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Police data quality 2006/07

Improving data quality to make places safer in England and Wales

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Summary

1 The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced for the police service in 2002. This is the fourth year that the Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office (WAO) have reviewed compliance with NCRS. Overall, good progress has been made in improving the quality of crime data. Thirty-eight police authorities and forces (88 per cent) have good or excellent crime data quality. This is a significant improvement from 12 (28 per cent) in 2003/04. Since 2005/06, no police authority or force has poor crime data quality.

2 There has been a sustained improvement in crime data quality. Compliance with national standards is now built into the activity and processes of most police authorities and forces. Most forces and the better performing police authorities are showing leadership in achieving high-quality crime data. This can make a real difference to people who report crimes to the police. What they say is being recorded more accurately than ever before so the police have better information with which to target their response. The police place a high emphasis on feedback and our review of the quality of data in their user satisfaction surveys found that most authorities and forces are good or excellent.

3 Although crime levels have fallen since 1995, most people continue to believe that they have risen in overall terms especially within their local area. Anti-social behaviour and fear of crime has a disproportionate impact on some communities, especially the most deprived. Although there has been a reduction in the proportion of people who perceive high levels of anti-social behaviour, there are signs that this is starting to increase **(Ref. 1)**.

4 Addressing these issues in a sustainable way requires reliable, timely and accurate information to be brought together from police authorities, forces, councils, housing and health services. Crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) in England and community safety partnerships (CSPs) in Wales are responsible for doing this.

5 Understanding the nature and pattern of crime and anti-social behaviour incidents requires standard definitions and consistent high-quality recording policies and practices. Police authorities and forces need to work with partners in CDRPs and CSPs to improve crime and incident data. This will mean that solutions can be targeted appropriately and resources deployed effectively.

6   For the first time, in 2006/07, police authorities and forces were required to comply with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). NSIR is a standard for capturing information about incidents which are not notified as crimes. We recognise that the new arrangements may take time to embed. Therefore in the first year we have taken a national overview of the progress being made by police authorities and forces to implement and use NSIR. We reviewed compliance with NSIR within the anti-social behaviour incident category. A quarter of police authorities and forces were assessed as good or excellent but progress in implementing NSIR has been patchy.

7   There remain areas where police authorities and forces need to make improvements. In particular:

- nearly a half of police authorities and forces have been assessed as poor in relation to recording incidents of anti-social behaviour;

- authorities and forces have difficulty in complying with the NCRS in respect of racial incidents, and as a result of technical non-compliance, a fifth were assessed as poor;

- most CDRP and CSP partners are not routinely sharing incident data as part of local decision making; and

- over a quarter of police authorities and forces have not sustained previous levels of performance on crime data quality.

The key messages from our reviews of police data quality in 2006/07 are:

- The police have continued to make significant improvements in crime recording performance and now have better quality crime data than ever before. Nine out of ten are either good or excellent compared with only three out of ten in 2004. Most forces have made significant and sustained improvement. The focus on high-quality crime data needs to be made a priority for the eleven forces whose performance has deteriorated.

- For the first time, the police are building a full picture of anti-social behaviour incidents. The NSIR is a new approach which sets high standards for recording incidents that people report to the police. A quarter of police authorities and forces are already good or excellent. In this first year since NSIR was introduced, our review found that nearly half of forces are poor at recording anti-social behaviour and they need to quickly improve.

- Keeping communities safe is not just a matter for the police. It is a joint effort involving councils, health, fire, housing, probation and environment services. Crime and Disorder Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships are responsible for addressing crimes and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods. They need to record data consistently and accurately and make it easy to share and use. This will enable them to target and prioritise resources effectively and quickly to make neighbourhoods safe.

8 There needs to be a consistent and sustained focus on data quality by the police service, CDRPs and CSPs. High standards of data quality give not only the police, but also councils, housing and environmental services the potential to deliver better value for money by addressing incidents early. This proactive approach can reduce the cost of intervention and enforcement activity by the police, increase public confidence and encourage earlier reporting of incidents before local problems escalate.

Key recommendations

9 **Police authorities** need to ensure that forces comply with crime and incident recording standards. They should:

- use their scrutiny role to hold forces to account for achieving high standards of data quality; and

- ensure that the data held by the force on crime and anti-social behaviour is reliable, up to date and easily accessible to CDRP and CSP partners.

10 **Police forces** need to sustain and embed high standards of data quality through effective procedures and systems which are not overly bureaucratic and burdensome. Improvements are needed in:

- compliance with NSIR when recording anti-social behaviour incidents;

- accurately recording the status of a caller as a victim, witness or third party for reported racial incidents and anti-social behaviour; and

- using data to inform performance management, resource allocation and decision making.

11 **Partners in CDRPs and CSPs** need high-quality data on crime and anti-social behaviour. This will help them to address neighbourhood and community priorities and comply with the

new regulations for CDRPs in England which came into force on 1 August 2007. CDRP and CSP partners should learn from the police and develop non-bureaucratic processes to:

- adopt the NSIR and assess the accuracy and reliability of incident data;

- make their data on crime and anti-social behaviour easy to access and share; and

- use crime and incident data and intelligence to inform decisions about community safety in neighbourhoods.

Introduction and approach

Why NCRS and NSIR are important

12 While crime levels have been falling over the past ten years, many people do not believe this to be the case and up to 80 per cent of anti-social behaviour may not be reported. This may be because people are unclear about who is responsible or they do not believe anything will be done about it **(Ref. 2)**.

13 Accurate and reliable crime recording is an important part of an effective and modern police service. Over the years, the evidence of new types of crime has contributed to the development of a variety of complex and evolving crime recording practices. The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) provide polices forces with a framework for recording crime, but interpretation of these rules can be complicated.

14 The NCRS was first introduced in 2002 to raise data quality standards and improve the consistency of all forces and authorities in collecting and recording crime. NCRS requires all police forces to record crimes according to a defined and agreed set of principles. It places a high emphasis on recording crime as described by the victim or witness. This victim-focused approach requires that any changes to the category of crime as first reported are supported by a clear audit trail.

15 Since 2003, there has been considerable improvement in crime data quality. This was reflected in our national report, *Crime Recording 2005: Improving the Quality of Crime Records in Police Authorities and Forces in England and Wales* **(Ref. 3)**. We also identified that more could be done by police authorities and forces to sustain and improve crime data quality and make more effective use of data as part of resource planning and decision making. This would be supported by a consistent and common framework for recording all crime-related incidents.

16 NSIR is a standard for capturing information about incidents notified or reported to the police. It was introduced in 2006/07 by the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) following a review **(Ref. 4)** in 2003. The review found that:

- there were no common recording practices in relation to incidents;

- there was no common understanding of incident types;

- the most commonly used category for recording incidents was 'miscellaneous' or 'other' (over 50 per cent in a number of forces);

- notifiable crime only related to approximately 20 per cent of all incidents; and

- resourcing such matters costs between £4 and £5 billion per year.

17 NSIR aims to standardise the recording of all types of incidents which do not result in a notifiable crime. This is the first year that police authorities and forces were required to comply with NSIR. We have taken an early look at the progress being made to implement NSIR.

18 Our report *Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-social Behaviour* **(Ref. 5)** highlighted the importance of all CDRP and CSP partners in adopting and complying with NSIR. Compliance with NSIR will help CDRPs and CSPs to evaluate whether combined resources are being allocated and prioritised effectively to address neighbourhood problems and achieve value for money.

