SUMMARY

Policing is a complex business (Exhibit 1). Police managers have to make difficult choices concerning priorities and use of resources. Over the last decade the police service has made considerable progress with its management systems, but attempts to improve performance review systems have had mixed success. Lack of attention to management training combined with a mechanistic approach to implementation led to some unhappy experiences in the early 1980s with steps by the police service to respond to the Government’s Financial Management Initiative.

Those efforts certainly played a part in increasing awareness of the need for performance measurement, and most forces have now adopted their own brands of management planning. But although much progress has been made by individual forces, there are major weaknesses in current practices in others (Exhibit 2 overleaf):

– use of quantified output indicators and target standards of service is not well advanced. There is considerable evidence that the crime and detection rates which are the focus of the public debate are inadequate;

– management systems designed to set objectives and monitor performance have an inadequate effect on the activities of officers on the ground;

– forces’ internal inspection systems give limited attention to reviewing management issues, departmental performance and liaison with the public;

Exhibit 1
TIME SPENT ON MAIN POLICE ACTIVITIES
Police managers have a wide range of choices to make about priorities and use of resources...

Source: Audit Commission analysis of data from several forces.
Exhibit 2

CURRENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW PRACTICE

There are major weaknesses in current practices of performance review...

- forces have been slow to adopt market research to gather the views of the public;
- forces have tended to retain direct central control of operations as a substitute for explicit consideration of priorities.

The management style in the police service should be governed by the fact that its officers are all professionals, paid salaries commensurate with other public sector professionals. Management systems should delegate responsibility to them for taking decisions using individual initiative.

Subunits and individuals should have the freedom to contribute to quality of service in the ways best suited to local circumstances.

The corollary is that they should be held accountable for their actions. Better measurement of output makes line managers more accountable, and reduces the need for the centre to make detailed decisions about the resources to be used.

Strengthening the performance review system is as much a matter of culture as of management systems. Each force should have a statement of its broad aims giving a clear sense of direction. The responsibilities and objectives of every manager should be clarified and the basis for assessing performance specified. At all ranks individuals should agree plans of action with their managers, and assessment of achievement should be part of personal performance review.

Indicators of performance which address the main functions of policing should be developed, and data collection systems established to serve them.
The Home Office should take the lead, in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers and representatives of police authorities in urgently pursuing the work already in hand to develop a national framework of activity classifications and standard performance measures for inter-force comparisons.

The Audit Commission has identified candidate performance indicators in previous Police Papers, and this paper proposes a diagnostic model for reviewing performance in crime detection.

Quality of service should be the concern of each officer and manager. But line management should be supported by a strong, central quality control team which should co-ordinate reviews of practices and performance and liaise with external inspection teams. It should incorporate a research arm for statistical analysis, market research, post-implementation reviews of major projects and reviews of force structure and resource deployment. It should also report to the chief constable on the problems of subunits and the ways in which management systems could be adapted to help them.

Police authorities should develop a more informed and proactive role in scrutinising the quality of service delivered by their forces, working closely with central quality control teams.

In these ways the police service can be helped to rise to the challenge which it has set itself in its recent statement of common purpose and values (Box 1) to respond to public criticism of the quality of its services.

---

**Box 1**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON PURPOSE AND VALUES**

'The purpose of the police service to uphold the law fairly and firmly; to prevent crime; to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law; to keep the Queen's Peace; to protect, help and reassure the community; and to be seen to do all this with integrity, common sense and sound judgement.

We must be compassionate, courteous and patient, acting without fear or favour or prejudice to the rights of others. We need to be professional, calm and restrained in the face of violence and apply only that force which is necessary to accomplish our lawful duty.

We must strive to reduce the fears of the public and, so far as we can, to reflect their priorities in the action we take. We must respond to well founded criticism with a willingness to change.'

Association of Chief Police Officers

23 October 1990.

---

**INTRODUCTION**

1 Police work is a mixture of diverse functions and objectives. There is the normal workload involved with preventing crime, apprehending offenders, maintaining public order, and controlling traffic. In addition, the police provide a catch-all emergency service called to attend at incidents ranging from major disasters and shotgun sieges to domestic disputes. If the nature of a crisis is unclear the police are summoned as a default option. And they are expected to step in if other services fail, as in the recent ambulance and prison officer disputes.

2 No police force has, or will ever have, the resources necessary to fulfil all its possible functions. Balances must be struck amongst competing demands for attention. The importance to attach to each of them varies from place to place and from time to time. Police managers have complex decisions to make about priorities and resources.

3 But although there is a general understanding of the final outputs required from the police service, generally agreed indicators of police performance are lacking. In 1829 the first Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police said that:

"the protection of life and property, the preservation of public tranquility, and the absence of crime, will alone prove whether [the efforts of the police] have been successful, and whether the objects for which the police have been appointed have been attained."

General statements of this kind are not a means for judging police performance. The simple interpretation using these criteria is that after 160 years the police are failing in their role. Crime levels are higher than most citizens wish to see, and are currently rising. But such a judgement would be unfair. It is often impossible to distinguish the impact of police performance from that of social factors beyond their control.
The same is true of recent reiterations of the 'common purpose' of the police: such as that in Box 1, developed by the Metropolitan Police for its 'Plus Programme' and recommended for adoption in all other forces by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This initiative is welcome, but definitions of 'good' policing are still not adequately supported by objective indicators of performance. However, it is not a failing of the police service alone that there is so little clarity about how to measure 'successful' policing, and much worthwhile progress in recent years has gone largely unnoticed in popular opinion.

Crime and detection rates are the popular measures of police performance, and to some extent this choice is encouraged by the police service itself. It puts forward little other quantified evidence of its success. Recently these figures have made gloomy reading, and they have prompted critical comparisons in some quarters between the increasing numbers of increasingly well paid police officers and the worsening crime statistics.

But these figures alone are an inadequate measure. Policing is about much more than crime prevention and investigation, and improvements in policing practices can result in apparent increases in crime (more sympathetic treatment of victims, for example, may encourage them to report offences which they might not have otherwise). And rises in the number of recorded residential burglaries may be due in part to the increase in the number of homes with household contents insurance.

The police have taken great strides over the last decade to improve efficiency. But although the service has become more conscious of the important part which performance review has to play, much remains to be done. Strengthening review systems by refocusing management information on outputs rather than inputs is a key to a more efficient, better understood and more effective police service – and indeed also to ensuring that it receives the appropriate priority in national and local budgets.

This paper reviews the current state of play of performance review in forces and goes on to recommend improvements. Although it necessarily concentrates on procedures and structures, these mechanisms cannot compensate for inappropriate attitudes. Quality of service needs to be part of the service culture as envisaged by the recent ACPO initiative (para 4). But a framework of performance review is essential if dedicated officers are to be able to judge themselves as well as to be accountable to others.

Current practice

The impetus to improve performance review systems within forces has come from a number of sources. One was the Government's 'Financial Management Initiative' in 1982. In the same year a circular letter from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) asked chief constables to indicate policy and set objectives annually. A series of Home Office circulars gave further support. Forces responded in a number of ways. One initiative became known as 'policing by objectives' (PBO) – a variant of 'management by objectives' (MBO) techniques adapted to the police environment.

In essence, PBO was intended to inculcate basic principles of good management: that activity should be planned; its implementation should be evaluated to guide future plans; and that each individual in an organisation should have clear roles and responsibilities. It struck a chord with a new generation of senior officers, anxious to find ways for their service to cope with increasing and conflicting demands. The emphasis on clear definition of objectives and a system for regularly measuring performance against them makes the history of that particular initiative instructive.

