

**Criminal justice**

**National report**

**December 2004**

# Crime recording

Improving the quality of crime records in police authorities  
and forces in England and Wales

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## Summary

Reducing crime and making places safer is only possible if the police have access to reliable and timely information. Consistent and effective crime recording, backed up by robust management systems, is vital in setting national crime reduction targets, tackling local priorities, instilling public confidence in crime statistics and helping to bring offenders to justice.

In 2002 the Association of Chief Police Officers introduced the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) with the support of the Home Office. The standard seeks to promote greater reliability and consistency in collecting and recording crime data. It requires police services to take an approach that focuses on the victim's perspective and requires all forces to record crimes according to a set of clear principles.

The Audit Commission reviewed crime recording at all 43 police authorities and forces in England and Wales in 2003 and again in 2004. This work has been carried out in partnership with the Police Standards Unit at the Home Office, which is responsible for supporting improvement in police forces. The reviews tested compliance with the NCRS and Home Office Counting Rules against a selection of crime categories and examined the management arrangements in place to ensure compliance. Each authority and force has been given a traffic light rating of green, amber or red.

At the introduction of the NCRS it was recognised that achieving the standard will take time. Forces have done a great deal over the last two years to improve compliance. But our review shows that more rapid progress is needed. Most forces are improving and making progress in achieving the overall standard of good practice. Last year 12 forces were rated green, this year 17 meet the exacting overall standard. However, the majority are not yet fully compliant and a few still have some way to go. Last year 10 forces had serious problems to resolve, warranting a red rating. This year 4 forces have received this rating, including the largest force in the country, the Metropolitan Police. Almost 18 per cent of all recorded crime is within the Metropolitan Police area.

### Summary of overall audit results for all forces showing changes from 2003 to 2004

	Number 2003	Movers up (red-green)	Movers up (red-amber amber-green)	Movers down	Number 2004
Green	12	3	3	1	17
Amber	21	5	2	1	22
Red	10			2	4

The change in overall ratings between 2003 and 2004 indicates the scale of improvement in crime recording nationally. There has been improvement in the compliance of recording in all seven categories of crime reviewed by the Commission, particularly in those relating to the national targets for reducing burglary and vehicle crime. The review found clear corporate commitment to national standards, with strong leadership and sound policies in place in the majority of forces.

But the fact remains that 60 per cent of forces have still to achieve the overall Home Office standard. In some cases crime recording performance has deteriorated and there remain variations in the quality of crime data between forces. Improvements have not been achieved consistently across the country, and progress made in some areas has been offset by weaknesses emerging elsewhere. In some forces the drive to implement victim-focused crime recording that was evident two years ago has lost some of its impetus.

Compliance with national requirements is not just about recording the right levels of crime; it is equally about being responsive to victims, and about the quality and timely availability of recorded information to support policing activities. Police authorities and forces need to satisfy themselves and others that they are using accurate information to make their strategic and operational decisions when committing resources and making choices over priorities. Frontline staff must have the appropriate training. Accuracy should be a natural by-product of dealing successfully with the victims of crime rather than a separate administrative process.

Further progress towards achieving the Home Office standard will depend on authorities and forces developing their understanding of what needs to be changed, and on them having the will to change it. The starting point must be an understanding of the current position. This report analyses the variations between and within forces in the quality of data and in the underlying management arrangements through which better data quality can be sustained.

The recent improvements now need to be built on and the momentum of improvement sustained. In the authorities and forces where the quality of crime recording has deteriorated, stronger leadership and focus are necessary. Better quality data and increased compliance with national requirements are necessary to reduce crime, bring more offenders to justice and demonstrate that resources are being used effectively. This will in turn contribute to safer places for everyone.

# Introduction and approach

- 1 It has long been recognised that interpreting police data is not always straightforward. The British Crime Survey has for many years shown that a significant proportion of crime is not reported to the police and, of those crimes that are reported, not all will be recorded. For the crime types that it covers, the British Crime Survey provides a more consistent and complete measure of national trends because it is unaffected by changes in reporting and recording. However, recorded crime is still essential data in helping communities and their police force to address local crime problems. Recorded crime data allows the public to assess the performance of their police, and provides the police service with essential operational data to help inform local strategies. Accurate and appropriate crime recording is therefore an important contributor to an effective and modern police service.
- 2 Police services face many challenges in recording and reporting crime: shifts in patterns of crime, the emergence of new types of crime and a sharper focus on performance have all contributed to the development of a variety of complex and continually evolving crime recording requirements. The Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime (HOCR) (**Ref. 1**) provide police forces with a framework for recording crime, but interpretation of these rules can be complicated.
- 3 In the past the absence of a standard recording and reporting system has led to inconsistencies in the way that local police services collect crime data. A report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published in July 2000, *On the Record* (**Ref. 2**), highlighted the different methods used by forces to record crimes. It drew attention to the possible consequences for the integrity of crime statistics of a continued uncoordinated approach. HMIC found that on average 24 per cent of the crime recorded in force 'command and control' logs went unrecorded in the corresponding crime systems. This was as a result of differing crime recording practices. The Home Office's Review of Crime Statistics (**Ref. 3**) published at the same time also drew this conclusion.
- 4 Following the publication of these reports the police service and the Home Office looked for a way to make crime recording consistent across all forces. In April 2002 the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) introduced the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) (**Ref. 4**) with the support of the Home Office and HMIC. The NCRS promotes greater consistency between police forces in recording crime, by giving a lead on difficult areas of interpretation and by taking a more victim-orientated approach to recording. Most importantly, the NCRS requires all police forces to record crimes according to a defined and agreed set of principles. The aim is to produce more robust data on police performance for the dual purpose of measuring performance and informing local decision-making.

- 5 It was acknowledged at the time that the introduction of the NCRS, if implemented correctly, would result in an increase in recorded crime. The published statistics and the Home Office's own evaluation (**Ref. 5**) of the impact of the NCRS bear this out. The findings from the British Crime Survey also show the significant improvement in crime recording by the police following the introduction of the NCRS, and this has been reported each year since its introduction in the main national statistics report on crime (**Ref. 6**). The increase in recorded crime reflects the positive improvement in recording introduced by the NCRS, and is placed in an appropriate context by the British Crime Survey reporting of national trends.
- 6 The Home Office has estimated that recorded crime in 2003, the first year of full implementation, rose by 10 per cent as a result of the NCRS. Recorded crime trends will, however, always be susceptible to changes in police recording practice, as well as contrasting local priorities and pro-active policing strategies, which can increase recording in the short-term. Recorded crime statistics should not always be viewed as being indicative of underlying crime trends. As the Review of Crime Statistics (**Ref. 3**) recognised, the British Crime Survey has been better able to measure real trends in those crimes it covers, which represent the majority of crimes experienced by the general public.
- 7 Assuring the quality of police data is the responsibility of the Police Standards Unit (PSU) in the Home Office, as part of its wider remit of supporting improvement in police performance. Working with force crime registrars and the National Crime Recording Steering Group, the PSU aims to bring greater consistency to data recording in order to provide a firm foundation for the performance measures used in the Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF)<sup>1</sup>. The PSU has established a programme of reviews of key performance data to ensure that performance assessments are underpinned by robust and reliable information.
- 8 The Audit Commission has a wide-ranging statutory role, which includes assuring and providing information on the quality of public services, and promoting improvement in services through practical recommendations and sharing good practice. As part of the programme to improve performance data, auditors appointed by the Audit Commission have reviewed crime recording in all 43 police authorities in England and Wales. The first phase of reviews was undertaken in 2003. It focused on the arrangements that each force had put in place to ensure compliance with the NCRS. The results were summarised in a national briefing, a copy of which was sent to each police authority and force. In addition, each authority and force received a local report identifying key issues and recommendations for improvement.
- 9 Police authorities and forces have a wide range of priorities to consider, service and resource. The implementation of the NCRS is an important challenge for the service. This report is intended to support improvement and has been agreed with the Home Office Police Standards Unit.

<sup>1</sup> PPAF provides a suite of performance measures that span the full range of police work in order to support comprehensive assessments and comparisons of performance.

## Audit methodology

- 10 The reviews have focused on the approach to crime recording practice in each authority and force and on compliance with national standards, including the Home Office good practice standard which requires that 90 per cent of crimes are recorded correctly. Work was carried out to assess:
- the compliance of samples of crime recording data with national standards; and
  - the breadth and effectiveness of the management arrangements for crime recording and victim-focused policing.
- The results of these two elements of the reviews were brought together to produce an overall assessment for each authority and force.
- 11 The first phase of reviews, undertaken in 2003, established a baseline for each authority and force. The second phase, undertaken in 2004, has assessed the progress made by authorities and forces in developing their crime recording arrangements, improving the accuracy of their crime data, and implementing the important cultural changes necessary to achieve effective victim-focused recording of crimes.
- 12 The Commission's auditors have undertaken this work as part of their responsibilities to examine the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of police authorities' use of resources under section 5(1)(e) of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and in accordance with the Commission's Code of Audit Practice. This report is produced under powers given us by the Audit Commission Act 1998, section 33.
- 13 The 2003 reviews found that most forces had made some progress in implementing the NCRS. There were, however, considerable variations in the quality of crime data between forces, and, in many cases, between different basic command units (BCUs) in the same force. Standards of recording were generally high for crimes against property and the crimes covered by national targets. But they were much less reliable for crimes against the person. And while there was evidence of strong corporate commitment to the national standard, with strong leadership and sound policies in place in the majority of forces, arrangements to train staff were often still under-developed and many data collection systems were ill adapted to the new requirements.
- 14 Over the summer of 2004, auditors re-visited all authorities and forces and looked again at the compliance of crime data and at the management arrangements in place. The work that auditors undertook at each force was tailored to the needs of the police authority and force concerned, with the closest attention paid to areas where the 2003 reviews had shown that serious problems needed to be resolved. As in 2003, this work was undertaken in partnership with the PSU.
- 15 The approach and standards for these reviews are set out in an audit manual published by the PSU. It provides authorities and forces with a useful practice guide to help them to assess their own arrangements and to plan for improvement.