High-quality police data to support safer, stronger communities

19 Across all public services, there is a growing importance placed on good-quality data. The 2006 Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* **(Ref. 2)** and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill place greater reliance on all public agencies using accurate and timely management information to agree and shape priorities for local areas. In Wales, the Making the Connections agenda will see local service boards using information to agree community safety priorities.

20 On 1 August 2007 new community safety regulations came into force in England. They set a standard for police and councils to share information about anti-social behaviour. It

specifies that anti-social behaviour information should be defined in accordance with NSIR for police. Councils are also required to use this or an equivalent standard. All public agencies now have a responsibility to share information on all incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result the regulations encourage a greater use of NSIR by all CDRP partners.

21 The Home Office, APA and ACPO have given a tripartite commitment to make anti-social behaviour and crime data more available at a local level to provide good intelligence on neighbourhood issues. Acting on recommendations from the 2006 Smith review *Crime Statistics: An Independent Review* **(Ref. 6)**, there are plans within three years to have achieved consistent, high-quality and timely data on anti-social behaviour and crime levels at a local level.

22 In our report, *Improving Information to Support Decision Making: Standards for Better Quality Data* **(Ref. 7)** published in September 2007 we have provided a framework and set of voluntary standards to support improvement in data quality in the public sector.

23 The Home Office strategy *Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11* **(Ref. 1)**, signals a new safer communities public service agreement (PSA). Neighbourhood policing teams will be operating in every area by 2008 and their success will be measured by local people in terms of how well they address community priorities. This will require them to have high-quality data about local incidents and work effectively with front line staff from council, housing, health and environmental services.

Effective use of resources

24 In our report *Police Use of Resources 2005/06: Summary Results* **(Ref. 8)** we said that police authorities and forces need to make better use of data to challenge all aspects of resource use. We also said that the police and CDRP and CSP partners should use this information to determine the best method for provision of services.

25 The recent Home Affairs Select Committee report on police funding found that reductions in overall crime levels could not be directly related to the additional funding and investment in the police service since 1995 **(Ref. 9)**. It also found that police resources may not have been maximised to improve value for money outcomes for local people.

26 With a changing pattern of police funding in the future, the need for a partnership approach to delivering safer communities is more important than ever. It can help police authorities and forces to maximise their resources for neighbourhood policing as well as dealing with national threats.

How we assessed police data quality

27 This is the fourth year that auditors appointed by the Audit Commission and the Auditor General for Wales have reviewed police data quality and arrangements to support effective crime recording practices. In 2006/07, following a risk-based review of the improvements made by forces and authorities, we have also reviewed corporate arrangements. For the first time, our work has focused on the progress made by police authorities and forces to implement NSIR and the quality of data used in user satisfaction surveys. Auditors followed a three-stage approach to reviewing police data quality this year, as summarised at **Table 1, overleaf**.

28 The results of the reviews are expected to drive improvement in the quality of police performance information, leading to greater confidence in the data on which the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) is based. The results from our work will inform the 2006/07 PPAF assessments which will be published by the Home Office in October 2007.

29 Auditors reported their assessments using a four-band rating system of excellent, good, fair and poor. This is consistent with the categories used in the PPAF. Auditors also reviewed the direction of travel from 2005/06 and assessed whether forces and authorities were improving, stable or deteriorating on arrangements to support accurate crime recording.

30 The overall results for each police authority on data quality and corporate arrangements are summarised at **Appendix 1**. A detailed breakdown of results is provided at **Appendices 2 and 3**. Direction of travel assessments for management arrangements and crime data quality are shown at **Appendix 4**.

31 In this first year that auditors have reviewed NSIR, we have summarised the national picture and provided the key messages that will enable police authorities, forces and CDRP and CSP partners to achieve compliant NSIR data in the future.

32 Every police authority received a report from its auditor that summarised the assessments and findings. Each report set out the areas that needed to be addressed by the police authority and force to improve performance. This report includes some case studies drawn from police authorities that have performed well or strongly.

Table 1

Approach to assessing police data quality

Auditors followed a three-stage approach to reviewing police data quality.

Stage 1– Review of corporate arrangements
Auditors reviewed police authorities' and forces' corporate arrangements to secure high-quality data. Auditors made an overall judgement based on assessments across five key lines of enquiry covering: • governance and leadership; • policies; • systems and processes; • people and skills; and • data use.
Stage 2 – Performance information
Auditors reviewed systems and processes for reporting published performance information in relation to the statutory performance indicators for crime and user satisfaction survey data.
Stage 3 – Data quality
Reviews involved sample testing of crime, incident and user satisfaction survey data. For NSIR, data were tested from the anti-social behaviour category. Crime data work was carried out in proportion to the needs of the police authority and force concerned. The reviews reflected prior year results and the level of risk associated with particular types of data. This meant that a lighter touch approach was adopted rather than the more intensive approach used in previous years' reviews.

Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

1

Quality of police data

33 Police authorities and forces have shown continuous improvement in the quality of crime and user satisfaction data but more needs to be done to sustain and improve the quality of data, particularly on recording anti-social behaviour.

Crime data

34 Since 2005/06, more police authorities and forces now have good or excellent crime data quality **(Figure 1)**.

Figure 1
Crime data quality 2005/06 to 2006/07

Category	Number 2005/06	Movers up		Movers down		Non movers	Number 2006/07
Excellent (green)	20			1	7	12	22
Good (green)	15		8		3	4	16
Fair (amber)	8	5	2			1	5
Poor (red)	0					0	0

Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

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35 In 2006/07, 38 police authorities and forces (88 per cent) were assessed as good or excellent for crime data quality, which is a significant improvement from 12 in 2003/04 (28 per cent) and a slight increase from 35 (81 per cent) in 2005/06. Since 2005/06, no police authority or force has been assessed as poor for crime data quality, which indicates an 80 per cent compliance rate with the NCRS. Improvement has been due to:

- determined championing of data quality at both a strategic and operational level; and

- better integration of data quality into financial and performance management frameworks.

36 The rate of improvement has not been the same at all police authorities and forces. For crime data, of the 16 forces rated as poor in 2003/04, 11 have improved to the highest possible rating of excellent and 4 have achieved a good rating this year. However, of the 20 forces assessed as excellent last year 7 forces (16 per cent) have moved down a category to good, and 1 force has deteriorated to fair. This demonstrates that a continued focus on data quality is necessary if high standards are to be maintained, just as much as where significant improvement is required.

37 For 2006/07 auditors looked at records of incidents that had initially been treated as potential crimes, and tested the extent to which those records complied with the NCRS and HOCR. Seven categories of incidents examined were the same as in the past three years. These were racial incidents, violent crime, vehicle crime, criminal damage, disturbance, domestic violence and burglary. In 2006/07, a further two categories were reviewed which were fire arms related incidents and acquisitive crime, such as personal robbery and theft from a person.

38 Overall 92 per cent of records met the standard, with 38 forces (88 per cent) achieving good or excellent in compliance with NCRS and HOCR. All forces achieved at least 80 per cent compliance rate which means that none were assessed as poor.

39 Auditors found generally good levels of compliance in categorising seven of the nine categories of crime. As in 2005/06, this year's review found that racial incident and violent crime reporting was below an acceptable standard **(Figure 2, overleaf and Appendix 3)**. Nine (21 per cent) police authorities and forces were assessed as poor in categorising racial incidents, an increase of five from 2005/06. Overall compliance across police authorities is 88 per cent, significantly below the best performing categories of vehicle and burglary crime at 98 per cent and 96 per cent respectively.

Figure 2
Quality of incident records by category of crime

Overall, 92 per cent of records were found to be correctly classified as crimes. While there has been improvement in recording domestic violence and disturbance, racial incidents and violent crime recording has deteriorated.