The term PBO is now rarely used by forces to describe their own systems. Various alternative titles have

* e.g. Circular 114 of 1983, and more recently 106/88 and 81/89
been adopted such as 'planned policing'. Each force has tried in its own way to adapt the principles but there is a common core in most current systems (Exhibit 3). Each year, the chief constable sets a number of overall goals for the force which are used to inform local management action. Individual officers prepare plans directed towards their local objectives.

Details differ considerably from force to force. For example, some forces derive their overall goals from the bottom up by first asking operational commanders to identify their priorities and then extracting common themes; others have less formal consultation with line managers. The ways in which the opinions of the community are taken into account vary. There is variation also in the degree of freedom operational commanders and officers have to choose objectives with origins outside the main areas of action identified by the chief constable.

The PBO initiative itself had mixed success. It played a part in increasing awareness of the need for performance measurement, but it did not lay the basis for a consistent approach. There were problems and false starts in translating the MBO approach to policing, in part caused by the lack of a co-ordinated training programme for middle managers. In some forces, effort tended to concentrate on measurement of inputs rather than outputs, and the lack of quantified measures led to objectives set in terms requiring subjective assessments of success. In some cases it led to an excessive concentration on procedures, which were often bolted on to existing systems with little impact on the culture of forces. These experiences were not unique. Similar problems have attended initiatives in industry, where MBO has sometimes been criticised for leading to 'management-by-numbers', with insufficient attention to building-in good quality instead of screening-out poor quality.

Unlike industry, the police service did not start with clear criteria for measuring quality of output. There was thus little in the way of numerical analysis for PBO to bite on in the first place. Amidst the wealth of data which forces now collect on themselves, it is still not common enough for them to measure the success of their plans in quantitative terms. In one force, for example, 85% of local action plans did not specify how their success was to be measured. In another force none of the local objectives was quantified, even though almost all were amenable to quantification.

Attempts are usually made to evaluate the success of plans, but without quantification the basis for the claims made is unclear; and in many cases the evaluation is based entirely on the level of inputs. It is typical, for instance, for success to be measured as in the example at Exhibit 3: in terms of input activity (usually the amount of time spent) rather than outcomes (e.g. reduction in disturbances). A further problem was that with its emphasis on 'planned' action, PBO was seen as relevant only to proactive po-
licing. This was a major weakness which tended to marginalise its impact.

17 Typically forces have numerous central teams following separate approaches apart from the main cycle of formulating objectives:
- a number are introducing internal inspectorates to review qualitative aspects of policing;
- central teams are set up ad hoc to review force structures and manpower deployment. Similar 'scrutiny' teams may be created to review specific topics such as driver training or fingerprinting;
- statistics sections collate and summarise data;
- research and development departments usually concentrate on reviews of the organisation and systems but also evaluate new initiatives in operational policing and crime prevention.

All this activity is well motivated, but the different strands become tangled. In general, the problem with performance measurement inside forces is that a great deal of effort goes into it, but it is poorly focused and uncoordinated.

18 So despite the progress made, there are widespread major weaknesses in current practices:
- a lack of clear objectives and priorities in forms capable of quantification;
- a failure to translate objectives into actions by officers on the ground;
- a lack of information on officers' activities and outputs;
- a lack of performance indicators;
- inadequate arrangements for qualitative review of performance; and
- a lack of attention to post-implementation evaluation of specific initiatives.

PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES
19 Home Office controls over manpower frustrate planning of resources, but there is also a tendency inside some forces not to integrate the business of setting priorities with their internal resource allocation systems. Rather than setting goals and objectives first and allocating resources accordingly, forces typically start from their existing allocations. Moreover, the annual round of objectives tends to concentrate almost exclusively on the parts of officers' time which may be available for proactive policing. But very little time can be found for this without strategic planning. The demands on police constables assigned to patrol make it difficult to find continuous periods of over 45 minutes in which such activity can take place. One study found that only 17 per cent of officers' time was available in this form.

20 Once objectives have been set, police constables have a high degree of autonomy about the ways in which they follow them, or not. This derives initially from their statutory position as individual warrant-holders under the Crown. It is reinforced by the need for them to work without supervision for much of the time. Police forces have found it difficult to reconcile this independence with their need to be corporate entities, for which the chief constable, however wide his span of command (Exhibit 4), is ultimately accountable to the police authority and the Home Secretary.

21 The high turnover of police managers does not help. For career development reasons it is common for sub-divisional commanders to change position every 18 months or two years. They are often not in post long enough for the consequences of their actions to become fully apparent. In some cases there may be difficulty in understanding the rationale behind the policies which are inherited, and a perceived pressure to 'make an impact' by changing them.

22 The solution adopted by many forces has been to issue force goals and

---

Exhibit 4

RANK STRUCTURE OF PROVINCIAL FORCES

The chief constable is accountable for all operational officers, no matter how far removed he may be...
divisional objectives which attempt to summarise the operational plans of their subordinate units. This approach has several flaws:

- the fine tuning of initiatives to tackle policing problems is most effective at a very local level. Putting the details of them up to a higher level at best applies a bureaucratic gloss; at worst it inhibits local initiatives and devalues links with the community;

- it weakens accountability of managers. Each layer in the hierarchy tends to concentrate on objectives for the most junior officers rather than on objectives for its own performance. This contributes to a widespread feeling amongst operational officers that their superiors do not practise what they preach;

- a police force covers a wide variety of policing environments. Goals can often only achieve relevance across the force by being couched in general terms such as "to increase detections of crimes giving particular cause for concern". Force goals of this type add little to what can be achieved by general statements of 'mission' such as those discussed at paragraphs 3 and 4 above.

23 Some forces attempt to retain direct central control of operations, as a substitute for explicit consideration of priorities or to avoid the difficulties of moving to a more devolved management structure. This is inefficient because it imposes unnecessary overheads. In a sample of forces studied by the Commission, the costs of higher ranks as a proportion of the direct costs of police constables were up to 50%, but in some forces the overhead is around 35%. Central control can also mean bureaucratic systems in which routine policing operations need prior authorisation. This delays responses to problems, introduces additional paperwork and stifles initiative. Chief constables more frequently now leave local management to identify local problems and there is a trend to minimise internal reporting procedures which has been encouraged by HMIC.

26 Forces have tried various ways to implant an understanding of the aims and philosophy of their force. A lot of effort may go into slogans embodying policing virtues and their distribution by pamphlets and posters. What is often lacking is a mechanism to relate this to what individual officers are expected to do and to engage their attention by making assessments of achievement part of their performance appraisal.

ACTION ON THE GROUND

24 Constables have traditionally been given considerable latitude to work their beat as they consider appropriate. This acknowledges the skills of 'beat-craft' involving the professionalism and local knowledge of individual officers. Many officers believe that centralised systems to set objectives hamper their work, and resist them accordingly.

25 Research reported in the Operational Policing Review 1990* provides an example:

- When a sample of constables in one force was asked what influenced their priorities when making decisions, less than a fifth said they were conscious of force goals or sub-divisional objectives. Over one-third of the officers considered that centralised systems set objectives hamper their work, and resist them accordingly.

ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

27 Activity analysis – the recording of what individuals do with their time – is underdeveloped. Given the varied workload and the reactive nature of much of it, this is a serious drawback. Some forces with computer aided despatch systems serving their communications rooms have recording systems which may classify incidents into one of over a hundred categories and analyse the patterns emerging. But where such data are available, few forces exploit their full potential. Interforce comparisons are frustrated by the lack of a standard national activity classification. There is also a risk that activity may be missed by systems concentrating on recordable incidents. Efforts to get a fuller picture by prompting officers to report their current activity at regular intervals may fail because, when the novelty wears off, officers will tend to report whatever is perceived as the 'default' option.