- 16 For the second phase of reviews, auditors assessed aspects of crime recording compliance as well as the quality of the management arrangements in place at both corporate and local levels to ensure compliance with the HOCR and NCRS. Each authority and force was given a 'traffic light' rating:

Green	A good standard of crime recording has been achieved, and no further action is required other than to maintain performance
Amber	Significant progress has been made, but further work is needed in key areas
Red	Some serious problems have yet to be resolved

- 17 All reports have been reviewed for consistency by the Commission. The methodology provides that a 'green' rating cannot be awarded for any individual category where:
- there are good intentions, but little evidence of clear improvements in practice;
  - an authority has failed to address relevant key recommendations from the 2003 review; or
  - an authority has adopted an approach that does not represent value for money.
- 18 Local reports have now been agreed by auditors with each authority and force, and, as in 2003, each authority and force is putting in place a local action plan, which responds to the auditor's recommendations.

Over 72,000 crime records were covered by the data quality audits and while the sample sizes are comparatively small, this report provides a summary of the key findings and a set of conclusions drawn from audits. This report presents the national summary of these local reports in four chapters:

- **Chapter 1** presents the results of auditors' testing of selected data and reports the progress that authorities and forces have made towards accurate crime recording;
- **Chapter 2** compares the findings from auditors' reviews of the management arrangements that have been put in place at each authority and force and identifies the remaining obstacles to full compliance with national requirements;
- **Chapter 3** summarises auditors' overall assessments of the 43 police authorities; and
- **Chapter 4** summarises the stage that has been reached in implementing the NCRS, the actions that still need to be taken and proposed future audit work by the Commission and PSU.

# 1

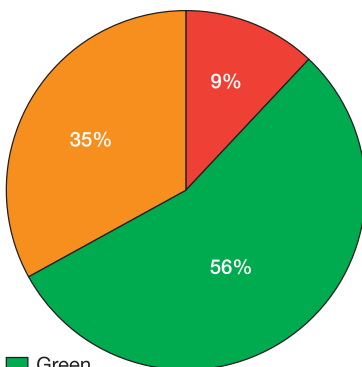
## Data quality

### Changes in data quality 2003 to 2004

	Number 2003	Movers up (red-green)	Movers up (red-amber, amber-green)	Movers down	Number 2004
Green	12	6	7	1	24
Amber	15	8	2	1	15
Red	16			2	4

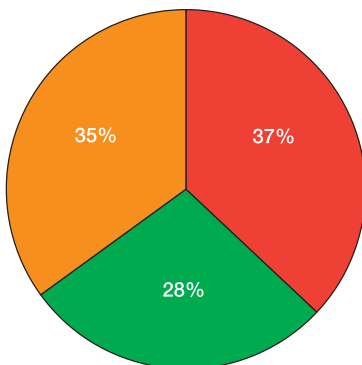
#### Exhibit 1 Data quality assessments

Data quality assessments 2004.



Green  
Amber  
Red

Data quality assessments 2003.



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 19 This chapter describes the findings of the data quality element of the audits. Overall, 21 forces and authorities have improved since 2003 and 3 have deteriorated.
- 20 Auditors' data quality assessments reflect the extent to which each force has complied with national requirements for recording crimes, set out in the NCRS and the HOCA. For the 2004 reviews, this involved three specific assessments of crime recording practice:
- the extent to which crimes in seven selected categories are recorded correctly ('crime recording');
  - the extent to which crime-related incidents in the same seven categories (which may not necessarily prove to be crimes) are recorded correctly ('incident recording'); and
  - the extent to which crime records that meet one of the criteria for re-classification as 'no crimes' are recorded correctly.
- 21 Overall, 24 forces (56 per cent) have been assessed as 'green' for data quality – twice as many as in 2003 – while only four forces (9 per cent) have been assessed as 'red' (Exhibit 1).
- 22 Where auditors found that records did not comply with national requirements, this was normally for one of two reasons:
- the rules had not been applied correctly:** an incorrect decision had been made not to record the incident as a crime, or the incident had not been recorded as a crime because the onus had been placed on the victim to pursue the complaint; or
  - proper procedures had not been followed:** the information on the incident record did not explain clearly that recording the incident as a crime was not appropriate, or the record was not closed within the 72-hour time limit.

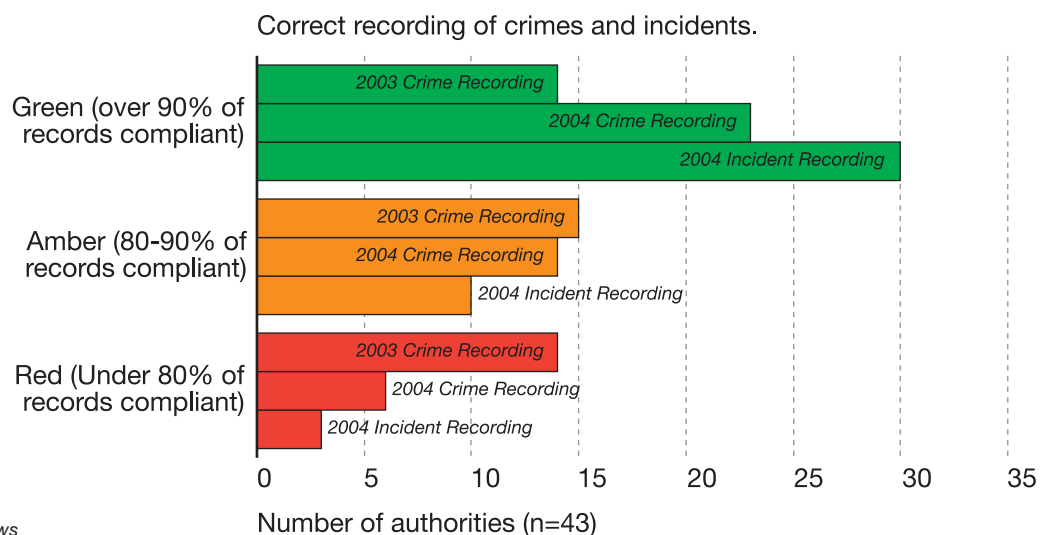
- 23 It is important to note that where a force, or a BCU within a force, may currently be assessed as non-compliant, this does not necessarily imply that crimes are being 'lost' from the published crime statistics. Some records may be deemed non-compliant because they do not meet the national standards in procedural terms, for example because insufficient information has been recorded, or the record has been completed outside the required timeframe. The 72-hour rule for recording crimes was included in the NCRS following the 2003 reviews in order to establish a clear deadline for recording crimes. The systems in some forces permitted simple introduction of this new rule, while others did not. Correction of these deficiencies will lead to higher rates of compliance, but will have no impact on the number of crimes reported and included in published statistics.
- 24 There are, however, some records that have been assessed as non-compliant because the incidents concerned have incorrectly not been recorded as crimes. These crimes would have been included in reported statistics had the correct procedures been followed.

## Crime and incident recording

- 25 On the basis of the sample of 72,000 records reviewed nationally by auditors, it appears that a majority of forces are now recording more than 90 per cent of crimes in accordance with the NCRS – compared with fewer than one-third of forces in 2003. At only six forces were more than 20 per cent of records found to be non-compliant in some respect – down from 14 forces in 2003. When all incidents (including non-crimes) are taken into account, the extent of non-compliance is lower still (**Exhibit 2**).

### Exhibit 2

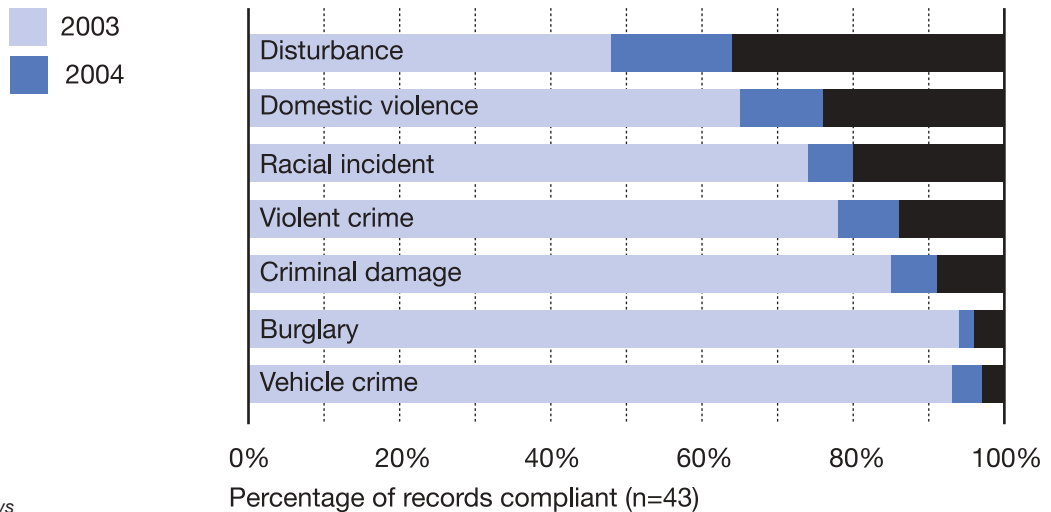
#### Improvements in crime and incident recording levels



- 26 This represents a significant improvement over the last year. In 2003, 82 per cent of crime records sampled were found to be fully compliant with the NCRS. That percentage has now increased to 88. The comparable percentage for incident records is 92. While this is in line with the good practice standard of 90 per cent set by the PSU, it does still mean that nationally an average of between 8 and 12 per cent of crime-related incidents are not recorded in accordance with the NCRS. While some of these errors will relate to poor timeliness or lack of detail, some will be a result of incorrect recording. This may result in misleading crime statistics.
- 27 Improvement was seen across all of the seven categories of crime used for the data samples (**Exhibit 3**). While the improvement was particularly marked in the categories of domestic violence and disturbance, recording in these categories, and in relation to racial incidents and violent crime, has still not reached an acceptable level of compliance. They remain some way from the Home Office standard that compliance should be above 90 per cent for all crime categories.