Average percentage of records compliant at each force

■ 2006/07   ■ 2005/06
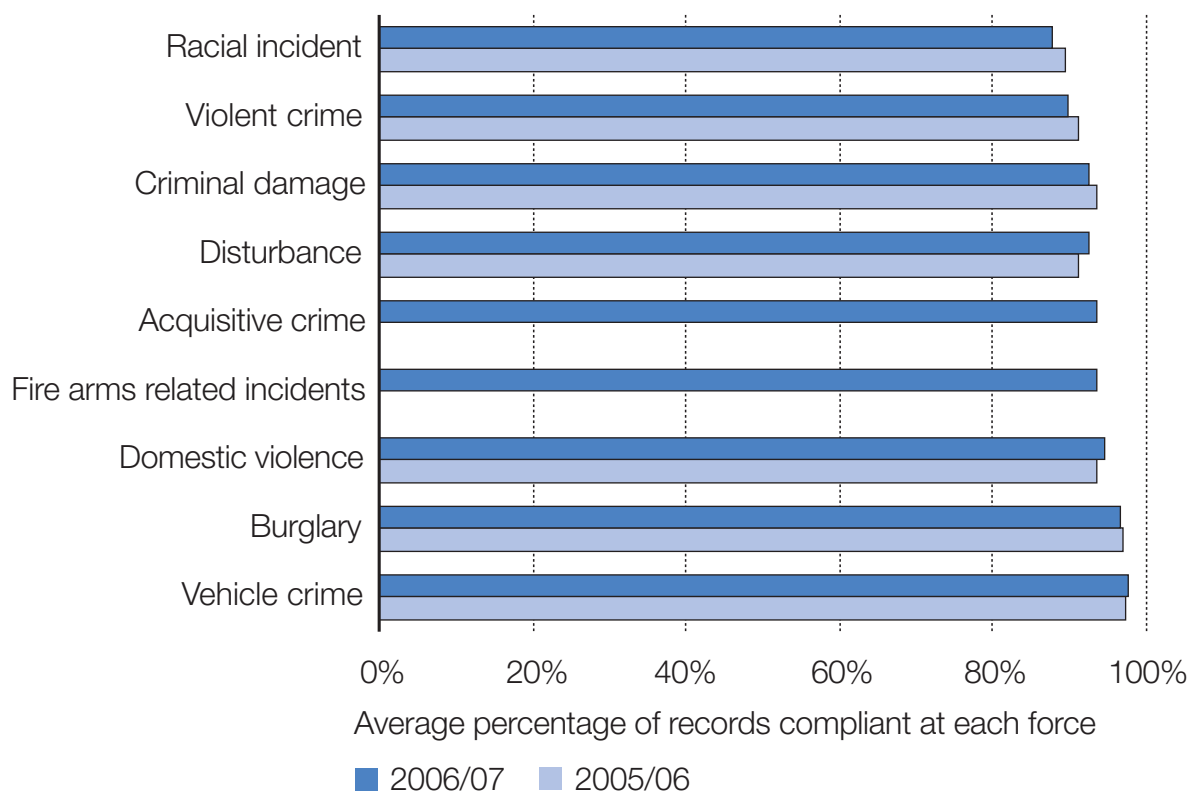
Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

40 This level of compliance does not mean that crimes are being under-recorded. Police authorities are responsible through their scrutiny role for understanding and acting on the reasons for poor standards of non-compliance. The main reason for a low level of compliance is due to insufficient information being held on force command and control systems on the nature of the racial incident when first reported. For some of the records reviewed, this meant that an incident may not have been categorised correctly either as a racial incident, another crime or as a non-notifiable crime such as harrassment. To comply with NCRS in the recording of racial incidents requires forces to have systems which are fit for purpose. Most importantly forces need to place a high priority on contact with victims and witnesses to understand the nature and full circumstances of the incident.

41 There are pockets of poor performance in specific crime categories for racial incidents (nine forces), violent crime (five forces), disturbance (three forces), fire arms related incidents (three forces), acquisitive crime (two forces), criminal damage (one force) and domestic violence (one force).

Compliance with the National Standard for Incident Recording

42 Most police authorities and forces need to improve the systems and processes used to record incidents of anti-social behaviour. It is important that accurate information is used to record the nature of incidents. This is the key reason why nearly half are poor in complying with NSIR **(Figure 3)**. CDRPs and CSPs need reliable data on the types, locations and victims of anti-social behaviour so they can address problems effectively and make neighbourhoods safe for local people.

Figure 3

Results from NSIR data testing in 2006/07

Nearly half of police authorities are poor in complying with NSIR within the category of anti-social behaviour.

Percentage of authorities and forces
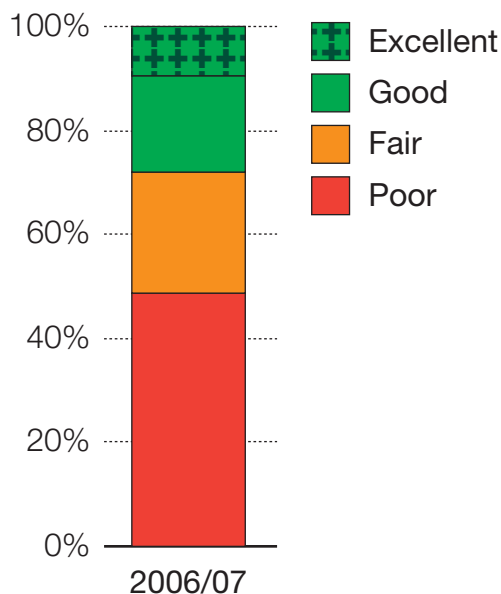
Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

43 Forces and authorities can learn from the success already achieved in raising crime data quality standards as they embark upon the significant improvements needed to ensure compliance with NSIR. When NCRS was introduced in 2002, there were some low standards of compliance by some forces and authorities. It will be important for forces and authorities to place emphasis upon good systems, processes and training to avoid the risk of bureaucratic approaches. The actions which were undertaken to achieve compliance with NCRS since then will need to be replicated quickly to improve compliance with NSIR.

44 The results of the first year of NCRS data quality reviews are compared with the NSIR compliance results for 2006/07 in **Figure 4**. It shows that there is a lower level of compliance for NSIR than there was in the early stages of NCRS.

Figure 4

Comparing NCRS to the first year of NSIR

NSIR compliance in the anti-social behaviour category is a lower standard of performance when compared to the 2003/04 results for NCRS.