28 Ad hoc surveys have been undertaken by different forces from time to time, but unless regularly repeated they are of little assistance and they tend to record activities like 'paperwork' and 'meetings' without...
EXHIBIT 5
EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
The Commission’s previous work on support services has indicated scope for developing performance indicators...

FINGERPRINTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifications made using fingerprint evidence as a proportion of relevant offences</td>
<td>&gt; 1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifications per fingerprint officer per annum</td>
<td>&gt; 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenes of crime cases with marks per scenes of crime officer per annum</td>
<td>&gt; 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic function of the fingerprint service is to identify offenders. The quality of service from the fingerprint department can be measured in terms of the identifications which it achieves. These could be analysed by gravity of offences to ensure that the department’s priorities correspond to those of the force. The Commission’s analysis was based almost entirely on data collected annually for many years by the National Conference of Fingerprint Experts. Yet the data had never been used systematically either nationally or inside forces.

VEHICLE FLEET MANAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- heat vehicles (hours)</td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- response/traffic cars (shifts)</td>
<td>&gt; 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CID cars (hours)</td>
<td>&gt; 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- motorcycles (hours)</td>
<td>&gt; 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance cost per weighted vehicle per annum</td>
<td>&lt; £750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1987–88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted vehicles per fitter</td>
<td>&gt; 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Police forces have large vehicle fleets. The majority of vehicles are used to transport officers between incidents and for patrol. The basic measure of fleet management effectiveness is availability and reliability of vehicles. Most forces do not monitor these ratios and suffer from poor workshop turnaround times and low vehicle utilisation rates.

TRAINING SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net cost per trainee day</td>
<td>&lt; £47 (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average size of classroom-based courses</td>
<td>&gt; 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact ratios of trainers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- driving and traffic courses</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- firearms courses</td>
<td>&gt; 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- other courses</td>
<td>&gt; 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom utilisation</td>
<td>&gt; 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedspace utilisation</td>
<td>&gt; 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of training is to improve the quality of work done by trainees. Officers should perform better after the training than before in the specific areas of skill, knowledge or approach covered. This can be monitored systemically as part of the performance appraisal process. Testing students before and after courses can generate a proxy measure. Such approaches are rare.

COMMUNICATIONS ROOMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patrol officers per communications room staff</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidents per receiver/despatcher per hour</td>
<td>&gt; 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation between staffing and workload</td>
<td>&gt; 0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians as proportion of communications room staff</td>
<td>&gt; 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Police communications rooms receive calls for assistance and despatch resources. They are essential to effective use of operational resources and presentation of a good public image. A simple measure of service quality is the time taken to perform their functions. Decisions on urgency of incidents and appropriate responses can also be monitored. Occasional surveys of callers and operational officers can add to understanding of service quality. Very few forces set service standards for their communications rooms, and fewer still monitor their achievement.

indicating what the papers and meetings are about. A working party of Home Office and Treasury officials has highlighted the need for further research and central guidance in this area. The whole subject of management information systems – what information is collected, how it is processed and the technology required – will benefit from advice at national level on common standards and good practice.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

29 The Commission’s studies of police support services have found that, even where output can be measured quite readily in quantitative terms, it often is not (Exhibit 5). Even input measures are often defined too widely to allow the costs of specific functions to be monitored. The same problems extend to core policing functions, including:
– crime investigation;
– incident response;
– traffic patrol, and
– proactive policing initiatives.

A recent Home Office study confirms these findings. It observed that "whilst forces recognise the need to develop output and performance measurement, little progress seems to have been made. In some cases a lot of information is collected but there is no analytical framework to enable interpretation and use. It is estimated that 20 – 25 per cent of forces' activities are covered by performance measures, mainly in the areas of crime and traffic".

The simple measure of the clear-up rate of recorded crime is of limited use. Yet it is the subject of media attention and within police forces it is often used as a key indicator of CID performance, even though senior police officers are well aware of its limitations as a measure of police effectiveness:

– there is research suggesting that changes in police actions have a limited impact on the level of reported crime (Exhibit 6 overleaf). There are even some circumstances in which increases in the number of crimes reported can be a sign of police success in building public confidence in the sensitivity of the police response, in areas such as rape, child abuse and racial attacks;
– it glosses over differences in types of offence. Clearly some types of offence are more serious than others and some are inherently easier to clear up – indeed some offences like shoplifting are effectively self-detecting because the offender is nearly always identified at the same time as the offence. From time to time major retailers change their policies on reporting shoplifters, which can have a major impact on the level of recorded crime and the force's clear-up rate;
– practices may differ on the recording of crime: for instance on whether a purse lost during a shopping trip has been stolen (a crime) or simply mislaid (no crime);
– figures for the proportion of recorded crimes cleared up take no account of the resources available to investigate crime. Recorded crimes per officer in 1989 ranged from 17.6 in one force to 48.9 in another; so although they cleared up 52% and 40% of crimes respectively, the latter achieved more than twice as many clear-ups per officer;
– it says nothing about wide variations in the method of clear-up. HMIC classifies crimes according to whether they have been cleared by charge or summons, by caution, by 'taking offences into consideration' (TIC) (sub-divided into those crimes which had previously been reported and those which had not), by admissions to further offences from persons already in prison ('prison visits') or by 'no further action'. The proportions of clear-ups by these methods vary considerably between forces (Exhibit 7). There is disagreement about the value which should be attached to TIC or prison visits. It is sometimes difficult to identify precisely which crime is involved. Some forces systematically devote considerable resources, which could otherwise be directed towards primary detections or other aspects of police services, to interviewing convicted prisoners;
– there can be a time-lag of several months between an offence being committed and its clearance, which is not recognised in the published statistics;
– the current national recording systems show as a 'clear up' the charging of people who are subsequently found not guilty in court, or in

Exhibit 7

METHODS OF CRIME CLEARANCE

The proportion of crimes cleared by different methods varies widely between forces –

![Exhibit 7: METHODS OF CRIME CLEARANCE](chart.png)

Source: HMIC matrix of indicators for all forces in 1989 (excluding Metropolitan Police)
THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF POLICING

There is considerable research evidence that police action has a limited impact on the level of crime...

Foot patrol

'The chances of patrols catching offenders red-handed are... small, and even if these are somewhat increased, law-breakers may not notice or may not care. An average foot beat in a large British city covers a square half-mile, with 4-5 miles of public roadway and a population of about 4,000. Thus, given present burglary rates and evenly distributed patrol coverage, a patrolling policeman in London could expect to pass within 100 yards of a burglary in progress roughly once every eight years - but not necessarily to catch the burglar or even realise that the crime was taking place. Research interviews with habitual burglars and other offenders have confirmed that they realise that the risks of being caught red-handed are low; and it is questionable whether they would be sensitive to changes in the level of risk brought about by changes in conventional foot patrol.'

Car patrol

'Research has found little evidence that car patrols are any more effective in reducing crime than foot patrols. The best known study, the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment, showed that a two or three-fold increase in the level of vehicle patrol had no impact on crime (and indeed passed virtually unnoticed by most people). This may not be surprising given that even intensive patrolling may only provide very intermittent coverage of what may be a large geographical area. Thus in the supposedly crime-ridden streets of American cities, it has been estimated that a patrol officer will encounter a street robbery only once every 14 years. Moreover, the generality of crime is not easily visible from a patrolling car. This last point applies even to some vehicle-related offences such as drunken driving, where the offender is safe from detection unless he infringes some other traffic regulation.'

