

**Crime Data Integrity – Update****Report of Paul Godden, Corporate Development Department**

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the action plan for Crime Data Integrity.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 At the Joint Independent Audit Committee on 16 June 2015, members requested an update on the progress made with the Crime Data Integrity action plan.
- 2.2 The Crime Data Integrity action plan was developed following the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into the way police forces record crime data. Northumbria was inspected in August 2014. HMIC made a number of recommendations which included:
- the need to improve the level of understanding of the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS);
  - improvements to the audit arrangements;
  - changes to the number of Dedicated Decision Makers; and
  - improvements to housekeeping arrangements, including document storage and automation.

**3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 Significant progress has been made with the Crime Data Integrity action plan, with considerable emphasis within Area Commands to ensure victims' needs are met and crimes are dealt with appropriately. Over this period, compliance levels have improved, although further improvement is needed. Proposals to develop crime recording at the initial point of contact within Communications are being developed to further support compliance with crime recording standards.

**4. Current Position**

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made since the inspection. Below is a summary of activity:

Training and Key Messages

- 4.2 The Force Crime Registrar (FCR) has provided training on the National Crime Recording Standards to all operational Sergeants and Inspectors. The same input has also been provided to Senior Management Team members, and a separate briefing has been provided to Area Commands to deliver key messages to all frontline officers. These key messages have been supported by visits to shift briefings by Chief Officers, reinforcing the importance of compliance with crime recording standards.
- 4.3 This training and key messages have been supported by significant activity within Area Commands. Briefings have been held with Sergeants and Inspectors to ensure victims' needs are met and crimes are dealt with appropriately, and weekly updates are being provided to all Inspectors regarding audit failures for direct remedial intervention. Data from audit is used to identify teams who require additional guidance

and the FCR delivers an input designed to improve decision making and supporting rationales.

- 4.4 The College of Policing has developed a new training and accreditation programme aimed at FCRs to bring greater consistency to crime recording. To be eligible for the professional register, FCRs will be required to pass an assessed course and to ensure they keep their skills and knowledge sufficiently up to date. The Force's Crime Registrar will attend during September 2015, with the Assistant Crime Registrar attending in October 2015.

#### Dedicated Decision Makers

- 4.5 The number of Dedicated Decision Makers that can make decisions regarding no-crimes has been reduced significantly, with Chief Inspectors in Area Commands and the Crime Department identified to perform the role. Current post holders have received further training from the Force Crime Registrar. This role is subject to an accreditation process. All relevant policies and procedures have been reviewed and amended.
- 4.6 All no-crime decisions for offences of rape are subject of review by the Force Crime Registrar.

#### Audit Approach

- 4.7 A new audit approach has been implemented adopting the methodology used by HMIC. Between 15% - 20% of relevant incidents are currently subject of audit. The process consists of listening to the initial call into the Communications Department and reviewing each incident record, and where there is potential that a crime should have been recorded, contacting the victim to confirm the precise details of the incident. A sample of those incidents that are considered appropriate is also checked to ensure that the audit approach is robust. Those incidents that fail are reported to Area Command Senior Management Teams to either record a crime or add further detail to substantiate the decision that a crime should not be recorded.
- 4.8 Compliance levels are reported to the Force's Strategic Management Board on a monthly basis, as part of monitoring the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, and also reported to the Police and Crime Panel.

#### Front-End Crime Recording

- 4.9 Proposals are being developed for the crime recording decision to be made at the initial point of contact in the Communications Department. At present, when a victim, witness or third party reports a crime or possible crime, an incident is created, to which an officer is dispatched to make a crime recording decision and to investigate the incident. In April 2015, the Home Office revised the National Crime Recording Standard so that crime recording 'must not routinely be delayed to facilitate deployment of resources or to enable further investigation to take place'. The Home Office indicated that forces should adopt the new approach within a year.
- 4.10 The proposed model will allow a contact handler to make a crime recording decision when the caller is the victim or a third party acting on behalf of the victim. When the information received amounts to a recordable crime the contact handler will create a partial crime report at the same time as the incident. Training will be given to enable contact handlers to determine when a partial crime should be created. When the officer attends they will further the investigation of the crime and update the report via mobile devices. If the investigation at the scene determines that a crime should not be counted the officer will provide the rationale. All confirmed crimes will continue to pass

to validation to ensure correct classification (there are approximately 1,400 crime classifications).

- 4.11 The contact handler will not create a partial crime when the information does not, on the balance of probabilities, amount to a crime, and when the caller is a witness or third party not acting on behalf of a victim. In these cases only an incident will be created and it will be flagged as a potential crime. An officer will attend, make the crime recording decision and provide a rationale if a crime is not recorded. It is proposed that all potential crime incidents that do not result in a recorded crime are subject of quality assurance.

#### Changes to Quality Assurance Process

- 4.12 In addition to introducing front-end crime recording, an additional quality assurance role is being created that will have responsibility for quality assuring decisions prior to the closure of an incident. These staff and officers will work under the auspice of the Force Crime Registrar and will have to maintain an accreditation. A sample of incidents will be audited on a regular basis to ensure standards are maintained.

#### NCRS Compliance

- 4.13 NCRS compliance reported by HMIC was 72% (+/- 8.2%). These results cover incidents recorded from November 2012 to October 2013. Compliance levels have improved; compliance between September 2014 and June 2015 is 86% (+/- 0.5%), and therefore there is still improvement needed. As mentioned earlier within the report, the introduction of front-end crime recording and creation of a quality assurance process is expected to further improve compliance levels.

### **5. Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising from the report.

### **6. Human Rights Implications**

- 6.1 There are no human rights implications arising from the report.

### **7. Risk Management Implications**

- 7.1 There are no additional risk management implications arising from this report.

### **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from the report.

### **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.