Percentage of authorities and forces
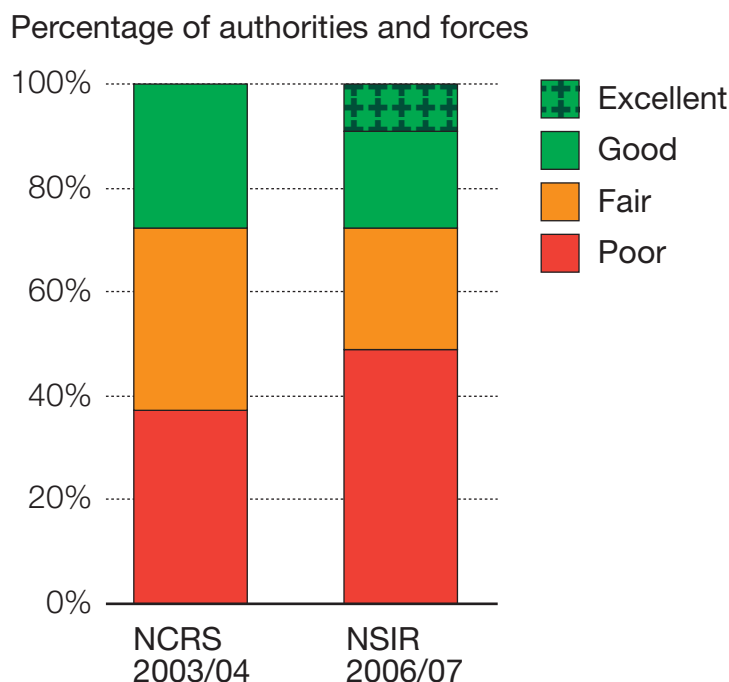
Source: Results from data testing. Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

45 There are 12 police authorities and forces (28 per cent) with good or excellent levels of compliance on NSIR in the anti-social behaviour category which was the same result for NCRS in 2003/04. Forty-nine per cent of authorities and forces are poor in complying with NSIR which compares with 37 per cent for NCRS in 2003/04. This is to be expected. As this is the first year NSIR has been introduced, we recognise that achieving higher standards will take time. At this early stage some police authorities and forces have already done a great deal to achieve good or excellent levels of compliance. But progress for the vast majority of forces remains patchy and rapid progress is now needed.

46 Our findings indicate that good or excellent police authorities and forces have provided the leadership and direction needed to implement NSIR successfully. Those needing to improve should use the key principles and learning which have resulted in continuous improvement in compliance with NCRS over the past four years.

47 Taking our early NSIR results with the findings for recording racial incidents, it is clear that some police authorities and forces need to improve the systems and processes used to record more complex types of crime and incidents.

48 **Police forces** must improve the quality of anti-social behaviour and racial incident data by ensuring that:

- all force command systems identify the status of a caller as a victim, witness or third party so as to take a victim-focused approach in addressing racial incidents and anti-social behaviour;

- high-quality management information is used actively at an operational level to determine the nature of anti-social behaviour and all incidents of crime so that police authorities, forces and partners, through CDRPs/CSPs, can determine the best preventative and responsive measures **(Case study 1, overleaf)**; and

- methods are in place to record accurately the decision-making process used to identify and record relevant incidents as anti-social behaviour, as opposed to a crime.

Case study 1

Leicestershire Police Authority: Robust systems and processes result in high-quality data being used to make decisions

Having access to accurate and real time data has been instrumental to understanding and tackling the fear of crime in Leicestershire. Over the past year, the Force has strengthened and improved its processes for investigating and reporting crimes. The importance of high-quality data is now integrated into the Force's operational process. Using its APEX performance management framework and Management Information Gateway (MIG) facility, the Force has demonstrated how data on crime and incidents have resulted in swift decisions to tackle areas of public concern.

MIG analyses and updates data at an area and local policing unit level on a daily basis using one corporate system. The Force can point to a number of examples where management information from APEX is being used to drive service improvement, including:

- basic command unit (BCU) resources being deployed in the city centre to tackle upward trends in robberies;

- a sustained performance improvement in answering non-emergency calls which is a local priority;

- any weaknesses in data quality are identified at a BCU level and local approaches are taken to improve compliance by providing targeted training to individuals; and

- reviewing policies and procedures relating to road traffic collisions using intelligence on the impact of actions being taken by individual officers.

By strengthening its systems and processes, the Force can demonstrate that data quality has improved and that it is being used to improve customer satisfaction and in providing better and more responsive services to communities.

User satisfaction data

49 Almost all police authorities and forces were assessed as good or excellent in the quality of data used in user satisfaction surveys. Survey data is being used by police authorities and forces to take a proactive victim-focused approach on responses to crime. Information is being used in an intelligent way by police authorities and forces as part of local decision making.

50 Most police authorities and forces are using surveys to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses in reporting crime and to understand the diverse needs of communities **(Case study 2)**. Forces understand that maintaining telephone or face-to-face contact before closing an incident gives increased levels of satisfaction. They are also rectifying any weaknesses highlighted in surveys.

Case study 2
Lincolnshire Police Authority: Using satisfaction data to understand community needs

Building strong and cohesive communities is a priority in Lincolnshire. The Authority and Force recognise that taking a victim-focused approach in responding to crimes provides good local intelligence and a better understanding of the needs of its diverse communities.

The Force has taken steps to understand the diverse needs of its community. Using local intelligence from surveys and partnership working with other public agencies, the Force has analysed the composition of its non-British population by providing survey forms in appropriate languages. For example, survey forms for racially motivated incidents are now available in Portuguese, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian to reflect the recent new arrivals in neighbourhoods from those countries. Actions are taken to address any areas of poor performance identified from user satisfaction survey data.

The Force has used this form of community engagement to build a picture of community cohesion issues in the area. It is now using this intelligence, in partnership with other agencies, to put in place actions to make a positive difference for all areas of the local community.

2

Arrangements to support accurate police data

51 The number of police authorities and forces achieving a good standard of corporate arrangements has increased from 29 in 2005/06 to 33 in 2006/07 **(Figure 5)**.

Figure 5
Corporate arrangements results

Category	Number 2005/06	Movers up	Movers down	Non movers	Number 2006/07
Excellent (green)	1		1	0	0
Good (green)	28		2	26	33
Fair (amber)	12	6		6	10
Poor (red)	2	2		0	0

Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

52 Since our 2005/06 reviews, progress has been made in the following areas:

- there is far less reliance on expensive intensive data checking and this has been replaced by cultural shifts on quality assurance, training and leadership to embed a culture of getting high-quality data;

- data quality is being integrated into risk and performance management systems;

- there is good commitment at a force level to get accurate and reliable data on anti-social behaviour incidents;

- data are being used more by police authorities and forces in performance management and decision making;

- member and senior management commitment to data quality has been enhanced, with clear accountabilities, roles and responsibilities; and

- robust policies and procedures exist covering all aspects of data quality.

53 Room for further progress remains. Although eight police authorities and forces have improved performance, three have not sustained previous performance. In addition, no police authority and force received an excellent rating this year and ten (23 per cent) are assessed as fair. As a result more needs to be done to create a strategic approach to data quality and embed a culture of compliance across all police authorities and forces **(Figure 6)**.

54 There are currently only 3 forces (7 per cent) with excellent systems and processes, with 14 forces (33 per cent) not achieving a good level of performance. Most of this can be attributed to low levels of NSIR compliance and poor recording of racial incidents by a fifth of police forces.

55 There are 11 forces (26 per cent) that are performing only at a fair level in at least 3 different aspects of corporate arrangements. These 11 forces account for nearly three-quarters of the fair assessments across all aspects of corporate arrangements.

Figure 6

Aspects of corporate arrangements 2006/07

Data use is the strongest aspect but a number of forces need to improve overall arrangements.