Rapid response

'It is also now recognised that the advantages of fast response are less than had previously been supposed. The police have been successful in greatly reducing the time taken to respond to incidents ... and in most major cities the police can get to the scene of a crime within minutes. However, this fast response is rarely productive in terms of arrest. For example, a large American study found that no more than 3% of crimes reported to the police resulted in arrests which could be attributed to the speed with which a patrol reached the scene of the crime. These findings can be explained by several factors.

Where offenders are disturbed in the course of crime they can make good their escape, especially in cities, in seconds rather than minutes. But for most types of crime (for example, burglary), the majority of instances are discovered long after the perpetrator has left the scene; and research has shown that people who discover crimes delay for quite some time before calling the police.'

Detective work

'Studies have shown that for the majority of crimes cleared up the offender's identity is plain from the outset: victims or witnesses can say who did it, or else the offender is caught red-handed or clearly implicated in some other way. Thus if the officer who first attends the scene of, say, a burglary finds no clear leads as to the identity of the offender, there is often little value in assigning a detective to the case as there hardly any effective action open to him; the only hope of a detection is if an offender arrested for another crime admits the burglary as a t.i.c [an offence to be 'taken into consideration'].'

Innovative methods

'More effort devoted to deterrent policing such as saturation policing and stop and search can result in increased numbers of arrests. But these tend not to be for serious crimes and their deterrent benefit must be set against the costs; police action perceived to be heavy handed or unnecessary can worsen relations between police and sections of the public.'

Conclusion

'The evidence about police effectiveness, coupled with financial constraints, led some American police departments to reduce manpower in the late 1970s; the New York Police Department reduced its workforce by a fifth. One result was that recorded crimes continued to rise - but no faster than before - and arrests for serious offences actually rose. Some police authorities in this country have also entertained the idea of reducing manpower. However, levels of police resource should not be assessed simply in terms of their effect on crime. Manpower is needed to perform the many functions of policing besides law enforcement, and it is doubtful whether the police could provide the same level of service with fewer officers.'

cases which are never tested in the courts, because they are dropped by the prosecution for various reasons.

31 However, at least in the area of crime detection a statistical base for measuring performance exists. In the case of incident response, which is another vital part of the police service, the basic data is often lacking. For instance, Police Paper No 5 described how few forces monitor times taken to answer emergency calls to communication rooms.

32 Centrally, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary now collates a wide range of data from all forces every year, and it is working towards a more analytical approach to external force inspections. Its 'matrix of indicators' provides the service with comparative data over a wide range of police activities for the first time. But whilst Inspectors can now focus better on some key areas of concern, a structured framework for analysis of the matrix data is lacking, and problems remain with inconsistency of data between forces.

QUALITATIVE REVIEW

33 There is a danger of placing greater emphasis on matters which can be measured quantitatively than on those which can only be monitored qualitatively. The latter are often of fundamental importance. This is a key concern expressed in the Operational Policing Review. Qualitative inspections must form part of performance review systems. Forces generally do not review the quality of service from officers as a matter of course to provide assurance that it conforms to agreed standards (which is the approach to medical audit being developed in the National Health Service). The police have an established system for investigating complaints about professional conduct but such investigations are reactive. And few forces provide line managers with feedback on the more general lessons from their complaints procedures.

34 Traditional quality inspection has concentrated on officers' written work (reports, crime files, process books etc.) including checking that pocket-books have been maintained in accordance with Force Standing Orders. There has been less emphasis given to the implementation of force policies, departmental performance, liaison with the public and internal management issues such as the effectiveness of communication lines. At a higher level, too, police authorities are typically exercised more about accounting for cash against the inputs it has purchased than about the quality of the services which have been produced from them.

35 Some forces are now developing a more proactive role for internal inspectorates formed as a by-product of devolving management responsibility to sub-divisional level. Examples are found in Humberside (in 1982) and Northamptonshire (1984). West Mercia plan to do so in 1991. This has given divisional commanders an inspectorate role to replace or supplement their reduced line management responsibilities. In larger forces where divisional commands retain a more active operational role, central inspection teams still have a place, as in West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Internal inspectorates, however, sometimes split their work territorially rather than functionally. This reduces the scope for cross-fertilisation of best practice and runs the risk of perpetuating the quality inspector's previous line management responsibilities.

36 A number of forces, such as Humberside, have strengthened functional rather than territorial bases for internal inspection. But specialist departments may be omitted from the internal inspection round altogether. The work of the internal inspectorate is not always well co-ordinated with that of other contributors such as central research teams, scrutiny teams and HMIC. There are, therefore, even in the more innovative forces, opportunities to improve inspection procedures.

37 A key opportunity is the monitoring of public opinion. Both the public and the police agree that priorities should be set and what their order should be (Exhibit 8 overleaf). The consensus begins to break down over the offences which the police ought to devote most time to combating (Exhibit 9 overleaf). Undertaken locally, this sort of analysis could be a valuable starting point for assessing policing priorities. Direct contacts between the police and the public are vital, but the feedback received in these contacts is inevitably difficult to weigh and to assimilate. It needs to be supported by structured local research.

38 Opinion surveys have been used widely by the police in North America for many years. On occasions when U.K. police forces have used opinion surveys (for example in Kent, Northamptonshire, Sussex and Wiltshire), they have generally found them a valuable source of information, as part of the process of obtaining the views of
Exhibit 8
POLICING PRIORITIES – TASKS
There is a high level of agreement about the order of policing priorities...

| Task                                      | Rankings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respond immediately to emergencies</td>
<td>Public: 1; Police: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detect and arrest offenders</td>
<td>Public: 2; Police: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate crime</td>
<td>Public: 3; Police: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol the area on foot</td>
<td>Public: 4; Police: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up squads for serious crime</td>
<td>Public: 5; Police: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide help and support to victims of crime</td>
<td>Public: 6; Police: 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get to know local people</td>
<td>Public: 7; Police: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give advice to the public on how to prevent crime</td>
<td>Public: 8; Police: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol the area in cars</td>
<td>Public: 9; Police: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work closely with local schools</td>
<td>Public: 10; Police: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with local council departments such as housing to plan crime prevention</td>
<td>Public: 11; Police: 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control and supervise road traffic</td>
<td>Public: 12; Police: 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Exhibit 9
POLICING PRIORITIES – OFFENCES
The consensus begins to break down over the offences which the police should devote most time to combating...

| Offence                                           | Rankings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assaults on women</td>
<td>Public: 1; Police: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary of people’s houses</td>
<td>Public: 2; Police: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunk driving</td>
<td>Public: 3; Police: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism and deliberate damage to property</td>
<td>Public: 4; Police: 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robberies in the street involving violence</td>
<td>Public: 5; Police: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes in which firearms are used</td>
<td>Public: 6; Police: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of heroin and other hard drugs</td>
<td>Public: 7; Police: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of and from motor cars</td>
<td>Public: 8; Police: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting and rowdymas in the streets</td>
<td>Public: 9; Police: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter and rubbish lying around</td>
<td>Public: 10; Police: 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of cannabis/pot/marijuana</td>
<td>Public: 11; Police: 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and general traffic offences</td>
<td>Public: 12; Police: 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag-snatching and pick-pocketing</td>
<td>Public: 13; Police: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial attacks</td>
<td>Public: 14; Police: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy parties and domestic disturbances</td>
<td>Public: 15; Police: 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Communities under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Generally, though, forces have made limited use of this technique. They have been encouraged to do more at subdi- vional and force levels by an ACPO subcommittee under the chairmanship of the Chief Constable of Leicestershire, and the Home Office is considering funding a routine national survey of public satisfaction.