**Exhibit 3**

**Crime recording by category of crime**



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 28 We recognise that disturbance and domestic violence present particular problems of interpretation, because the rules in relation to these categories are less precise and can be applied variably by forces, individual call-takers or officers. Unlike categories such as vehicle crime, these categories are not clearly identifiable with specific recordable offences, and it is often more difficult to identify and record the possible offences being reported based on the initial details provided. For example, a call from a member of the public may be made to the police reporting a 'disturbance', which on investigation may turn out to be an assault (in which case there will be a victim, and a crime). Alternatively it may not involve any damage or injury at all (for example, youths making a noise, in which case the incident does not require a crime record).

- 29 The Home Office is currently developing a national standard for incident recording (NSIR), which will set out a common framework for recording crime-related incidents. This is expected to include reports of these types of incident, which do not amount to a notifiable crime, and is intended to standardise the recording of all reports of this nature.
- 30 Forces also acknowledge that some incidents of a minor nature have not always been recorded correctly as crimes, and that their record-keeping in some of these categories is not always as thorough as it is for some of the more serious or clear-cut types of crime, particularly those covered by national priorities. Often, however, these are issues of anti-social behaviour and high-volume, low-level crimes that most frequently affect the lives of ordinary people, and so have a strong impact on public perceptions about, and fear of, crime. Some forces are therefore beginning to develop their own initiatives to address the crime recording issues relating to such incidents (**Case study 1**).

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### Case study 1

#### Thames Valley Police

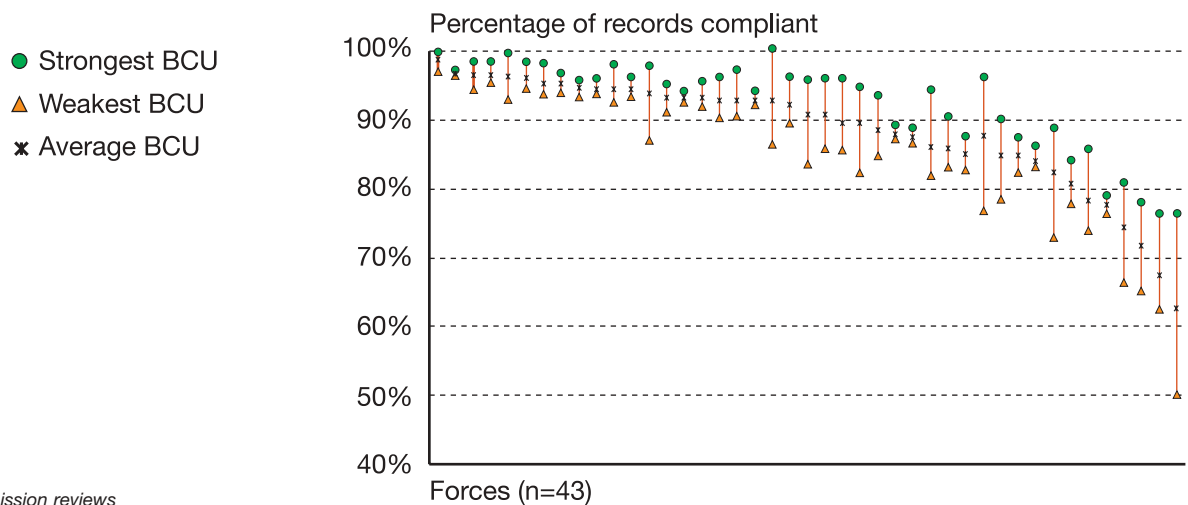
Service Delivery Units have been introduced for non-urgent incidents where attendance by a police officer is needed. Calls are allocated to a dedicated team within each BCU under the badge number of the supervising sergeant. The team then visits the victim or caller and obtains the necessary information, allowing the incident to be closed correctly either as a crime or not a crime, within the national time limit of 72 hours. This has not only made a significant difference to the force's ability to close incidents of a minor nature within the necessary timescales, producing a significant improvement in the rates of accuracy for some crime categories, but also improved user satisfaction with the service provided.

*Source: Audit Commission*

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## Variations between BCUs

- 31 Between 2003 and 2004 there was a noticeable reduction in the variation in the quality of data recording between different BCUs within forces. In 2003, there were 19 forces where the average gap between the compliance rate of the best-performing BCU and the weakest in recording crimes was more than 10 per cent, suggesting that not enough was being done to share good practice between BCUs.
- 32 In 2004, there were still 15 forces in this position. But the average gap between weakest and strongest BCU has reduced considerably to 7 per cent, indicating that many forces have taken action to improve the performance of their weakest BCUs. There is, however, still scope for forces to bring their weakest BCUs up to the level of the strongest (**Exhibit 4, overleaf**).

**Exhibit 4****Variations in crime recording between forces and BCUs**

Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 33 In particular, auditors found that there were still ten forces (22 in 2003 ) at which one or more BCUs failed to achieve 80 per cent compliance in their recording of incident and crime records. These included the six forces that achieved less than 80 per cent compliance in crime recording over all. Four of these forces also included one or more BCUs with a compliance score below 70 per cent. While the great majority of BCUs across all forces appear to be getting closer to meeting the demands of the NCRS, crime-recording issues in these BCUs clearly merit the close attention of local management.

## Transferring records to crime-recording systems

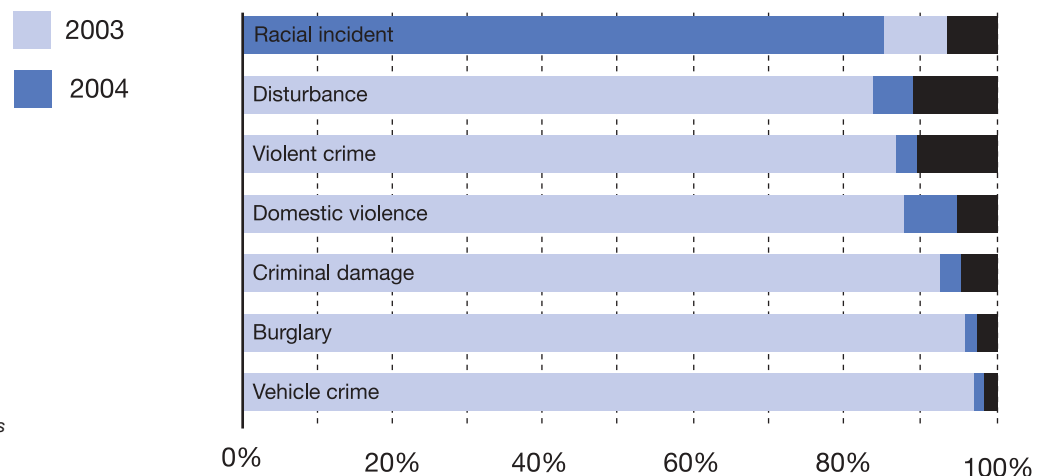
- 34 Auditors found in 2003 that forces were generally performing well in transferring crime incidents from their incident systems to their crime recording systems, as NCRS requires. In 2004, auditors reviewed this aspect of data quality only at the ten forces that had received a 'red' rating in 2003. Of these ten, the majority had maintained or improved their performance in this area, although performance had deteriorated in four forces. For this data check, the PSU good practice standard is that 95 per cent of records should be transferred correctly to the crime system.

35 Over all, the transfer of records relating to crimes against property had improved (from 95 per cent compliance to 97 per cent), while records relating to crimes against the person presented slightly greater problems (90 per cent compliance compared with 88 per cent in 2003). In particular, the forces surveyed found increased difficulty in transferring records of racial incidents (**Exhibit 5**). This may be the result of local arrangements for dealing with such incidents, but it should be the focus of management attention.