Percentage of authorities and forces
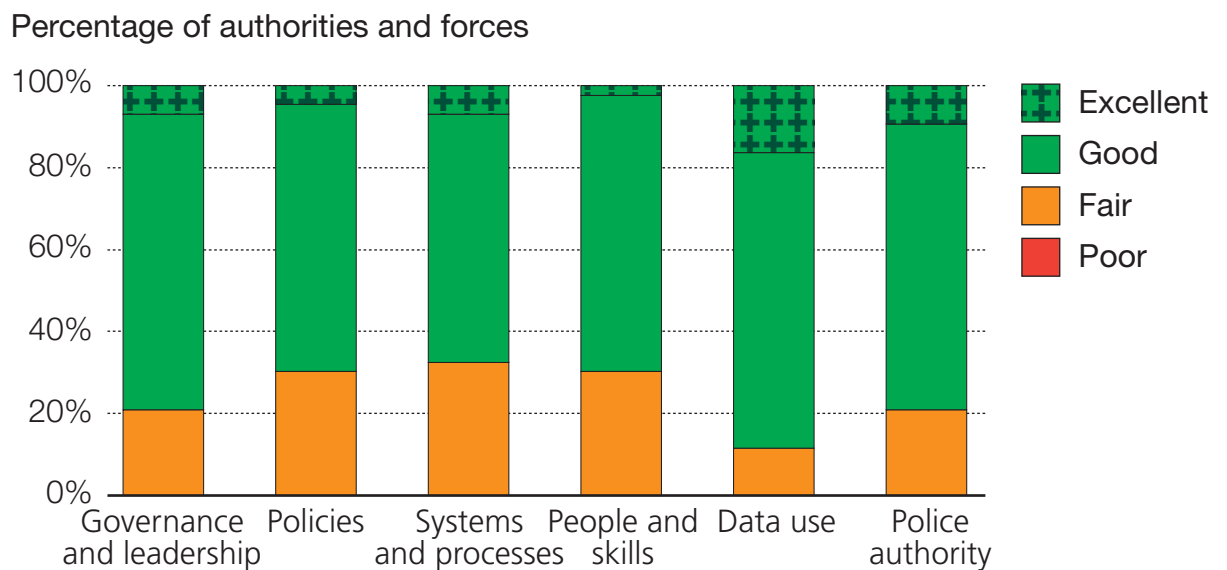
Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

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56 The responsibility for securing and maintaining high levels of police data quality rests with individual authorities and forces. **Police forces** needing to improve should draw on the characteristics shared by those who are performing well such as:

- having a strategic approach to data quality which sets out the key data which will be used to monitor performance and how arrangements will be made to ensure accurate and reliable data is used in decision making;

- routinely considering data quality issues as part of the authority and force risk management process **(Case study 3, overleaf)**;

- actively using data to inform performance management, resource allocation and decision making **(Case study 4, overleaf)**;

- adequately resourcing and increasing the capacity of the force crime and incident registrar to ensure compliance in the reporting and recording of all incidents;

- ensuring a quality review programme is in place which provides assurances that incident data as well as crime data is accurate and reliable;

- using the results from a proportionate and risk-based quality assurance review of data to drive improvements in data quality standards;

- providing training to force staff that raises the awareness and importance of collecting, recording, analysing and reporting anti-social behaviour data **(Case study 5, overleaf)**; and

- ensuring data quality issues are addressed through personal development and training programmes, supported and monitored by force champions.

Case study 3
West Yorkshire Police Authority: Effective governance and leadership
To recognise the importance that high-quality management information plays in effective decision making and service delivery, data quality needs to be at the heart of the leadership and culture shown by a police authority and force. This has been shown successfully by West Yorkshire Police Authority where data quality has improved year on year.

In the past year, improvements have resulted from a top level commitment by chief officers to the importance of data quality as well as integrating this with a focus on quality of service. A culture has been created where a dedicated data quality manager from the Force's corporate review team prepares reports for the Authority's Strategic Planning & Performance Committee on the accuracy and reliability of the performance results which

are used in setting priorities, making decisions and allocating resources. The Authority not only receives this report but also quarterly updates on the Force's risk assessment, which includes information on data quality. Failure in data quality is seen as the second highest risk in the force risk register. It also receives assurances from the Force that comprehensive plans are in place to prevent this risk, such as:

- having robust disaster recovery plans that cover the data quality implications of loss in ICT systems in crime bureaux and call handling;

- each management team having a dedicated compliance officer, with direct links to the force crime registrar to provide training on crime and incident recording to all staff; and

- all staff being held to account in ensuring robust data quality through personal development and appraisal processes.

Improving data quality is a key part of West Yorkshire's approach to information management. Issues relating to data quality are raised on a regular basis through the data quality issues group chaired by the Head of Information Management. This group is represented by staff from across the Force including training, custody, help desk, crime bureau, disclosure unit and intelligence. Significant data quality issues from this group are raised with the Information Management Programme Board and key actions are taken forward via an Information Services Steering Group to the command team. The Chair of the Authority's Strategic Planning and Performance Committee acts as data quality champion and keeps abreast of any emerging performance issues.

The Deputy Chief Constable chairs a quarterly Quality of Service board meeting which reviews service performance, drawing on user satisfaction and performance information data. Senior members and officers of the Authority and Force are represented on this board to provide effective scrutiny, leadership and accountability on performance and service delivery. Having the knowledge that the risks from poor data quality have been addressed provides senior officers and members with the confidence that the right data is being used to set priorities, allocate resources and deliver service improvements to local people.

Case study 4
Lancashire Police Authority: Using data for decision making

Using high-quality data, drawn from good performance management systems helps to provide a better understanding of value for money at a local level. It also allows resources to be allocated to priority activities in the best way. Lancashire Police Authority has shown how its performance management systems are contributing to improvements in value for money.

From a strategic to operational level, the Force can make available high-quality management information in a format which is tailored to the needs of the user. Key features include:

- a British Crime Survey comparator tool, commissioned by Government Office North West which supplies monthly benchmarking information for use by all CDRPs within the North West;

- an information tool called TORA which analyses team and individual activities. As an automated system, this provides real-time data on the activities of its officers and is used alongside other productivity measures, for example number of arrests; and

- using a survey tool called PROBE which enables the Force to measure how specific preventative measures have an impact on public reassurance and confidence. Levels of user satisfaction are associated with specific actions and behaviours adopted by its officers.

The Force has used this information to build a full picture on the activities and deployment of officers and how this results in the achievement of value of money and public satisfaction. Comparative information is used across teams and BCUs. Decisions are then made on allocating resources to priority areas. As a result, the Force can demonstrate that it is using a wide range of information and data sources to challenge performance and assess value for money with a clear victim-focused approach.

Case study 5
North Wales Police Authority: Raising awareness of NSIR

North Wales Police Authority knows that it can resolve neighbourhood problems better if it has access to high-quality data. The Authority and Force have been proactive in raising awareness to all staff on the importance that compliance with NSIR has in making places safer for local people.

It took the decision to use its intranet site to provide a series of training materials for staff on NSIR. Staff have found the training materials to be accessible, easy to use and informative. Guidance on NSIR and data quality standards is compulsory and practical examples are used to demonstrate how NSIR is applied when officers record incidents which are not a crime, such as anti-social behaviour.

Before putting training into practice, staff are required to complete a self-assessment which tests their knowledge and awareness of NSIR. The results of this are used to highlight and design any further training to staff on NSIR. It then forms part of officers' personal and professional development plans.

As a result, the range of training initiatives used by the Force has been used to embed a culture of high data quality standards and expectations on compliance with NSIR.

57 Police authorities and forces have a responsibility to ensure that data recording of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour is of high quality and this has now been extended to CDRPs and CSPs.

58 **We recommend that CDRP and CSP partners** adopt the NSIR standard. They need to learn from the improvements made by the police and put in place appropriate management arrangements to avoid the risk of bureaucratic approaches to NSIR compliance. They should ensure that their performance management systems can share information on crime and anti-social behaviour with their partners.

59 Successful police authorities and forces have worked with CDRP and CSP partners to:

- use data to shape community profiles and intelligence on crime and anti-social behaviour as part of area and neighbourhood decision making **(Case study 6, overleaf)**; and

- understand the nature of incidents by sharing data between partners, particularly where incidents have been referred to community or safe neighbourhood teams for resolution.