39 The most important places for discussing police performance are meetings of the police authority, by whom chief constables are appointed and to whom they are accountable. But previous research has shown that police authorities are often passive receivers of information rather than leaders of opinion or informed commentators.

40 The chief constable is required to give the police authority an annual report, which may be supplemented by ad hoc reports on specific matters as requested by them, but the extent to which forces communicate with their police authorities beyond the annual report varies widely. In some forces there are as few as four formal and perhaps a dozen informal meetings between officers and members during the year. In others there can be several hundred different contacts between the authority and the force requiring attention at senior level. In most author- ities, however, the subject matter and content of reports is, by default, determined by the force.

41 The Policy Studies Institute has pointed out that, although the Police Act 1964 gives the police authority an equal duty with the Home Secretary to ensure its force is efficient, the author- ity does not have the same access to information. Consequently members are not able to ask incisive questions about police performance or express informed preferences on matters of policy. It goes on to recommend that the public should be involved in discussions about the general aims of policing and that chosen methods should be legitimised by public approval. The concluding sentence of its report states:

"If representatives of the public on police authorities or at other meet-
ings with the police are to make a more constructive contribution to discussion about good practice, then they will need to be provided with better information by police forces, the Home Office and the Inspectorate to help them do so.”

EVALUATING INITIATIVES

42 In organisations which move staff between posts frequently (as police forces do), implementing major projects is a common way for ambitious managers to make their mark. One of the strengths of the police service is its ‘can-do’ approach to problems. But enthusiasm needs to be tempered by rigorous analysis of the problem to be addressed, the costs and benefits of the solution envisaged, and independent post-implementation reviews. These are generally not done as thoroughly as they ought by forces.

43 The quality of cost-benefit analyses has improved in recent years since the Home Office issued guidelines on how they should be done. No such advice has been provided on post-implementation reviews, however, and they are often overlooked altogether. Corporate commitment to experiments is often perceived by the managers involved as a corporate presumption that they will produce successful results. This can create pressures to present their results as successes. Without feedback from analysis, there is little to guide managers preparing their future plans or to advise the police authority on the effectiveness of its spending.

* * *

44 This tour d’horizon demonstrates that, while many of the building blocks for a performance review system are in place, there is much more work to do, and an overall framework is lacking. The Home Secretary recently said that “a tightly managed service working to clear objectives and sensitive to the concerns of the community will be more effective”. The challenge is to find a way of meeting and reconciling the need for subunits and officers to be held accountable for their performance, while giving them the flexibility to exercise professional discretion and initiative. The remainder of this paper describes how this can be done.

STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE REVIEW

45 Strengthening the performance review system is the key to more effective policing. It is not an academic exercise in management theory. Rather, it is about the simple but essential business of knowing what the organisation aims to achieve, how it is going about it, how successful it is being and how it might improve. This is as much a matter of management culture as management systems. Every officer should know what he or she should be doing, continuously to improve the quality of the police service in their area, and be given the means and the incentives to do so. Better measurement of output makes staff better equipped to judge their own performance and to be more accountable for it.

46 Although there is no single blueprint, strengthening performance review requires the integration of a number of management activities (Exhibit 10):

Exhibit 10

THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW CYCLE

Strengthening performance review depends upon integrating a number of management activities...
- determining priorities and objectives;
- specifying roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels;
- developing management information systems to analyse activity;
- setting performance indicators; and
- quality control.

**PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

47 A force must first decide on the relative importance of the main policing functions. Implicit signals are sent out by forces to those who care to read them, in how many officers they deploy to uniformed patrol, CID, traffic, crime prevention, incident response and so on. These allocations need to be guided by an explicit statement of the force’s aims and priorities to give all officers a sense of direction and to assist in setting local objectives (Exhibit 11).

48 The procedures for developing this statement can be adapted from those used for force goals under systems of planned policing, except that there is no need to repeat the process every year, unless circumstances indicate the need for change. The statement will be a matter of professional judgement, based on the views of the police authority, public opinion – as reflected by opinion surveys and consultation – and statistics on local incidents, crime and so on. The ACPO common purposes statement (Box 1) will be helpful.

49 Operational policing can be categorised as either routine or as special initiatives. Routine operations include, for example, most traffic policing, incident response and general patrol. Special initiatives are typically responses to particular problems, such as concern about a surge in burglaries, or child abuse. Routine policing should largely be handled by setting target standards of performance and then monitoring indicators to check achievement. Special initiatives will require the setting of new objectives. These should largely be handled by local commanders using analyses of the situation and the views of the local community. Guidance should be given from the centre and a sample of actions should also be reviewed, but it should not be necessary for commanders to report formally on each individual action towards each objective.

50 A guide to the general approach envisaged has been developed by the Northamptonshire force with Home Office funding.* Some forces have also made valuable investments in producing their own material for use in management development, as for instance in Durham.

51 Delegating responsibility for formulating detailed operational objectives does not preclude the chief constable from setting precise force-wide objectives if there is a need. But this should be kept in reserve for problems which require special attention across the force – such as a need to improve the appearance of police station enquiry desks. Chief constables should not be expected to set such precise objectives as routine. Still less should their production form part of an annual ritual.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

52 Once the higher level objectives and indicators have been defined, those for individual managers and officers should flow from them. It is essential therefore that junior officers are involved in the formulation of higher level aims. Every officer needs to understand how he or she can contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the force. Officers at every level (both operational and non-operational) should agree activity

---

Exhibit 12

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY PLANS

Officers at every level should agree plans with their managers ... 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICER RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>INTERIM TARGET</th>
<th>COMPLETION</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Constable</td>
<td>To improve the image of the force and the understanding of its aims amongst the public and force personnel</td>
<td>To prepare a statement of the force’s mission</td>
<td>Police authority and management team to be consulted; public opinion survey and internal force questionnaire to be conducted by Dec 1990</td>
<td>Statement to be issued in March 1991</td>
<td>Opinion survey and force questionnaire to be repeated annually in September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Chief Constable (Support)</td>
<td>To increase the availability of operational officers for proactive patrol by 100 hours per officer per annum</td>
<td>To introduce administration support units in every division</td>
<td>All units to be fully operational by Dec 1991</td>
<td>Projected benefits to be visible by mid 1992</td>
<td>Post-implementation review to be conducted end of 1992. To review increase in proactive patrol and impact on quality of prosecution case files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent (Management Services)</td>
<td>To ensure that expenditure on police overtime is within +/- 3% of budget</td>
<td>To prepare police overtime module for insertion into force management information system</td>
<td>System to be operational by Aug 1991</td>
<td>Objective to be achieved by March 1992</td>
<td>Survey of managers to be conducted Dec 1991. Reasons for under and overspends on 1991/92 budgets to be investigated April 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief Inspector</td>
<td>To reduce the number of incidents of disturbances of the peace by 30%</td>
<td>To organise patrols outside licensed premises at and around closing time every night</td>
<td>Review progress with sub-divisional commander after one month</td>
<td>Pending interim review</td>
<td>Monitor number of incidents over three month period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Beat Officer</td>
<td>To increase public visibility of preventive patrolling by 30% compared with analysis conducted in 1990</td>
<td>To patrol beat at peak times identified – ie 0600–0930 &amp; 1530–1800 on Mon-Fri and 0900–1600 on Sat &amp; Sun</td>
<td>Review progress with sergeant after one month</td>
<td>Pending interim review</td>
<td>Repeat 1990 analysis after three months if plan still operational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

plans with their managers (Exhibit 12). This provides a link which is often missing between management planning and action on the ground. Plans should be designed in the light of force priorities, operational objectives and performance indicators, and the availability of resources. Managers should monitor their subordinates’ progress and achievement of the agreed plan should form a central part of individual performance appraisal. The chief constable should have his own objectives on topics which he can directly influence such as civilianisation policy, the introduction of new management systems and so on.

