an aspiration to ensure that data is of sufficient quality to avoid 'capping' within the Police Performance Accountability Framework (PPAF). BCUs have protocols in place controlling the use of crime and incident data and also have tasking meetings which are compliant with standards contained within the National Intelligence Model. Whilst anti social behaviour data is generally not yet of the required standard to share with partner agencies, appropriate mechanisms are in place to share the data when it is sufficiently accurate. The MPS has recently published a set of processes for developing sharing arrangements with partners. These are compliant with the Bichard Management of Police Information (MoPI) Guidelines. An Information Sharing Support Unit has been set up within the Directorate of Information to provide advice and guidance on the application of the processes and maintain a register of agreements set up under them. There are no formal arrangements at present for reporting on information sharing arrangements directly to the MPA. However, all new sharing arrangements will be made available to the public by being published on the MPS Publication Scheme on the public Internet site. Plans are in development to review all existing information sharing arrangements under the MoPI implementation programme and ensure that they are compliant with the new processes. The Authority is undertaking analysis of the user satisfaction data in order to identify good and bad practise, but this has not yet been fully embedded. Further work with dissatisfied victims who agree to have their personal details made available is planned. Interviews with staff at a sample of BOCUs indicated that although user satisfaction results are being provided to local SMT members, this information is not always reaching operational staff.	The MPS makes full use of data to inform, deliver and improve performance at strategic and operational levels. The Command and Control and Crime systems provide a wealth of data for analytical and tasking purposes and there are plans to develop the use of user satisfaction data. There are currently no formal quality targets although there are plans to introduce an 'ethical health check' on crime data (AC recommendation 11/2006). Analysis and tasking arrangements are fully compliant with the National Intelligence Model and data sharing arrangements are compliant with Bichard Management of Police Information Guidelines.

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The police authority role

KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
1 **Governance and leadership** Has the body put in place arrangements at a senior level to secure the quality of data used to manage and report on performance?	Fair	The MPA is represented on the Performance Board where regular NCRS related reports are discussed. Senior MPA members have also been engaged with the MPS in responding to issues identified in the review of Non Sanctioned Detections. The lead member chairs the Planning, Performance and Review Committee which receives reports on NCRS compliance. Regular informal meetings take place with the ACPO lead. MPA link members are invited to attend BCU 'cluster' meetings held by the geographical ACPO leads but levels of participation are mixed. The 2006 recommendation to develop the engagement of link members with NCRS issues has not been actioned.	The MPA is engaged at a senior level in data quality issues, with a risk based and proportionate involvement in issues such as the detections audit. Informal as well as formal relationships exist with ACPO and senior colleagues. The Authority receives regular updates on NCRS and other data quality issues. We are less clear as to the level of engagement of link members with BCUs on data quality issues. *Recommendation 9* *The Authority undertakes a proactive role in the oversight of NCRS at BCUs.*
2 **Policies** Has the body defined its expectations and requirements in relation to data quality?		Planning, Performance and Review Committee (PPRC) regularly receives reports on NCRS issues however the expectations for data quality have not been defined explicitly.	
3 **Systems and processes** Are there effective systems and processes in place to secure the quality of data?		The MPA has oversight of the C3i project which is subject to scrutiny at a number of committees. Systems modernisation issues such as Telephone Investigation Bureaux are amongst topics discussed.	

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	KLOE	Assessment	Findings	Conclusions and recommendations
4	**People and skills** Does the body have the resources in place to secure data quality?		Relevant MPA Committees receive reports on training matters and linked issues such as the implementation of C3i.	
5	**Data use** Are there effective arrangements and controls in place for the use of data by the body?		PPRC receives a range of reports on performance issues and is working with the MPS to develop indicators which are outcome rather than input driven. Current work includes the performance framework for Safer Neighbourhoods Teams using a mix of police generated intelligence and response data complemented by surveys of local residents.	