Case study 6
Hertfordshire Police Authority: Effective use of data for intelligence led policing

Tackling the fear of crime requires a proactive approach by all public agencies to capturing and recording all reports and incidents. In Hertfordshire, the Authority and Force have led the way in sharing and using data with partners to direct the resources of BCUs and CDRPs effectively. They have established a data sharing protocol with all agencies and use their operational performance management meetings to gather data and intelligence for use by CDRPs and BCUs.

For example, in Operation Enigma, the Force used intelligence-led policing to reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour in local communities. In one BCU, the Police Force worked successfully with schools, districts and the county council to share information which identified the causes of anti-social behaviour in specific areas of the community ranging from family tensions to drugs misuse. Intelligence was used to isolate incidents by ward, street and property. In other parts of the county, data have been used to target resources to address incident hotspots. For example, user satisfaction data are used to transfer learning across CDRPs on successful approaches to improve victim satisfaction from responses to racist incidents and violent crime.

The police and their partners are able to use this intelligence to make decisions about how local problems will be addressed and resourced. The actions taken have resulted in reductions in anti-social behaviour and contributed towards making areas of the community safer for local people.

By sharing and using data on all crime and incidents, the Police Force and its partners have a better understanding of community and neighbourhood issues. As a result, resources are used more effectively to address and respond to local problems.

3

The role of the police authority

60 In 2005/06, 65 per cent of police authorities were assessed as good or excellent in their role. In 2006/07 there has been continued improvement with 79 per cent (34) of police authorities now achieving this standard **(Figure 7)**.

Figure 7
The role of the police authority
There has been improvement in police authorities' corporate arrangements.

Percentage of authorities and forces
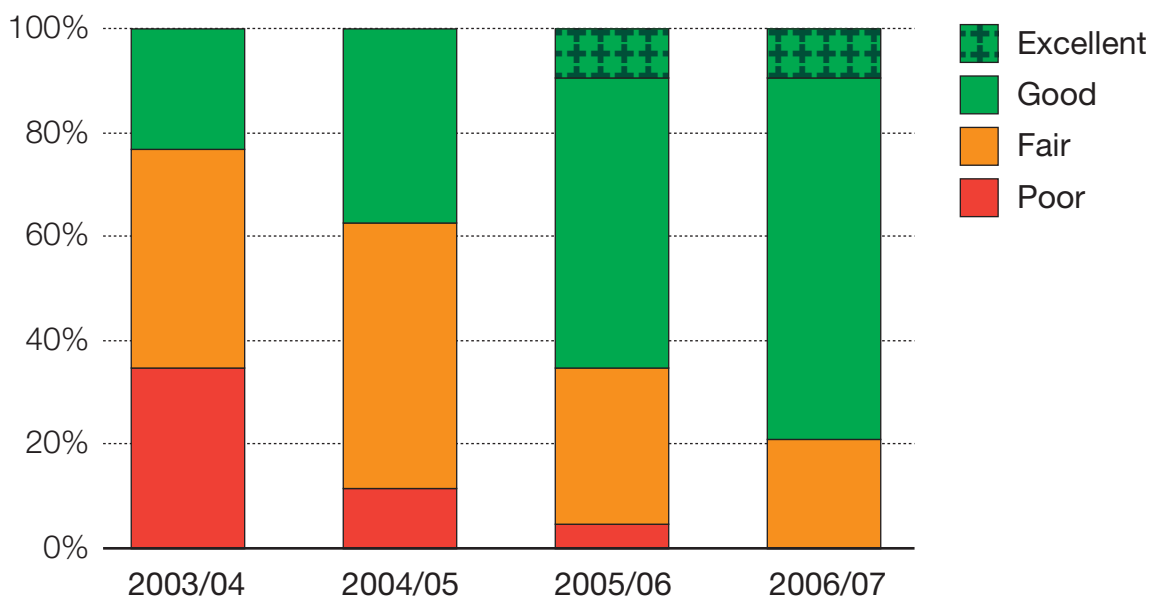
Source: Audit Commission and Wales Audit Office

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61 Nine police authorities (21 per cent) are assessed as fair. Most police authorities have not yet secured the ownership and leadership needed to achieve compliant NSIR data. Our findings on the poor quality of anti-social behaviour incident recording, and compliance with NCRS in relation to racial incidents, will require police authorities to take a strong lead and, where necessary, challenge forces to deliver improvement **(Case study 7)**.

Case study 7

Greater Manchester Police Authority: Proactive police authority role on data quality

Securing high-quality data for decision making requires leadership and determined championing by police authorities. Greater Manchester Police Authority continues to be successful at this by providing effective scrutiny and accountability to the Force in the quality of data being used in performance management, decision making and allocating resources.

For some time, the Police Authority has taken a strategic role in holding to account the performance information being used by the Force in its decision making. It has high expectations on the quality of data being used by the Force and provides a supportive, yet challenging approach. Joint lead members have responsibility over all aspects of data, including user satisfaction data and compliance with NCRS and NSIR. The Authority has also demonstrated leadership with its key partners and peers on the importance that high-quality data plays in making places safer for local people.

The Authority has a number of examples of its proactive approach to scrutiny on the quality of data and its use in performance management and decision making, including:

- joint lead members have responsibility for data quality and performance information and all members have received training and awareness on the importance of data quality;

- scrutiny panels receive reports on data quality and use this to hold BCU commanders to account for performance on a quarterly basis;

- authority members and officers have been involved at an early stage in the development of any new systems and processes for collecting and recording data, for example in the Force's business case for a new call resolution system;

- leading the Greater Manchester Against Crime (GMAC) partnership which aims to make better use of data across all partners and is starting the process by working with the Force to develop a data warehouse for use by BCUs and community safety teams;

- sharing learning and good practice with other police authorities on its approach to scrutiny on data quality;

- authority officers are represented on the Force's audit board;

- using its scrutiny process to check and challenge data used at a BCU level;

- using public consultations to challenge performance data; and

- actively involving authority champions in providing force training sessions to emphasise the importance of data quality.

62 Police authorities need to do more to secure the longer-term cultural change at most forces so that accurate crime and incident recording become the basis for good police performance management and use of resources. The main areas for improvement are in:

- proactively holding the force to account on complying with the NSIR and on the accuracy of anti-social behaviour data being used in decision making;

- using its own scrutiny role to challenge the force on all key data used in strategic planning and decision making;

- training and equipping all members with the knowledge and tools to provide challenge to the force on the accuracy and reliability of key data used in decision making;

- demonstrating a commitment to data quality at all levels through member and staff champions who liaise regularly with the force and BCUs; and

- training and supporting authority members and staff to raise the awareness and importance of collecting, recording and reporting all data including on anti-social behaviour.

Community safety and Comprehensive Area Assessment

63 The *Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities* **(Ref. 5)** set out wide-ranging proposals for local services in England. It put forward a number of measures to strengthen the leadership provided by councils, to increase openness and ways for local people to influence decisions and to encourage local services to work together. Its aim is for local services (councils, police, fire, probation, health and others) to work in partnership with each other and with their communities to engage better with people and better meet their needs.

64 A new performance assessment framework, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), is being developed for England. This will assess how well local public services are serving the local area and how well they are positioned for the future. It will focus on the things that matter most to local people such as having safe, clean neighbourhoods and good access to public services. It will bring together data, performance information and judgements from local services regulators including Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

65 A forward-looking assessment will be made about the likelihood of the local strategic partnership (LSP) achieving its key priorities. Any support and intervention that follows from the assessment will be targeted where it is needed most.

66 Local people are concerned about crime and anti-social behaviour. This is reflected by LSPs in their local area agreements and will be recognised in the PSA targets to be published in autumn 2007.