53 There ought to be a positive incentive for individuals to perform well. Typically, the police service relies on
promotion through the ranks for this. But elsewhere in the public sector merit pay is increasingly used as well. Good officers are of course not in the police service just for the pay, but cash rewards are a strong signal of the organisation's approval and as such, a powerful encouragement. They are also a more immediate incentive than promotion alone, which has now become associated with a system of career development requiring rapid mobility of individuals amongst posts, disrupting continuity of management.

ACTIVITY ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

54 Comprehensive activity analysis on a standard basis, undertaken regularly, would give police managers the basis for tracking costs through into the results of policing, to derive 'costs per result'. These could be compared and variances analysed. Without a basis in activity analysis, functional costing breaks down at the level of inputs and cannot be followed through the system (Exhibit 2).

55 A balance needs to be struck between having enough data to understand activity, and collecting so much that measurement becomes a major burden. An experiment worthy of further attention is the use by one force of pocket computers, permanently in use by a small number of officers at any one time, but only infrequently by individual officers. To realise its full potential as a management tool, this sort of scheme needs to employ a national standard activity classification, which should be developed as a matter of urgency by ACPO and the Home Office. It also depends critically upon automated information processing.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

56 There needs to be urgent attention to the development of standard performance indicators for use in interforce comparisons. These standards would not detract from the need for individual forces to develop their own measures to meet their own needs. Exhibit 13 is a flowchart which HMIC have developed as part of welcome guidance on the development of performance indicators.

Exhibit 13
THE STAGES IN SELECTION AND DESIGN OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Introducing performance indicators (PIs) requires careful design and implementation...
MEASURING POLICE PERFORMANCE

Forces should first identify the objective of each of the main policing functions and its measurable attributes. For instance...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas</th>
<th>Main Objectives</th>
<th>Measurable Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime detection</td>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>Clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>Seriousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime prevention</td>
<td>Crime reduction</td>
<td>Crime occurrence (by type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventative patrol</td>
<td>Officer visibility</td>
<td>Volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident response</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Grading of incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim support</td>
<td>Reassurance</td>
<td>Appropriate resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic patrol</td>
<td>Response to accidents</td>
<td>Speed of response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

response to crime than can be captured by the overall crime clearance rate, as the following discussion illustrates.

CRIME DETECTION

In the function of crime detection, there are major drawbacks in concentrating on crimes cleared up per recorded crime. Although underlying data are generally closely defined in detailed 'counting rules' issued by the Home Office, statistics can be manipulated to produce merely cosmetic improvements.

If one measure alone is to be used, then primary clear-ups* per officer is better than the overall clear-up rate. Because primary clear-ups are counted at the time the offender is charged, summoned or cautioned they have the added advantage of reflecting current performance, whereas secondary clear-ups (which are also subsumed in the overall clear-up rate) are not counted until many months later. The traditionally quoted clear-up rate declined in 1989, whilst the number of primary clear-ups per officer nationally has increased annually since 1986 – the first year for which reliable data are available (Exhibit 15). In 1989, the national average of primary clear-ups per officer (excluding the Metropolitan Police) was 7.9. Amongst individual forces it ranged from 4.9 to as high as 12.2.

However, no single measure of performance on crime is adequate. A number are needed, but they must not be viewed in isolation. Systems generating 200 separate data as used in some forces or the 400 in the HMIC 'matrix' are of little value unless placed in a structure for analysis and interpretation. Diagnostic models – however simplistic – are invaluable.

As part of its study of the police service, models have been designed by the Commission to analyse the work of fingerprint departments and police training schools. To illustrate again the power of diagnostic models in evaluating police work, the Commission, with the co-operation of HMIC, has now developed a crime detection model based entirely on data in the HMIC matrix.

It displays the underlying statistics on crime and clear-ups and helps to pick a path through the interactions between them. The value of the approach is best illustrated by means of an example (Box 2 overleaf). There, one force which may appear to be performing poorly on the basis of the traditional clear-up rate is shown to be performing considerably better when some of the other indicators are also examined. Despite dealing with one third more reported crimes per officer

* Clear-ups by cautions, charges, summonses and no further action

CRIME DETECTION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Primary clear-ups per officer have increased steadily over the last four years...

Source: Audit Commission analysis of Home Office statistics
Box 2
CRIME CLEARANCE MODEL

Forces A and B are metropolitan forces with overall clear-up rates of 30% and 45% respectively (3). Force B is sixth highest, whilst A has the lower clear-up rate of any force in the country. In terms of primary clear-ups per officer, however, Force B is lowest (1). There are two main reasons for this:

– the number of recorded crimes per officer is much higher in A than B – 40 compared with 28 (4);

– the proportion of all clear-ups which were primary is much higher in A than B – 63% and 40% (2).

The model provides evidence that there are fundamental differences between the forces' methods of clearing-up crime;

– Force A obtains 50% of its clear-ups from charges and summonses (8) and a further 10% from cautions (close to the national averages). Force B obtains 33% and 6% by these means respectively. The main source of Force B's clear-ups is from prison visits which provide three times the proportion of the national average (5);

– crimes against the person have high clear-up rates nationally; whilst A is a little below average, force B is substantially worse than every other force in the country (9). A similar picture emerges when viewed from the perspective of clear-ups per officer (6);

– property crimes have a lower clear-up rate nationally. A is well below average and B well above (7).

One possible explanation for this scenario is that detectives in Force B spend an exceptionally high proportion of their time interviewing prisoners to obtain confessions to burglaries and autocrimes. The strategy produces one of the highest clear-up rates in the country for these crimes – and hence overall. The value of such an approach must, however, be open to question since the clear-up rate for crimes against the person suffers.

Conversely, Force A clears-up an average proportion of the more serious crimes – in fact above average for metropolitan forces. Its profile of methods of clearance is close to the national average. It is achieving this in spite of having a third more crimes per officer than the national average.
than the national average, it clears-up an average proportion of serious crimes.

63 An analysis of this kind, however, can only raise questions. The chief constable and line managers can use professional expertise to look behind the statistics to identify the underlying reasons for variations, and discuss them with HMIC. A detailed version of the model which could incorporate a full analysis of the method of clearance by major category of crime, e.g. the number of robberies cleared by means of charges, cautions, TIC, prison visits, etc. is being developed. If forces and HMIC adopt it or something similar it could be incorporated into annual reviews and the findings reported publicly and looked at by police authorities.

64 The model could be extended in several directions if additional data could be gathered. In particular:

- to analyse the principal technique used to obtain primary clear-ups, i.e. major enquiry, surveillance, routine systems, witnesses, patrols, other CID work, other uniformed work, and so on. An independent view of the value added by CID activity in each case should be instructive;

- to capture more rigorous and consistent reporting of which crimes were 'actioned' (i.e. whether an investigation was initiated), the type of officers involved and the methods used;

- to analyse the progress of cases through the judicial system, perhaps as part of the review of relations between the Crown Prosecution Service and police forces which has been mooted.

The Commission hopes that the service, HMIC and police authorities will see advantage in developing a model along these lines.