### Exhibit 5

#### Transfer of records to the crime system

Percentage of records correctly transferred from incident system to crime recording system



Source: Audit Commission reviews

### ‘No criming’

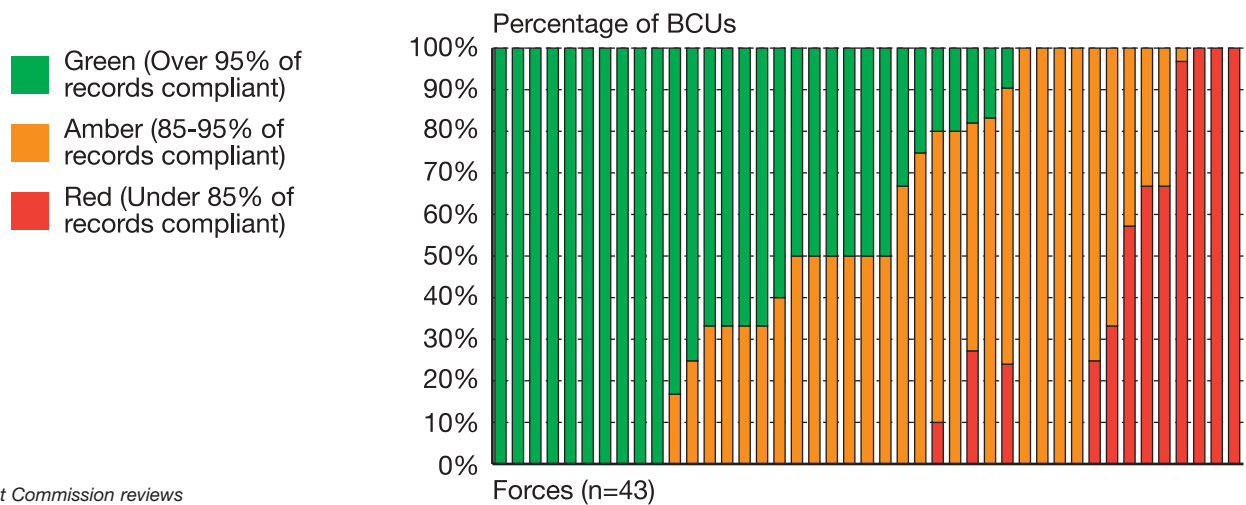
36 In 2004, auditors looked at authorities’ and forces’ compliance with national requirements for removing crime records (‘no criming’) from their systems. The national rules allow removal of records only in four very specific circumstances:

- A The crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded.
- B Following the report of an incident that has subsequently been recorded as a crime, additional verifiable information is available which determines that no notifiable crime has been committed.
- C The crime, as alleged, constitutes part of a crime already recorded.
- D The reported incident was recorded as a crime in error.

Home Office data shows that just over 2.6 per cent of incidents that have initially been recorded as crimes are later ‘no-crimed’.

- 37 Auditors examined 10,000 records nationally for this test. Generally, the results were satisfactory, with 58 per cent of forces achieving a compliance rate of over 95 per cent, and 86 per cent achieving a compliance rate of over 85 per cent, compared with the PSU good practice standard of 95 per cent.
- 38 The most common source of errors was the category relating to the provision of additional verifiable information to demonstrate that a crime had not been committed, where 89 per cent of records were found to be correctly 'no crimed'. The other three categories had accuracy rates of 95 per cent and above. As with the recording of crimes, compliant and less compliant BCUs could often be found within the same force (**Exhibit 6**).

**Exhibit 6**  
**Removal of crimes ('no criming')**

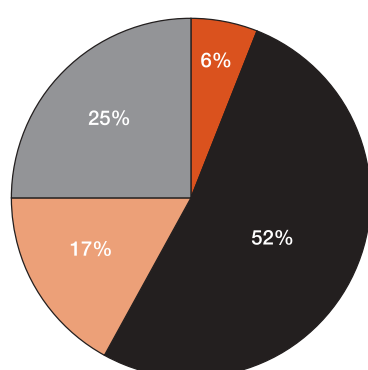


Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 39 The forces and BCUs with particularly low compliance rates in category B, relating to the need to demonstrate that additional evidence shows that a crime was not committed, are in some cases removing crimes inappropriately from their systems. For example, crimes may be removed incorrectly in cases where the Crown Prosecution Service indicates that there is no likelihood of a successful prosecution. In other cases, while there may be additional information to support the correct removal of the crime, this information has not been recorded or is no longer available.

**Exhibit 7****Reasons why crimes are cancelled**

Reasons for cancellation of crime records.



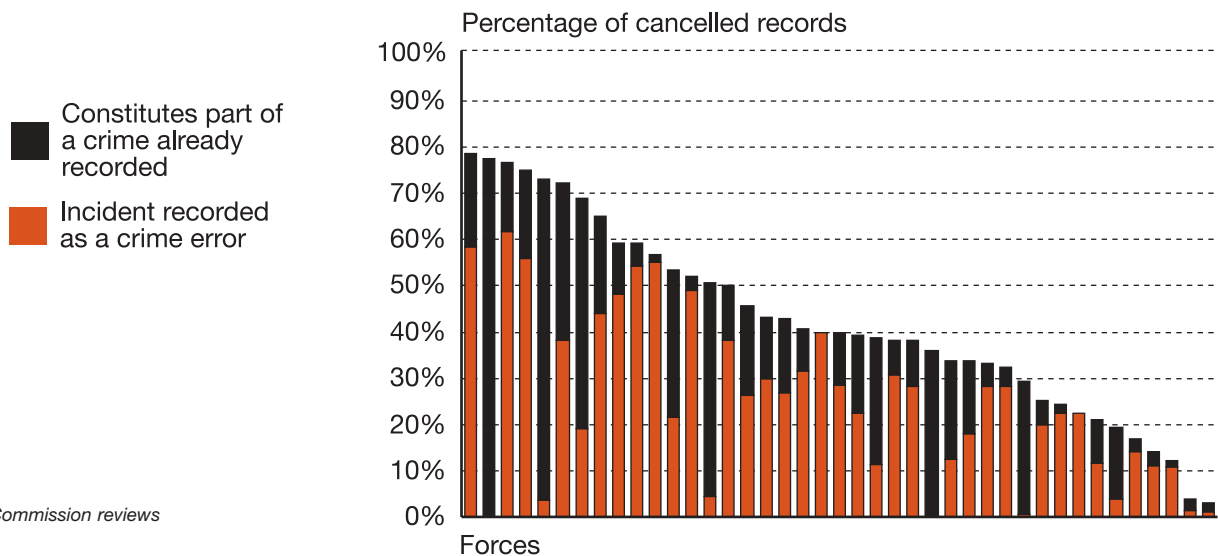
- Committed outside jurisdiction
- Additional evidence determines crime not committed
- Constitutes part of a previous crime
- Crime recorded in error

*Source: Audit Commission reviews*

## Other issues

- 40** Against the background of improvement in crime data quality generally in the second year of reviews, there are two specific aspects that cause concern. First, auditors have reported an increasing tendency in forces to record incidents as crimes even where such ‘criming’ may be inappropriate. This reflects a determination to comply with the NCRS by recording all incidents where there is a possibility that a crime has been committed, and to do this within the time limit of 72 hours.
- 41** Further investigation in these cases often reveals that no crime has been committed and the crime record has to be cancelled. This ‘criming’ and subsequent ‘no-criming’ of incidents creates additional records and leads to additional work. While it may be seen as a way to encourage a more victim-focused approach in some cases, it is not an effective use of valuable police resources, and does nothing to improve the quality of information to support policing or performance management.
- 42** Nationally, just over half of all crime records that are ‘no-crimed’ fall into category B – there is additional evidence that contradicts the initial judgement made when the incident in question was first recorded. A further small proportion of crimes turn out to have been committed outside the jurisdiction of the force concerned. The remaining cancellations (almost 4,000 records in the auditors’ sample) are due either to error (including multiple recordings of a single incident) or to double counting of an incident that may involve more than one possible crime (**Exhibit 7**).
- 43** In the majority of forces, error and duplication are kept within reasonable bounds, but assessments found 15 forces where these two causes accounted for half or more of all cancellations. Five forces were found where errors alone accounted for the majority of the records cancelled (**Exhibit 8, overleaf**). Officers in these forces may be too ready to record incidents before the facts are sufficiently clear, and a little more attention might reduce the overall workload.
- 44** A related problem is that of over-auditing of crime records to ensure compliance with the NCRS and HOCR. In some forces, considerable resources have been devoted to the retrospective checking of records, and in a few cases this work appears to have been concentrated on records expected to fall within the scope of the Audit Commission’s review. While every police authority and force should have in place a programme of internal audit, this should always be risk-based and designed to cover all units, BCUs and types of data on a sample basis rather than by focusing on the particular records likely to be scrutinised by the external auditor.

### Exhibit 8 Crimes cancelled because of error or duplication



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 45 In the light of all this activity, auditors have expressed concerns that the improvements in data quality seen at some authorities may not be sustainable. Not all authorities whose data appears to comply with the NCRS have embraced a culture of ‘getting it right first time’. While the internal review and amendment of faulty records can be good practice in certain circumstances, auditors found instances of forces spending disproportionate resources on checking data and correcting errors. In the long term, this is unlikely to be an appropriate use of limited resources, and will not help to develop the victim-focused approach to crime recording that the NCRS seeks to promote.
- 46 For these reasons, it is important to consider not only the accuracy and completeness of the records that auditors have examined, but also the underlying management arrangements. This is the subject of the next chapter.