67 By 2008/09, a new performance framework will be introduced for the police service. The Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) will emphasise the outcomes resulting from the police working with its partners to achieve priorities for safer communities. Assessing these outcomes will require accurate and reliable data to be reported and shared by the police and its partners in the CDRP and CSP.

68 A continued focus on high-quality data and management information will be needed by CDRPs. This will give greater confidence in the performance information used to assess the delivery of safer communities in local areas. From 2008/09, the introduction of APACS aims to provide a simplified performance assessment regime and from 2009, the APACS assessments will advise CAA judgements.

4

The way forward

69 Addressing neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour requires high-quality management information and sustained action by all partners in the CDRP and CSP. Having more accurate data on crime and anti-social behaviour will help CDRP and CSP partners to take more timely decisions and interventions to build stronger, safer and more cohesive communities.

70 There has been a sustained improvement in crime data quality. The results from the first year review of NSIR compliance have revealed a poor picture of performance around the recording of anti-social behaviour in 49 per cent of police forces. There is a need for early action to improve this situation so that reliable data is available to assess CDRP performance in delivering safer and stronger communities outcomes.

71 More needs to be done to improve the quality of crime and incident data which will underpin national performance frameworks such as CAA and APACS in England and Making the Connections in Wales. As part of our assessment of police use of resources, in 2007/08 auditors will continue to review the corporate arrangements to secure accurate and reliable data in police authorities and forces.

72 Looking ahead we believe that assessing corporate arrangements for police data quality will need to be supported by some spot checking of data. We will continue to work with the Home Office on options for assuring police data quality which supports CAA and APACS in England and future performance frameworks in Wales.

73 We would like to thank the police authorities and forces in England and Wales for their assistance to us and our auditors in carrying out this review. We hope that our findings help them to build further on the significant improvements made since 2003/04.

Appendix 1

Individual police authorities' results for crime data and corporate arrangements 2006/07

Police authority	Corporate arrangement	Crime recording
Avon and Somerset	F	G
Bedfordshire	G	G
Cambridgeshire	G	G
Cheshire	G	E
City of London	G	E
Cleveland	G	G
Cumbria	F	E
Derbyshire	G	G
Devon and Cornwall	F	E
Dorset	F	G
Durham	G	E
Dyfed Powys	G	E
Essex	F	G
Gloucestershire	G	G
Greater Manchester	G	E
Gwent	G	G
Hampshire	F	F
Hertfordshire	G	E
Humberside	G	E
Kent	G	E
Lancashire	G	E
Leicestershire	G	E

Police authority	Corporate arrangement	Crime recording
Lincolnshire	G	G
Merseyside	G	E
Metropolitan	F	F
Norfolk	G	E
North Wales	G	E
North Yorkshire	F	E
Northamptonshire	F	F
Northumbria	G	E
Nottinghamshire	G	E
South Wales	F	F
South Yorkshire	G	E
Staffordshire	G	G
Suffolk	G	G
Surrey	G	G
Sussex	G	E
Thames Valley	G	E
Warwickshire	G	G
West Mercia	G	F
West Midlands	G	G
West Yorkshire	G	E
Wiltshire	G	G

Key

E Excellent   G Good   F Fair   P Poor

Individual police authorities' results for crime data and user satisfaction

Police authority	Crime recording 2006/07	Incident investigation									Crime investigation		User satisfaction			
		Violent crime	Fire arms	Burglary	Vehicle crime	Acquisitive	Criminal damage	Disturbance	Domestic violence	Racial incidents	Reclassification	No crime	Overall	Sample selection	Survey process	Survey data
Avon and Somerset	G	F	G	E	E	G	G	E	E	P	G	G	E	G	E	E
Bedfordshire	G	F	G	F	E	F	G	E	G	P	G	E	G	G	E	E
Cambridgeshire	G	G	G	E	F	G	E	F	F	G	E	E	G	G	G	G
Cheshire	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	P	E	E	E	E	E	E
City of London	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	E	F	E	E	E	G	E	G	G
Cleveland	G	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	F	E	E	G	E	E
Cumbria	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	E	E	E	F	F	G	F	E	E
Derbyshire	G	P	E	E	E	P	E	E	E	G	E	G	G	G	E	G
Devon and Cornwall	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	E	G	F	E	E
Dorset	G	E	G	G	F	F	F	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	E	G
Durham	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	E	G	E	E
Dyfed Powys	E	E	F	E	E	E	E	G	E	G	E	G	G	G	G	E
Essex	G	F	G	E	G	G	G	F	E	F	E	F	G	F	G	G
Gloucestershire	G	E	F	E	E	E	G	F	E	P	E	G	E	E	E	E
Greater Manchester	E	G	G	E	E	E	G	G	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E
Gwent	G	P	P	E	E	F	E	F	G	F	E	F	G	G	G	G
Hampshire	F	P	E	F	E	G	P	P	P	F	P	P	E	E	E	E
Hertfordshire	E	G	G	E	E	G	E	E	G	G	E	E	G	F	E	E
Humberside	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	E	G	E	E	E	G	F	E	E
Kent	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Lancashire	E	E	E	G	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	E	G
Leicestershire	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	F	E	F	E	E	G	G	E	E

Police authority	Crime recording 2006/07	Incident investigation									Crime investigation		User satisfaction			
		Violent crime	Fire arms	Burglary	Vehicle crime	Acquisitive	Criminal damage	Disturbance	Domestic violence	Racial incidents	Reclassification	No crime	Overall	Sample selection	Survey process	Survey data
Lincolnshire	G	F	E	G	E	E	E	G	G	G	E	G	E	E	E	E
Merseyside	E	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	E	G	E	E
Metropolitan	F	F	F	G	G	P	F	P	F	F	G	P	G	F	E	E
Norfolk	E	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	G	E	G
North Wales	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	E	E	E	G	G	E	G
North Yorkshire	E	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	E	G	G	E	G
Northamptonshire	F	G	P	E	E	E	F	F	E	F	P	P	G	G	E	G
Northumbria	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Nottinghamshire	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	E	E	G	F	E	E
South Wales	F	F	F	F	E	F	G	F	G	P	E	G	F	G	F	P
South Yorkshire	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	F	E	E	G	F	E	E
Staffordshire	G	E	G	E	E	G	E	E	G	E	F	F	E	E	E	E
Suffolk	G	E	E	E	G	F	E	E	E	F	G	F	G	G	E	G
Surrey	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	G	P	G	E	E	G	E
Sussex	E	G	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	F	E	E	G	E	E	E
Thames Valley	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	E	E	G	G	E	E
Warwickshire	G	F	P	E	E	E	F	G	G	P	G	E	E	E	E	E
West Mercia	F	P	F	E	E	F	F	P	G	P	E	F	E	E	E	E
West Midlands	G	F	G	G	E	E	G	F	E	P	E	E	E	E	E	E
West Yorkshire	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	E
Wiltshire	G	P	E	E	E	F	F	F	E	P	E	E	E	G	E	E