CRIME PREVENTION

65 Crime detection identifies criminals, but this is only one factor in crime prevention. Proactive work, such as encouraging households to participate in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and visits by officers to schools, also forms part of the police response to crime. But research over a number of years shows that such activity in isolation has a limited impact on the overall crime rate. There is now widespread acceptance that the police must work more closely with other agencies. For example, analysis of burglaries in a West Midlands housing estate showed that over half involved theft from gas or electric coin meters and that the risk of houses with coin meters being burgled was considerably greater than for those without. One response was to press at a national level for the substitution of card meters. The take-up of this initiative was patchy around the country. The best results were achieved where forces followed the matter up locally – the Wythenshawe estate in Greater Manchester is a particularly noteworthy example. This is a clear example of initial problem analysis leading to more effective responses than instinctive ones such as, for example, putting more patrols into the areas.

66 Another example is provided by a study of three major stores in Oxford Street which revealed wide differences of approach to preventing shoplifting. For example, the number of store detectives operating, the methods adopted by those detectives, the display systems used, whether items were 'tagged' or 'chained' all varied between the stores. These differences had a significant impact on the level of theft in the stores and analysis demonstrated that specific initiatives could have a measurable impact (Exhibit 16).
GENERAL PATROL

67 General patrol is regarded by the public as an important police function, but its effectiveness in deterring crime (Exhibit 6) is widely misunderstood. The instinctive reaction to worsening crime figures is to call for more police on the street, but the general public seldom appreciates just how few officers forces are able to make available – an average force with around 2,000 officers might expect to have around 100 officers assigned to general patrol at any time (Exhibit 17). Chief officers have little scope for putting more officers onto the streets of towns without reducing unacceptably what is often already a very thin cover of resources to provide rapid response across the adjacent rural areas. Moreover officers assigned to patrol have other associated duties demanding their attention. In one force a survey indicated that amongst constables assigned to foot beat duties, some 40 per cent of their time was spent inside police stations, mainly on paperwork.*

Just a few incidents such as shoplifting offences tying up manpower may virtually eliminate the capacity for active foot patrol in a provincial town.

68 People are reassured by seeing police officers on the streets, because they perceive their presence as a deterrent against lawbreaking. But this has a limited impact on the level of crime. The main output from general patrolling, as opposed to intensive preventive patrolling, is public reassurance. Until evidence indicates otherwise, therefore, visibility must be regarded as the key measure of the effectiveness of reassurance patrol.

‘...the general public seldom appreciates just how few officers forces are able to make available...’

69 A crude measure of the number of hours spent patrolling is oversimplistic. A more sophisticated measure would take into account the time and place that the patrolling occurred because extra patrolling targeted at the times when the public most feels at risk will be much more effective than a general increase at all times. The prime times should be identified for each vicinity, for example:

– lunchtimes and weekends in shopping centres;
– the beginning and end of the school day in residential areas;
– closing time near licensed premises;
– rush hour along commuter routes.

70 Target levels of patrolling could be derived for each type of area. Achievement could be monitored using data from duty state logs or command and control systems and summarised by calculating the statistical correlation between the target and actual performance. Comparison could also be made between the numbers on patrol and the numbers of officers on duty at these times. These, of course, are all indications of inputs devoted to the task. Crucially, public opinion of the output must also be tracked.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

71 Incident response is comparatively easy to monitor. Firstly, the objective is to ensure that the response is appropriate to the urgency of the incident, both in terms of speed and the type of resource deployed. These can be measured directly. One force has defined the calls received which it expects to be graded as requiring an immediate response, a delayed response and ‘for information only’; it has also specified, for each of the first two gradings, those which it expects will require a fast response vehicle, an urban beat vehicle, a rural beat vehicle and a specialist vehicle. Actual de-
ployment performance is monitored against these standards.*

72 Secondly, many forces have computerised incident handling systems which log the resources despatched to each incident. The systems also log the time the call was received and should record the time the officer arrived at the scene (although officers frequently fail to report this information). Such systems should, in theory, be able to provide the necessary data quite readily. These should be used to monitor deployment practices and response times – and the more the data are used in performance measures, the more patrol officers will ensure they are correct.

VICTIM SUPPORT

73 Supporting victims of crime is an important part of police work. Concern about the treatment of victims by the criminal justice system has increased considerably in recent years. Research studies have shown that victims become frustrated by the difficulty of keeping track of their case. Similarly the British Crime Survey 1988 showed that relatively few victims were offered information about claiming compensation through the courts or the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board or given information about Victim Support Schemes. In many cases these needs can be met by means of a standard letter or brief telephone call, which should not be a heavy drain on resources. However, there are often basic problems in tracking paperwork on the progress of cases and contact with victims, where information technology applications should be profitable. Interworking with other support agencies should be part of the approach. As with crime itself, the subject is not the sole responsibility of the police service.

74 Traditionally forces have not attempted to monitor the level, suitability or impact of the support they provide. Some forces, for example Northumbria, are already making more formal arrangements to ensure that victims receive the support they require. Others have been urged to do so by ACPO, in conjunction with surveys of opinion amongst members of the public who have come into contact with their police. Monitoring complaints and commendations together with sample surveys of victims and monitoring of input activity could form the basis of a set of performance indicators.

STANDARDS

75 All of these aspects of crime-related policing can and should be subjected to numerical analysis through performance indicators. Indicators are also needed for other core functions such as traffic patrol. Having established which indicators should be monitored, the next step is to define satisfactory performance. This can be done either by setting standards based on experienced judgement, or, much better, by using comparisons based on observed performance. In some cases users will indicate their dissatisfaction with current service standards either by complaining or by less direct means (such as terminating calls to the communications room before the telephone is answered through frustration at the delay). These oblique indications can be used in the selection of standards.

76 Basing standards on observed ranges of performance is generally more objective. Natural comparators for sub-divisions, for example, are other sub-divisions in the force – taking account of differences in their circumstances. Such comparisons will become increasingly important as the autonomy of sub-divisions is extended. Intra-force comparisons have the added advantage of not being confused by uncertainty over the definitions used by other forces.

77 Inter-force comparisons are also valuable. Forces already compare specialist groups such as firearms teams, task forces and CID squads with those in other forces. This approach has potential for more general application. Many county forces, for example, contain only one inner city sub-division and for some purposes it may be more appropriate to compare it with inner city sub-divisions in other forces rather than the suburban and rural parts of its own force. Comparing certain aspects of overall force performance can also be informative, provided the forces are similar enough.

78 Exhibit 18 provides one example of a categorisation of forces into four 'families' which can be useful for many such comparisons. These have been compiled using socio-economic indicators. Analysing the performance of these families with the crime detection diagnostic model (above), for example, reveals significant differences in performance. Prison visits account for 12%, 8%, 7% and 33% of all clear-ups in families A, B, C and D respectively.

79 Trends should be monitored. Sometimes comparing this year's per-

---

* See Police Paper No 5, 'Calling All Forces: Improving Police Communications Rooms.'
performance with the last is the only relevant basis available. It may be hard to gauge, for example, how quickly a force should respond to calls for assistance but it is always valuable to know whether it is improving or deteriorating. As a general rule, monitoring of this kind should include figures from several years so that long term trends can be distinguished from sudden (and possibly temporary) changes.

QUALITY CONTROL

80 There is the danger that concentration on mechanisms of quality review may detract from the task of producing quality in the first place. The emphasis must be on incentives for individuals to provide a high quality of service. The starting point is effective leadership of the front-line personnel who are responsible for the bulk of the service delivery. Managers must ensure that the system enables individuals to define what is required, and can recognise and reward it. This is a matter of local working relationships, but central management must also be involved in creating the right environment. Scrutiny by central teams is very much a backstop, and should not be the focus of quality control efforts. There needs, however, to be a strong, central quality control function.

81 Reviews should cover all territorial command units and specialist departments, focusing on particular topics to identify best practice and promote it throughout the force. The record checking which has consumed much of the inspection resources in the past should be delegated to line managers – as some forces have already done. The review team should carry out a brief review of the manager’s own approach to this but concentrate its efforts on more fundamental aspects of performance.