# 2

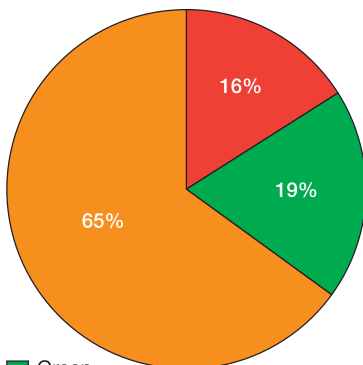
## Management arrangements

### Changes in management arrangements 2003 to 2004

	Number 2003	Movers up (red-green)	Movers up (red-amber, amber-green)	Movers down	Number 2004
Green	4	1	6	1	8
Amber	32	4	2	4	28
Red	7	0	0	0	7

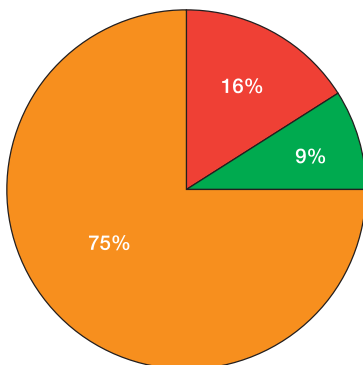
#### Exhibit 9 Management arrangements assessments

Management arrangements assessments 2004



Green  
Amber  
Red

Management arrangements assessments 2003



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 47 This chapter describes the findings of the reviews of management arrangements. In 2004 the review examined both corporate and BCU level arrangements.
- 48 Auditors have reviewed the arrangements put in place by authorities and forces to support accurate recording of crime data and compliance with national requirements. In 2003 the reviews focused on the corporate arrangements in place to support the implementation of the NCRS. In 2004 the reviews took a wider view, and included analysis of the arrangements in place at BCU level to manage crime recording, focusing on how corporate arrangements are applied in practice by the frontline staff, who hold the key to effective crime recording practice by 'getting it right first time'. Auditors' assessments also took into account the progress that each authority and force had made in implementing the local action plans agreed following the 2003 reviews.
- 49 Overall, the 2004 results showed some improvement over those for 2003 (**Exhibit 9**). There was a net increase of four in the number of authorities receiving a 'green' rating, while the number receiving a 'red' rating remained unchanged. These summary figures mask considerable movement between categories, with eleven authorities improving their rating while at seven others weaknesses had become evident since the 2003 reviews.
- 50 In both 2003 and 2004 auditors looked specifically at nine aspects of corporate management arrangements:
- policy and administration;
  - leadership and accountability;
  - auditing arrangements, scrutiny and integrity;
  - resourcing;
  - the process for crime recording;

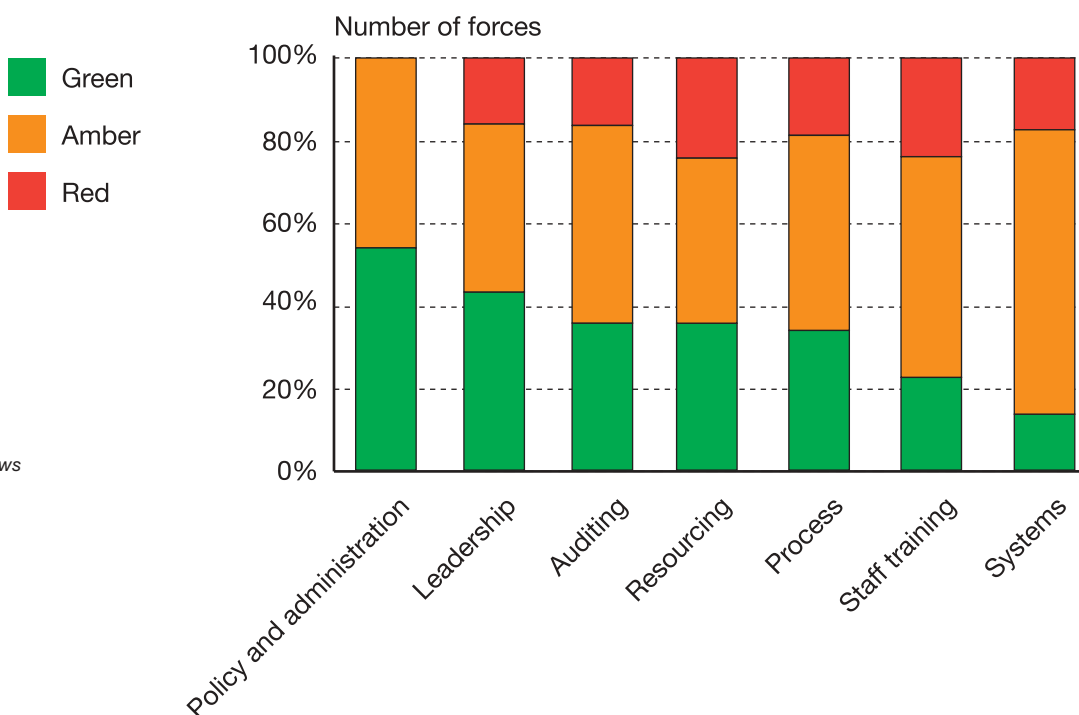
- staff training, knowledge and awareness;
- systems for incident and crime recording;
- quality of service (corporate level) and user focus (BCU level); and
- the role of the police authority.

51 In 2004 auditors also considered the first seven of these aspects from the perspective of the BCUs in each force, and reviewed BCUs’ arrangements to ensure a user focus in their crime recording.

52 Forces are making good progress in implementing most of these aspects at both corporate and BCU level. Most forces have prepared and implemented comprehensive crime-recording policies and have put in place arrangements to ensure that policies are understood and acted on. A high proportion has demonstrated strong senior leadership and commitment to the NCRS. But there are other aspects that have proved more demanding, for example, the arrangements that forces have in place to ensure that resources are adequately matched to demand and to train staff and provide them with the necessary knowledge to apply the NCRS correctly (Exhibit 10).

### Exhibit 10 Assessments of different aspects of management arrangements

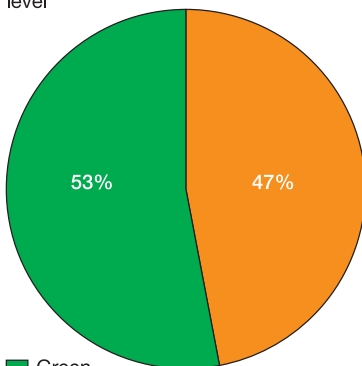
Management arrangements final assessments



Source: Audit Commission reviews

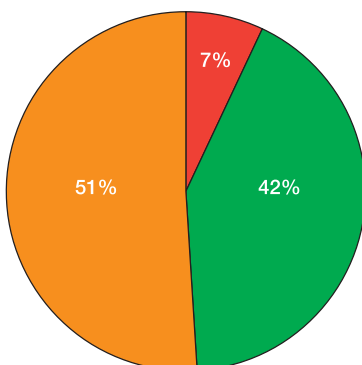
### Exhibit 11 Policy and administration 2004

Policy and administration – corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Policy and administration – BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 53 The variable pattern of improvement in management arrangements overall raises concerns about the sustainability of the improvements in data quality discussed in the previous chapter. The improved data testing results achieved in 2004 and therefore the underlying quality of crime data cannot be considered secure for the longer term where:
- arrangements are not fully embedded in the culture and working practices of an authority, force or BCU
  - previously identified weaknesses are not being addressed in an active and timely manner; or
  - a force is relying excessively on checking mechanisms to ensure compliance.

External audit will be a process which will continue to place importance on these issues.

## Policy and administration

- 54 The reviews considered whether forces have developed and implemented crime-recording policies that are consistent with national requirements, that these are reviewed and updated regularly, that they are communicated effectively and are accessible to all relevant staff.
- 55 Auditors found that almost all forces have now rewritten their policies to take account of the changes introduced by the NCRS. In one force, policies had not been updated to take account of the timing requirements of the NCRS introduced in April 2003 (the '72-hour rule'), and in a few other forces, where policies had been fully updated without this being reflected in the associated guidance. Serious problems were encountered at only three forces, and these affected policy and administration at BCU level (**Exhibit 11**).
- 56 Good practice was found to include:
- comprehensive sets of policies covering interpretation of the NCRS and HOCR, which are regularly reviewed and kept up to date;
  - links to other policies, such as those covering crime investigation, prosecution and victim support;
  - widely publicised policies, for example, using posters and pocket-book inserts, as well as the force intranet (**Case study 2**); and
  - robust arrangements to check that staff understand policies.

57 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- over-reliance on e-mail to issue important policy changes without building in management intervention to ensure that changes are received and understood;
- over-reliance on the intranet without adequate arrangements to ensure that frontline staff have access to, and actually use it; and
- the continued existence of other policies (including, in two cases, requirements for some categories of crime reports to be authorised or reviewed before records were completed) that are in conflict with NCRS requirements.

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## Case study 2

### North Yorkshire Police

As well as using formal communication channels for NCRS policy, the benefits of which are clearly marketed in terms of victim focus and an aid to better crime analysis, reminders on key points or changes are notified to all staff via an e-mail 'message of the day'. Good practice examples are sent to all officers via e-mail. 'Messages of the day' have included information on:

- the respective roles of the Crime Recording Unit and area staff in finalising crime, and its importance in ensuring the integrity of the systems and data;
- proper recording of criminal damage/attempted burglary;
- the finished incident rule; and
- rules on harassment.

This is supplemented by a comprehensive and user-friendly intranet site, and an email enquiry service for the resolution of individual queries.