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SPI completeness checks

SPI		Assessment	Findings	Recommendations
1	User satisfaction	Fairly stated	This indicator is derived from the information provided from an external survey company and has been transposed and calculated correctly. Formal records are kept and signed off by senior management at the Authority.	
3	Satisfaction of ethnic groups	Fairly stated	This indicator is produced and stored in the same way as SPI 1 and it has been correctly calculated and presented.	
5b	Violent crime rate	Fairly stated	The data for this indicator is extracted from CRIS using the correct search parameters and is used to populate the CRIMSEC return for the Home Office. The Home Office definitions and methodology have been correctly applied.	
5e	Life threatening and gun crime	Fairly stated	This indicator was produced in the same way as SPI 5b and it has been correctly calculated and stated.	
5f	Acquisitive crime	Fairly stated	This indicator was produced in the same way as SPIs 5b and 5eand was calculated and transposed from data systems according to the Home Office guidance.	

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Data testing

Data	Assessment	Findings	Recommendations
Crime data	Fair	The improvement achieved in 2006 has not been sustained. There has been an overall decline in data quality with levels of compliance falling across 5 of 7 categories where year on year comparison is possible. Reclassification and 'no crime' decisions also declined in quality although reclassification data standards, undertaken corporately, received a 'good' rating.	See 'Arrangements for Data quality' above for detailed findings and recommendations.
NSIR		To be reported separately.	
User satisfaction		Sample sizes for each user group were calculated according to Home Office guidance and the recommended methodology. We identified victims who had been excluded from the potential survey group because they only provided a mobile telephone number. This was due to data extraction procedures not being updated to include a mobile telephone field. This error was rectified in January 2007 and therefore affects the sampling process during both the 2005/06 and 2006/07 year. The samples taken for each BOCU were representative of the total number of accidents over the year. Age, gender and ethnicity of respondents were not fully reflective of the profile of user groups (victims of violent crime and racist incidents) over the year.	*Review and update procedures regularly to ensure that all Home Office requirements are complied with and that potential respondents are not excluded unnecessarily.* *Ensure that samples taken fully reflect the victim profile in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.*

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Data	Assessment	Findings	Recommendations
		Questionnaires followed the recommended format and all core, diagnostic and demographic questions were covered. Although a written agreement is in place with the survey company and inspection visits do take place, these need to be formalised and recorded. Data is monitored throughout the year by the Research and Survey unit and is signed off by a senior manager. Manual manipulation of data has been reduced to a minimum and controls are in place to protect data and victim anonymity where required. Some analysis of survey data is performed but this has not yet been fully embedded. Victims who respond as 'dissatisfied' are not contacted for further information.	*Keep records of inspection visits to the external contractor to ensure that the Authority can be confident that quality and training issues are addressed.* *Extend the analysis of victim survey results particularly to include dissatisfied victims, and use to inform improvement plans and service delivery.*

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Appendix 3 – Action plan

Rec no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
Police Crime Data						
1	Establish a target(s) for data quality within the call handling and crime recording systems to support improvement.			Yes	Recommendations have been agreed. The detailed implementation arrangements will be signed off at MPS Performance Board in May 2007.	
2	Review and revise local BCU crime recording policies to ensure compliance with relevant data quality standards (repeat of 2006 recommendation).			Yes		
3	Enhance the Call Handling System to include the equivalent of the NCRS Special Message Format (repeat of 2006 recommendation).			Yes		
4	Encourage a 'feedback loop' between IBOs and Metcall to develop a 'right first time' approach.			Yes		
5	Review the proposed NSIR audit programme to incorporate an holistic audit of call handling quality issues to get maximum benefit from the audit process.			Yes		
6	Develop proposals to improve the quality of initial classification and no crime decision making.			Yes		

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Rec no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	Review how incidents passed to Safer Neighbourhood Teams are actioned and resulted to ensure that victim needs are met and relevant intelligence obtained.			Yes		
8	Require all call handling staff in the Central Communications Command and IBOs to undertake the NCALT remote training package.			Yes		
9	The Authority undertakes a proactive role in the oversight of NCRS at BCUs.			Yes		
10	**User Satisfaction Data** Review and update procedures regularly to ensure that: • all Home Office requirements are complied with and that potential respondents are not excluded unnecessarily; • samples taken fully reflect the victim profile in terms of age, gender and ethnicity; • victim survey results are analysed particularly to include dissatisfied victims, and used to inform improvement plans and service delivery; and • inspection visits to the external contractor are documented to ensure that quality and training issues are addressed.			Yes		

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