82 One of the topics reviewed every year should be the use of performance review itself. This should encompass a review of a sample of officers’ performance appraisal reports. The quality control team should be a source of expertise on the mechanics of performance review and be responsible for developing common performance indicators and ensuring that common methodologies are applied throughout the force.

83 Just as a force team should be seeking to promulgate best practice within the force, so HMICs are attempting to do the same nationally. The two levels have complementary roles. The internal team has more time to examine particular local issues and problems in depth, while the external team can bring a broader perspective because of its experiences elsewhere. There needs to be close liaison between them to make the most effective use of their time. The Commission’s own auditors are required to liaise in just this way with local authorities’ internal auditors.

84 The quality control team needs to incorporate a research arm. Its responsibilities should include:

- statistical comparisons of the performance of the force with other forces and internal comparisons of operational units within the force;
- post-implementation reviews of major projects including the acquisition of new systems. Knowledge that the impact of changes will be reviewed independently will encourage careful pre-planning and cost benefit analysis within subunits;
commissioning major reviews of the force management structure and resource deployment.

It should be a small high powered team headed at senior level. The detailed composition must be for each force to decide, but ideally it should report directly to the chief constable. This is particularly important if, as it should be, the inspection process is to be 'two-way' – not merely scrutinising local performance against centrally determined standards but also examining the realism of standards, and the ways in which local commanders can be better enabled to do the jobs expected of them. The responsibility for digesting its reports should not be passed down the chain of command to officers with parochial responsibilities as this could compromise its independence and effectiveness.

It would need people with very good professional policing experience and people with strong analytical and management consultancy skills. These may be the same individuals but some forces may need to recruit a small number of (civilian) professional analysts. In the main, however, the team should be assembled by pulling together people from different parts of the force such as any existing inspectorate, research and development officers and the scrutiny team. The integration of different aspects of performance review should reduce and simplify, rather than increase and complicate, administrative efforts.

ACPO has recently recommended that in each force a senior officer should be given specific responsibility for monitoring the quality of service across the force.

‘...ACPO has recently recommended that in each force a senior officer should be given specific responsibility for monitoring the quality of service across the force...’

The research arm of the quality control team should work with the police authority on public attitude surveys to monitor customer satisfaction. The opinions of people who have had contact with their local force can be monitored to some extent by using telephone and letter surveys of samples of people recorded as having contact, e.g. as victims of crime, as recommended by ACPO. In addition it is important to assess satisfaction amongst members of the public who have not encountered the police directly. Opinion surveys usually omit this majority on the basis that its opinion will owe more to its diet of TV police fiction than real life. But although this body of opinion may not be as well informed, it is no less important in relations between the police and the community on which they depend.

Unless surveys are conducted regularly (probably annually), and are able to distinguish between territorial commands (probably down to sub-divisional level) they have limited value because their strength is to identify trends in opinion which can be related to operational commands. A survey of 1500 people with 15 minute interviews conducted in homes could be expected to cost in the region of 20,000, and should allow results to be disaggregated down to sub-divisional level in a medium-sized force. This would complement sub-divisional surveys of people who have been in contact with the police.

The same principles apply to external inspection. The Commission welcomes the recent decision of HMIC to publish reports of its inspections, adding considerably to the information previously available to police authorities and supplementing the information from HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary’s collective annual report. It is to be hoped that these reports will be the subject of attention in local media, and that the Inspectorate will be able to balance at-
tention to detail with accessibility of the information to lay readers.

91 But the Inspectorate remains understaffed in relation to the demands placed on it. Although the office of HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary has been strengthened by, for example, the appointment of a financial advisor and a part-time business advisor, it is not equipped for the intensive research and development activity which increasingly is asked of it. Excluding secretaries and drivers, it has a total staff of about forty comprised almost exclusively of seconded serving police officers reporting to eight HM Inspectors selected from the ranks of senior chief constables. It is understaffed in relation to, say, the Inspectors of Schools where there are approximately 900 teachers and lecturers per member of HMI staff compared with about 3100 police officers per HMIC staff (excluding clerical and administration staff). The equivalent of only about one twentieth of a percentage point of the national police budget is dedicated to financing HMIC: yet under current arrangements the Inspectorate has a pivotal role.

92 Increasingly the Home Office wields the most influence over policing policies, and it relies exclusively on HMIC for external scrutiny of forces. The Treasury and the Home Office have remitted HMIC to lead the development of performance indicators for the police service in the midst of normal inspection duties. Unless this and other edicts for central action are supported by resources, it is unlikely that they can be fulfilled with the urgency required.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE AUTHORITY

93 A key concern running through the arguments discussed above is the role of police authorities. In a previous paper (Number 6 in this series) the Commission has argued that the role established for them by the Police Act 1964 is being eroded by the ways in which central government exercises its powers to make grants and control manpower and major capital expenditure. The Act reserves operational management exclusively to the chief constable, and this is the basis of the political independence of our police forces. But it is clearly the intention that local police authorities should have some influence over the standards with which policing is delivered in their areas: they are intended as the representatives of the local community, and if the present structure of independent forces in England and Wales is to have any purpose it must lie in local accountability – through the police authority.

94 The precise definition of ‘operational’ is not clear, and is a potential (and sometimes actual) source of friction between chief constables and their authorities. Technically, the chief constable has all the power but none of the money and the police authority has all the money but none of the power. It is a testament to the reasonableness of the individuals involved that the system generally moves along without major disagreements, and the underlying principles have never been tested to destruction. It may be that the presence on police authorities of one third of their membership which is nominated from amongst their own ranks by unelected magistrates is a stabilising influence.

95 The test of the system, however, must be in practice rather than theory. The attitude of central government suggests that in practice it is less than happy with the way the tripartite system has worked: the ways in which it has exercised its financial influence in recent years may be interpreted in terms of disappointment with the decisions on manpower levels etc. which local government was reaching.

‘...technically, the chief constable has all the power but none of the money and the police authority has all the money but none of the power...’

96 The Association of Metropolitan Authorities has begun a review of the role of police authorities, which is welcome. Although the subject should be approached with care, there should be a role for police authorities in the assessment of the quality of police services. Their members should understand and question the measures used by their forces, and be to the fore in the development of new measures. For instance, structured monitoring of public opinion as recommended above is a function which lends itself naturally to the police authority role. Police authorities should also have a higher profile in representing their forces to their communities. Members have no power over, and cannot therefore be accountable for, the conduct of
forces in individual operational matters, but they can and should take more responsibility in the public debate about general standards of policing and quality of service, talking outwards to the community as well as inwards to the force.

CONCLUSION

97 The management style in the police service should be governed by the fact that its officers are all professionals who should be delegated responsibility for taking decisions and using their own initiative, harnessing their policing experience and knowledge of their local communities. The counterbalance to this is that officers should be held accountable for their actions through a performance review mechanism. The police service has made considerable progress in this direction in recent years but there is much that needs to be done, and many improvements can be put in train within a short time (Exhibit 19). It is essential:

- that the emphasis is on adoption of an appropriate management culture, directing and enabling high performance by individuals, instead of on detailed styles of management systems which may obscure the principles involved;
- that output-based, quantifiable performance indicators are developed by police forces, acting on guidance from the Home Office and HMIC, and in discussion with their police authorities; and
- that the growing public debate about the quality and future of the police service is informed by a better understanding of what police forces do, how they do it, and what they do it with.

Under all of these headings, concerted action is required by the government, by police authorities and by chief constables and the officers under them, if the police service is to rise to the challenges before it.