*Source: Audit Commission.*

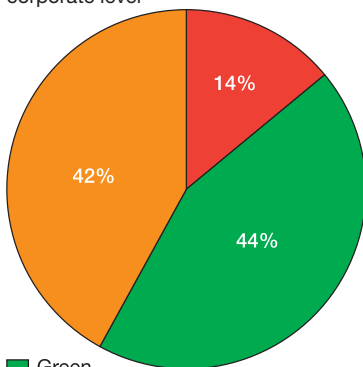
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## Leadership and accountability

- 58 Reviews considered how well authorities, forces and BCUs have implemented a strong accountability framework to support crime recording and compliance with national requirements, including the extent to which there is proactive monitoring of data quality, clear arrangements for accountability corporately and individually, and an appropriate force crime registrar function.
- 59 During the course of the crime data reviews in 2004, the PSU requested some additional work following the publication in June 2004 of the findings of the Richard Inquiry, which was set up to consider child protection procedures following the conviction of Ian Huntley for the Soham murders. This additional work focused on the response of police authorities and forces to the specific recommendations of the Richard Inquiry relating to data records, and its conclusion that there had been serious failings in intelligence systems and practices at the forces concerned, specifically in relation to inadequate guidance and training on record creation, review and deletion. While these comments relate primarily to the records on the Police

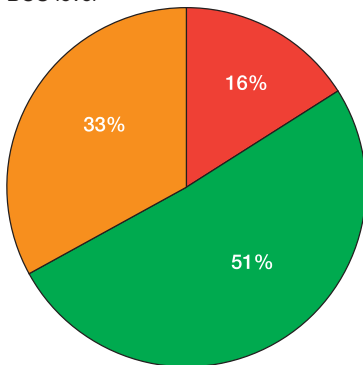
## Exhibit 12 Leadership and accountability 2004

Accountability and leadership –  
corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Accountability and leadership –  
BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

National Computer (PNC), the incident records reviewed in the Commission's crime data quality audits are the starting point for the information that is eventually entered into PNC records. Auditors concluded that most authorities are considering the implications of the findings of the Bichard Inquiry, many do not yet have a corporate risk management framework that takes account of the risks relating to data quality.

60 Auditors found that the introduction of the NCRS had been given a high priority at almost all forces, with clear top-level commitment almost everywhere. All forces have appointed a Force Crime Registrar (FCR) who is independent of operational management, as the NCRS guidance requires. Each force has also appointed an ACPO officer (usually an Assistant Chief Constable) to lead on crime-recording issues and to support the FCR, and many forces have identified NCRS champions at BCU level. There is, however, a marked difference between forces where leadership and accountability are satisfactory and those where further work is needed. This generally reflects the extent to which operational processes have been adapted to reflect the commitment to implementing the NCRS (**Exhibit 12**).

61 Good practice was found to include:

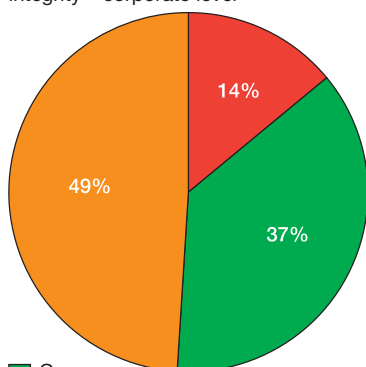
- continued commitment, leadership and advocacy at senior level for the NCRS;
- strong supervision at local level, reinforcing the importance of compliance with the NCRS (**Case study 3**);
- a monitoring and accountability framework for crime recording at both force and BCU level;
- crime recording accuracy included in individual performance appraisals;
- continued promotion of the NCRS, following up issues and reinforcing compliance through positive feedback;
- data quality being considered as part of the approach to risk management, and arrangements being put in place to manage the identified risks; and
- implementation of all audit recommendations from the 2003 audit reports.

62 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- lack of clarity about responsibility for closing incidents;
- the absence of a corporate risk-management framework that includes data quality;
- a failure to share good practice between BCUs;
- a management focus on performance in relation to crime reduction and increasing detections rather than in relation to crime data quality; and
- a culture in which frontline officers see NCRS compliance as 'box-ticking' rather than as fundamental to effective policing.

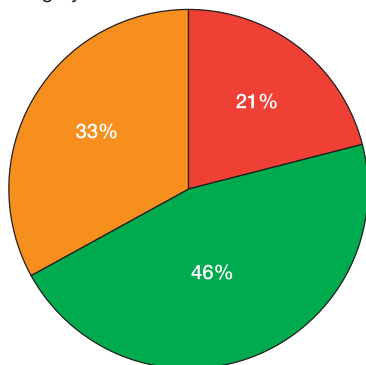
**Exhibit 13**  
**Auditing arrangements, scrutiny and integrity 2004**

Audit arrangements, scrutiny and integrity – corporate level



Green  
 Amber  
 Red

Audit arrangements, scrutiny and integrity – BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

**Case study 3**  
**West Yorkshire Police**

Within each BCU a member of the management team (Chief Inspector Operations) has been designated the specific role of NCRS Liaison Officer. This officer provides the role of local NCRS Champion and in addition to other operational responsibilities, is responsible and accountable for the following:

- NCRS compliance;
- the delivery of training;
- ensuring staff accountability through the appraisal process;
- providing a link with the FCR regarding NCRS compliance; and
- raising awareness of the NCRS within the BCU.

The Liaison Officer provides a single point of contact for the FCR at divisional level. This includes receiving the monthly audit results from the Force Crime Team and acting on those logs that fail on NCRS compliance by discussing the results with the individual officers concerned. By closely monitoring the audit results, the Liaison Officer can identify any additional training needs. This is linked to the staff appraisal system. Local NCRS performance drives the appraisal process through the emphasis of individual performance in the monthly audit programme.

The Liaison Officer is also responsible for holding an NCRS training day every two weeks on a five-weekly cycle for all BCU teams. The NCRS continues to be a standing agenda item on BCU management meetings and is discussed at daily Inspector briefings. This includes examining BCU performance as reported in the monthly audit results.

Source: Audit Commission

**Auditing arrangements, scrutiny and integrity**

- 63 Reviews considered whether authorities and forces have a formal and comprehensive internal audit regime for crime data quality, focused on the key risks identified by the authority and police force, and covering all units and BCUs, and all types of crime data and potential errors. Auditors considered whether there was appropriate and formal reporting of the results of internal data audits, with clear plans to address findings and modify operational practices where appropriate.
- 64 Auditors found that, in many cases, force arrangements for internal audit of crime recording were well focused. The great majority of forces were found to have a centralised audit programme covering all BCUs, using appropriate testing methodologies. The range of skills, knowledge and experience available to in-house audit teams does, however, vary widely, and there is a great deal of variation between forces in terms of the way that audit findings are used (**Exhibit 13**).

65 Good practice was found to include:

- having a formal and comprehensive audit programme in place, including checks of specialist units, and thematic reviews (**Case study 4**);
- presenting the results of audits to senior officers, and developing agreed action plans to address the issues identified;
- having a structured approach to quality assurance, including independent and timely checking of incident and crime records (**Case study 5**); and
- feeding back the results of audit checks to individual staff and managers, and providing training where necessary.

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### Case study 4

#### Northumbria Police

The Force has responded positively to recommendations made last year and has focused audit activity on areas of weakness. The benefit of increasing traffic light thresholds and early introduction of the 72-hour crime recording targets has had a noticeable impact on performance. Risk assessment and audit of specialist departments are now in place. Ongoing consultation with the Home Office will ensure that any national developments in specialist department audit are quickly incorporated. Very strong BCU level audit regimes have contributed significantly to success.

*Source: Audit Commission*

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66 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- the absence of a formal audit programme;
- the lack of follow-up where crime recording issues are identified;
- over-reliance on intervention rather than on carefully-planned improvements to systems and processes to ensure data accuracy;
- a failure to integrate user experiences in the audit programme; and
- a tendency apparent at a few forces to focus audit work exclusively on data expected to be subject to external review.

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### Case study 5

#### North Wales Police

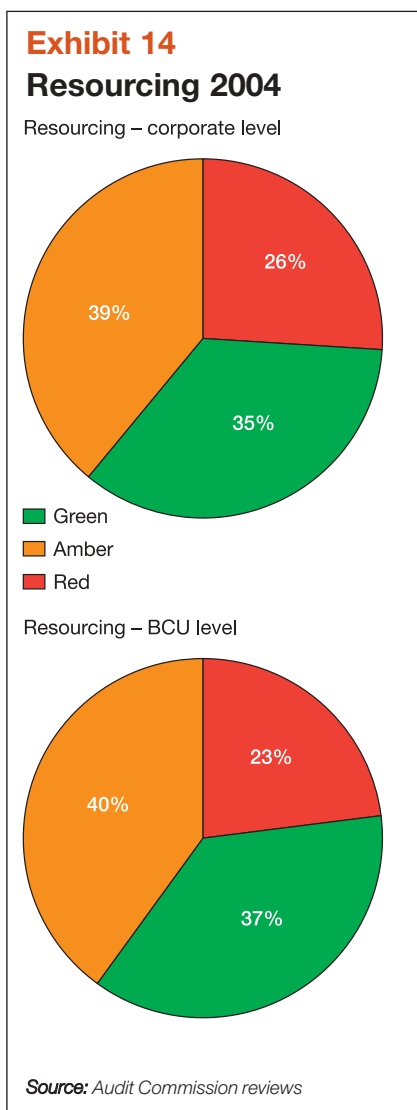
At a corporate level, the FCR co-ordinates the audit programme for crime data quality. Crime Bureau personnel are involved in this process, which is supplemented by daily and 'real-time' monitoring of crime-related incidents by members of the Force Control Room.