Appendix 3

Individual police authorities' results for corporate arrangements

Police authority	Corporate arrangements 2006/07	Police authority	Governance and leadership	Policies	Systems and processes	People and skills	Data use
Avon and Somerset	F	F	F	F	F	F	G
Bedfordshire	G	F	G	G	G	G	E
Cambridgeshire	G	F	E	G	G	F	F
Cheshire	G	G	G	E	G	G	G
City of London	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Cleveland	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Cumbria	F	G	G	F	F	G	G
Derbyshire	G	G	G	F	F	G	G
Devon and Cornwall	F	F	F	F	G	F	G
Dorset	F	F	F	F	G	F	G
Durham	G	G	G	G	F	G	G
Dyfed Powys	G	G	G	G	E	G	G
Essex	F	G	F	F	F	F	F
Gloucestershire	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Greater Manchester	G	E	G	G	G	G	G
Gwent	G	G	G	G	F	G	G
Hampshire	F	F	F	F	F	G	F
Hertfordshire	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Humberside	G	G	F	G	G	F	F
Kent	G	G	G	F	G	G	E
Lancashire	G	E	G	G	E	G	E
Leicestershire	G	G	G	G	G	G	E

Police authority	Corporate arrangements 2006/07	Police authority	Governance and leadership	Policies	Systems and processes	People and skills	Data use
Lincolnshire	G	G	G	G	G	F	G
Merseyside	G	E	G	E	G	E	G
Metropolitan	F	F	F	F	F	F	G
Norfolk	G	G	G	G	G	F	G
North Wales	G	G	G	G	E	G	G
North Yorkshire	F	F	G	F	F	G	G
Northamptonshire	F	G	G	F	F	F	G
Northumbria	G	G	E	G	G	G	G
Nottinghamshire	G	G	G	G	F	G	G
South Wales	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
South Yorkshire	G	G	F	G	G	G	G
Staffordshire	G	E	G	G	G	G	E
Suffolk	G	G	G	F	G	G	G
Surrey	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Sussex	G	G	G	G	F	G	G
Thames Valley	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Warwickshire	G	G	G	G	G	F	G
West Mercia	G	G	G	G	F	F	G
West Midlands	G	G	G	G	G	G	E
West Yorkshire	G	G	E	G	G	G	E
Wiltshire	G	G	G	G	G	G	G

Appendix 4

Individual police authorities' direction of travel on crime recording 2003/04 to 2006/07

Police authority	Corporate arrangements					Crime data quality				
	Direction of travel	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	Direction of travel	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04
Avon and Somerset	⇑	F	P	F	F	⇑	G	F	F	P
Bedfordshire	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇓	G	E	G	F
Cambridgeshire	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇓	G	E	G	G
Cheshire	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇔	E	E	F	P
City of London	⇔	G	G	G	F	⇔	E	E	G	G
Cleveland	⇑	G	G	P	F	⇓	G	E	P	P
Cumbria	⇔	F	F	P	F	⇔	E	E	P	F
Derbyshire	⇔	G	G	G	F	⇓	G	E	G	G
Devon and Cornwall	⇓	F	G	F	F	⇑	E	G	G	G
Dorset	⇔	F	F	G	F	⇔	G	G	G	F
Durham	⇑	G	F	P	P	⇑	E	G	F	F
Dyfed Powys	⇑	G	G	F	P	⇑	E	G	F	P
Essex	⇑	F	F	F	F	⇔	G	G	G	F
Gloucestershire	⇑	G	F	F	G	⇑	G	F	F	G
Greater Manchester	⇑	G	G	F	F	⇑	E	G	F	P
Gwent	⇑	G	G	F	F	⇑	G	F	F	F
Hampshire	⇑	F	P	F	P	⇔	F	F	F	P
Hertfordshire	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇔	E	E	G	P
Humberside	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇔	E	E	G	F
Kent	⇔	G	G	F	F	⇔	E	E	G	G
Lancashire	⇑	G	G	F	F	⇔	E	E	G	P
Leicestershire	⇑	G	F	F	F	⇑	E	F	G	G

Police authority	Corporate arrangements					Crime data quality				
	Direction of travel	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	Direction of travel	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04
Lincolnshire	↔	G	G	G	F	⇓	G	E	G	G
Merseyside	↔	G	G	F	F	⇑	E	G	G	P
Metropolitan	↔	F	F	P	F	⇓	F	G	P	F
Norfolk	↔	G	G	F	F	⇑	E	G	F	P
North Wales	⇑	G	G	G	G	↔	E	E	G	G
North Yorkshire		F	G	G	P	↔	E	E	G	P
Northamptonshire	↔	F	F	F	F	⇓	F	E	F	F
Northumbria		G	E	G	F	↔	E	E	G	G
Nottinghamshire	⇑	G	F	P	F	⇑	E	G	F	F
South Wales	⇓	F	F	P	G	⇓	F	G	F	F
South Yorkshire	⇑	G	F	P	P	↔	E	E	P	P
Staffordshire	⇑	G	G	F	G	⇑	G	F	G	G
Suffolk	↔	G	G	F	F	⇓	G	E	G	P
Surrey	⇑	G	F	F	F	⇑	G	F	G	F
Sussex	↔	G	G	F	P	↔	E	E	F	P
Thames Valley	↔	G	G	F	F	⇑	E	F	G	F
Warwickshire	↔	G	G	F	P	↔	G	G	G	F
West Mercia	↔	G	G	G	F	⇓	F	G	G	G
West Midlands	↔	G	G	F	F	↔	G	G	F	F
West Yorkshire	⇑	G	G	F	F	⇑	E	G	F	P
Wiltshire	↔	G	G	F	F	⇓	G	E	G	P

Glossary of terms

ACPO
The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) develops policy on behalf of all police forces. ACPO's members include chief constables, deputy chief constables, assistant chief constables or their equivalents in the 43 police forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, national police agencies and certain other forces in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands plus senior non-police staff.
www.acpo.police.uk

BCU
Basic command units cover over 300 geographically defined areas in England and Wales, variously named as districts, areas, operational command units and divisions. Varying in size between 100 to 1,000 officers and covering densely populated, ethnically diverse inner cities or vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside.
(HMIC, *Going Local – the BCU Inspection Handbook*, Home Office –
http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/docs/going-local-3-handbook.pdf)

CDRP/CSP
The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 created 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in every council area. The Act requires local agencies to work together and states that councils and the police shoulder the prime responsibility to deliver improvements. The Local Government Act 2000 extended this responsibility by requiring councils to provide for the social, economic and environmental well-being of communities. The CDRPs in Wales are named community safety partnerships.
(Audit Commission, *Community Safety Partnerships – Learning from Audit, Inspection and Research*, Audit Commission)

HOCR
The Home Office Counting Rules for the counting and classifying of notifiable offences recorded by the 43 police forces of England and Wales. The rules incorporate the National Crime Recording Standard.
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/countrules.html

NCRS

The National Crime Recording Standard aims to:

- promote greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime; and

- take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/countrules.html

NSIR

The principal aim of the National Standard for Incident Recording is to ensure that all appropriate incidents, be they crime or non-crime, are recorded by police in a consistent and accurate manner, so as to allow resulting data to be used at a local and national level to meet the management and performance information needs of all stakeholders. (Police and Crime Standards Directorate, Home Office – www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

PCSD

The Police and Crime Standards Directorate of the Home Office, formerly the Police Standards Unit, focuses on measuring and comparing BCU and CDRP performance, understanding the underlying causes of performance variations, identifying and disseminating good practice and supporting forces needing assistance.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

PPAF

The police performance assessment framework is an effective and fair way of measuring, comparing and assessing strategic performance in policing across the full range of policing responsibilities for all forces in England and Wales. PPAF focuses on force and BCU performance.

http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/performance-and-measurement/performance-assessment

Recorded crimes

All incident reports whether from victims, witnesses or third parties and whether crime-related or not, will result in the registration of an incident report by the police. Following initial registration, an incident will be recorded as a crime (a notifiable offence) if on the balance of probability:

- the circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law (the police will determine this, based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules); and

- there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/countrules.html

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