At a BCU level, regular and daily crime management unit (CMU) reviews of incidents and crimes in each BCU supplement the corporate audit programmes. All outstanding crime related incidents that have not been crimed are reviewed and identified by the CMU. These instances are summarised in a divisional list, which is circulated to all personnel. Crime incidents are monitored for their timelines of recording and disposal, and any issues are raised directly with the officer concerned and their supervisory officer.

Source: Audit Commission

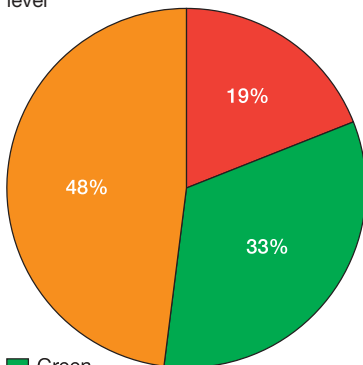
## Resourcing

- 67 Reviews considered whether authorities and forces had adequately resourced the crime-recording process. This included assessing the FCR role and looking for indications of backlogs or call answering delays that would affect the level of service provided to the public.
- 68 Most forces appear to have put significant resources into making the NCRS work, including appointing a full-time FCR to act as the focus for crime-recording issues. Almost all forces have a full-time FCR, who has the independence, resourcing and support necessary to achieve the full range of duties of the role set out in ACPO guidance.
- 69 The most effective forces have ensured that crime recording is adequately resourced not only at the centre, but also at the level of the BCU crime desk unit or police enquiry centre. One force in four, however, appears to be under-resourced in some way, or not to be using the available resources effectively (**Exhibit 14**).
- 70 These forces find it difficult to meet the 72-hour requirement for establishing a crime record on a consistent basis; they experience high numbers of missed or lost telephone calls; or members of the public find that they have to wait to report a crime. In some cases these difficulties appear to be of a temporary nature (amber assessments), but in others they are more fundamental (red assessments).
- 71 Good practice was found to include:
  - re-considering the pattern of staff deployment to ensure that services are consistent with operational need, for example by aligning crime bureau operating hours with demand; and
  - introducing an 0800 ('freephone') telephone number to enable incident details to be provided from the victim's home or from the scene of the incident.
- 72 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:
  - 'call-back' systems involving lengthy delays;



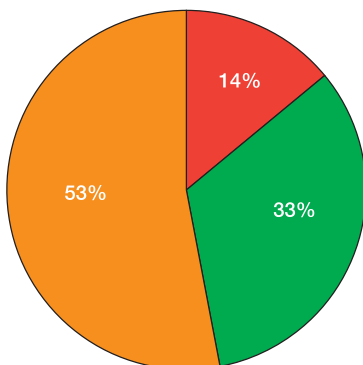
### Exhibit 15 Process for crime recording 2004

Process for crime recording – corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Process for crime recording – BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- different shift patterns at front desks and in BCUs resulting in hand-over difficulties;
- failure to make use of a freephone system where one is in place;
- backlogs of incidents to follow up;
- poor capacity planning in call centres; and
- inadequate or out-dated IT systems.

**73** Some forces have focused resources inappropriately on intensive checking of records to ensure compliance. This cannot represent value for money, nor is it an effective use of police resources. If incidents are not recorded correctly when they are reported, victims may not receive an acceptable response from the police, and the information to support policing activity may not be reliable. Forces and authorities should instead focus on ensuring that they promulgate a culture of 'getting it right first time', in order to secure compliant crime recording practices in the longer term.

## Process for crime recording

**74** Reviews focused on whether forces and BCUs have a clear and documented process for crime recording, with a focus on 'getting it right first time'. The process should have in-built checks and reviews to support the correct application of national requirements, and should be constructed around the needs of users, with clear standards of service.

**75** A number of forces face significant problems in this area, either because processes have not been adapted to meet NCRS requirements or they simply have not been documented. The most effective forces, by contrast, have succeeded in striking a balance between meeting standards of timeliness and compliance, and have rethought their crime recording processes to ensure that quality checks are built in, rather than using secondary quality control procedures to correct errors. While controls are necessary and prudent, the over-reliance of some forces on this approach suggests that these mechanisms are masking a higher level of non-compliance and a lack of NCRS awareness (**Exhibit 15**).

**76** Good practice was found to include:

- clearly defined and documented processes;
- standards for the content and timeliness of records;
- electronic controls to support active quality assurance and prevent unauthorised access or reclassification;
- screening policies to enable the level and speed of response to be determined quickly; and
- mechanisms to identify and address trends in non-compliance (**Case study 6**).

77 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- confusion about responsibilities;
- a high percentages of lost calls;
- a lack of sufficient information in crime logs;
- delays in documenting crimes and getting them onto systems, resulting in long delays in officers contacting victims and investigating the offence (up to two weeks in some cases); and
- over-reliance by operational staff on senior officers to identify and correct errors.

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### Case study 6

#### Essex Police

The Force has introduced a system to monitor the decisions of service desk staff in relation to incidents that are opened as crime-related but are not closed as crimes. It is now force policy for service desks to create a record when they make a decision not to crime an incident, and record the reason for this decision. This is intended to provide useful management information, and to support the audit of crime recording in the force. The policy has been implemented in the Force, and incidents are monitored through the internal audit function.

*Source: Audit Commission*

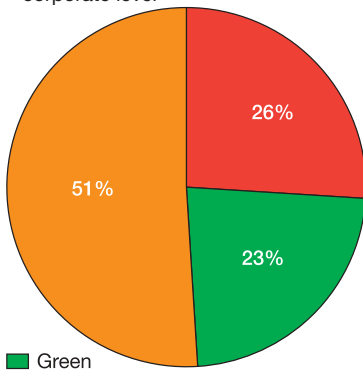
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## Staff training, knowledge and awareness

- 78 Reviews considered the arrangements in place to ensure that staff involved in crime recording have the appropriate level of knowledge and competences for the task. They also assessed whether a formal and resourced programme of training was in place, focusing on continuous improvement in crime-recording performance.
- 79 Introducing the NCRS was a big change for many forces. It required police officers and staff to rethink their approach and procedures for crime recording. Auditors identified staff training as one of the critical success factors in supporting compliance with the NCRS. They found clear examples of cases where insufficient investment in staff training and raising awareness had undermined implementation of the standard.
- 80 Most forces had provided some initial training for crime-recording staff, and there were good examples of flexible approaches to training. Some forces had developed different training packages for specific teams or groups of staff. Some had included training on the NCRS in induction programmes, or were developing flexible packages of support with 'buddying' systems and group seminars.

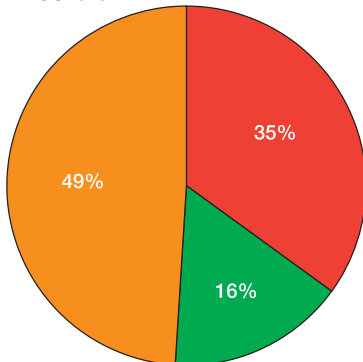
## Exhibit 16 Staff training, knowledge and awareness 2004

Staff training, knowledge and awareness  
– corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Staff training, knowledge and awareness  
– BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

81 Some forces, however, have yet to develop comprehensive programmes to ensure that all staff involved with crime recording, in whatever function, have the necessary knowledge to comply with the requirements of the NCRS. A common finding in both 2003 and 2004 was that forces had adopted a robust approach to training for probationers, control centre and crime bureau staff, but were less consistent in training existing operational officers. This was particularly evident when auditors looked at this aspect of management arrangements in BCUs (**Exhibit 16**).

82 Good practice was found to include:

- providing training that is tailored to the level of expertise required;
- mixed media promotion of the NCRS (including use of the intranet, pocket guides and notebook inserts and posters);
- use of a variety of training methodologies (including cascade training, ‘buddying’ systems, local champions, one-to-one training and group seminars) (**Case study 7**);
- frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers available on force intranets;
- use of shift briefings to cover data quality and compliance issues; and
- refresher training targeted at those officers and staff with high non-compliance rates.

83 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- over-reliance on initial training programmes with no follow-up or reinforcement;
- the absence of feedback or concentration on negative feedback;
- a focus on targets rather than on building knowledge of national requirements and the capacity to meet them; and
- the lack of a consistent training programme across all BCUs.

### Case study 7 Greater Manchester Police

The Force has developed innovative interactive training sessions for operational officers and call handlers, based on ‘ask the audience’ type equipment. This equipment, known as ‘Question Wizard’, uses hand-held wireless sets and allows participants to answer questions based on common issues found in the force’s own audits. These questions are based on actual incident logs.

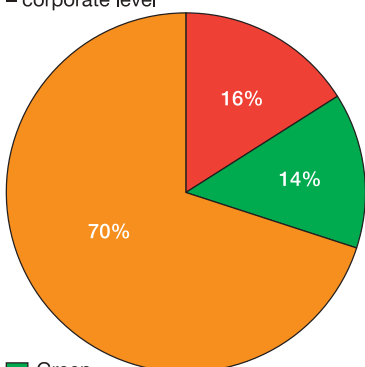
After each question is answered, the results are displayed on a screen as a percentage of correct and incorrect responses. This enables the trainer to direct the session towards those areas where knowledge is weakest.

The results can be stored, and the results from several training sessions can be aggregated to identify areas where further training and/or awareness is needed. This package has been made available to several other forces.

Source: Audit Commission

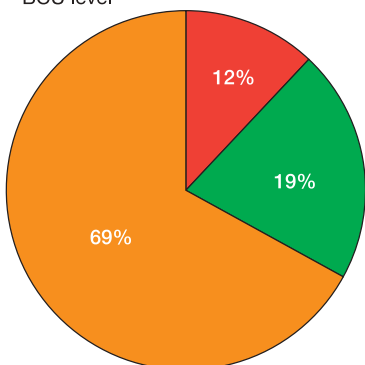
**Exhibit 17****Systems for incident and crime recording 2004**

Systems for incident and crime recording – corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Systems for incident and crime recording – BCU level



Source: Audit Commission reviews

## Systems for incident and crime recording

- 84 Reviews considered whether forces have in place effective and integrated systems for crime recording. Appropriate audit trails and controls must be in place to ensure consistent data between the systems used to record incidents and crimes.
- 85 Many forces have incident and crime-recording systems that are outdated and over-stretched. Integrated systems, in which data need only be entered once, are rare. Despite these obstacles, a majority of forces seem to be working towards ensuring a reasonable standard of data quality, using shared crime numbers and conducting regular reconciliations.
- 86 There remain, however, a significant number of forces where systems are too slow or too inflexible (**Exhibit 17**). This can mean that appropriate controls are not in place to prevent unauthorised use of options or codes, that standard formats are not in place to secure minimum data requirements, or that incident and crime data is difficult to audit. The need in some forces to rely on manual processes to address system weaknesses inevitably leads to higher levels of error.
- 87 Good practice was found to include:
- electronic links between incident and crime systems (**Case study 8**);
  - regular reconciliations between systems; and
  - controls to prevent use of ‘un-crimed’ incidents or reclassifications without authority.
- 88 Aspects of arrangements in need of improvement included:
- the reliance on systems that are excessively slow or inflexible;
  - the absence of appropriate controls to prevent unauthorised use of options or codes;
  - the lack of standard formats to ensure that minimum data requirements are entered;
  - poor access to workstations; and
  - over-reliance on manual processes to address system weaknesses.

### Case study 8

#### Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

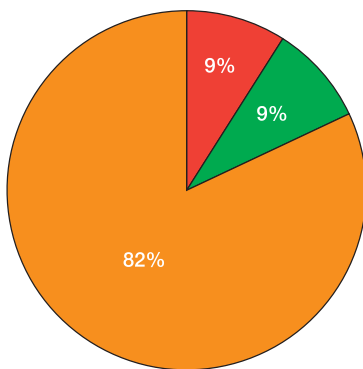
While acknowledging that they use old technology, the force’s systems have been updated to provide for new uses and requirements. Improvements have been made to improve links between incidents and crime records, and to support the ability to audit the information recorded. The system includes appropriate checks to prevent security breaches and unauthorised access to records.

Source: Audit Commission

### Exhibit 18

## Quality of service assessments 2004

Quality of service – corporate level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Source: Audit Commission reviews

## Quality of service

- 89 Reviews focused on whether forces seek customer feedback to ensure that crimes reported are handled properly, to the satisfaction of the caller, and that customer surveys include questions specifically covering the requirements of the NCRS, to establish whether a victim-focused approach had been adopted.
- 90 We found that most forces undertake quality reviews and surveys to test public perceptions of their quality of service. Few, however, had adapted their review and survey methodologies to take full account of the victim-centred approach required by the NCRS (**Exhibit 18**). Few forces could demonstrate that they had investigated the extent to which members of the public had been dissuaded from reporting incident as crimes.
- 91 Although few forces had wholly satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that they provide good-quality service, auditors found numerous examples of good practice, including:
- calling individual customers back, on a limited basis, to ascertain satisfaction with the handling of their enquiries (**Case study 9**);
  - supplementing the findings of in-house customer satisfaction surveys with periodic external reviews;
  - publicising a single number for non-emergency calls; and
  - making provision for members of ethnic minorities and people with physical disabilities, including the partially-sighted and hard of hearing.
- 92 Aspects of arrangements in need of improvement included:
- survey methodologies not being adapted to take full account of the victim-focused approach required by the NCRS;
  - lack of arrangements to probe whether members of the public have been dissuaded from reporting an incident as a crime; and
  - the use of alternative policies that do not comply with national requirements, for certain types of crimes, for example thefts of mobile phones.

### Case study 9

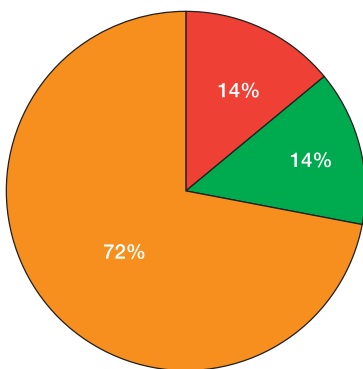
#### Lancashire Constabulary

The force has enhanced its survey activity to reflect a stronger focus on victims of crime. It is also seeking to understand if and why people are discouraged from reporting crime.

Every day a random selection of people who reported an incident to one of the force's communications centres is called back to ascertain how satisfied they are with the way their call was handled. In 2003, 4,000 customers were surveyed in this way. Survey results are analysed centrally and fed back to relevant divisional and

## Exhibit 19 User focus assessments 2004

User focus – BCU level



Green  
Amber  
Red

Source: Audit Commission reviews

headquarters teams and strategy groups. Separate written questionnaires are distributed to victims of specific crimes; these include questions about:

- how easy it was to contact the police;
- whether they were dealt with in a reasonable time and whether the first person spoken to was able to take all the details;
- whether the police tried to dissuade people from reporting the incident; and
- what the police could have done to make it easier for people to contact them.

In addition, the police authority has formed a citizens' panel, known as 'Opinion', consisting of 4,200 members of the public. This panel is regularly canvassed on their views of policing in Lancashire, including experiences of reporting crime. Respondents are asked if they have been a victim of crime in the past year and whether they reported the crime/s to the police or local authority. The Authority has also consulted local businesses, asking about the number of crimes experienced in a 12-month period and, of those crimes, the number that they reported to the police.

Source: Audit Commission

## User focus

- 93 Reviews focused on whether incident and crime reporting processes acknowledge and cater for the diversity of users and their needs, and whether forces monitor quality of service against clear standards. In order to complete these assessments, auditors observed activity at the police stations they visited, as well as arranging a series of focus groups and other investigations.
- 94 Good practice was found to include:
- arrangements for members of the public whose first language is not English;
  - appropriate access to enquiry offices for people with disabilities;
  - clear service standards and reporting on performance;
  - local arrangements tailored to local needs (**Case study 10**);
  - good networks of communication with local businesses; and
  - surveys of members of the public, as well as victims; with clear links to service development processes.
- 95 Aspects of arrangements in need of improvement included:
- poor quality of service arising from delays or difficulties for calls to the force-wide call centre;
  - poor feedback to customer surveys; and
  - poor links between survey results and service development.

## Case study 10 City of London Police

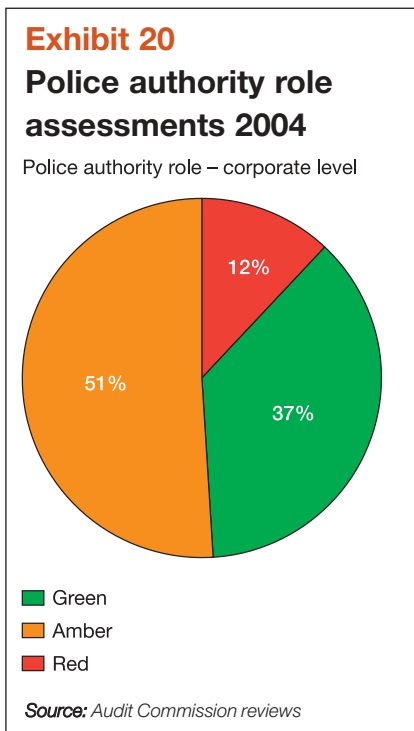
The City of London Police is the police force for the City of London, an area with a low residential population but a high transient population made up of business employees. This is due to its location in the heart of the capital city’s financial and business district.

The City Police receive a significant number of reports related to crimes that have occurred outside its jurisdiction from this transient population, who commute into the City from the surrounding Metropolitan Police area and beyond. The City Police has traditionally had a positive policy of accepting such reports, rather than referring the victim to the police force where the crime took place, to help ensure that members of the public are not deterred from reporting crimes. Given that the number of crimes in the City is relatively low at between 9,500 and 10,000 per year, crime reports relating to other forces form a significant percentage of their workload, and as such this impacts adversely on the remaining resources available.

Source: Audit Commission

## The role of the police authority

- 96 Reviews focused on the extent to which each police authority has clear arrangements for exercising effective oversight of the local force’s approach to data quality issues. The relationship between the authority and force should be a partnership; but at the same time authorities should demonstrate a proactive approach to monitoring force data quality, and should hold the chief officer to account for ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to secure data quality (**Case study 11**).
- 97 There is wide variation in the extent to which police authorities have played an active role in examining the implementation of the NCRS (**Exhibit 20**). This is surprising given the need for police authorities to rely on the data they use to scrutinise performance.
- 98 The majority of police authorities have now identified an NCRS lead within the authority, and are receiving regular reports on NCRS implementation. Some are making a real effort to understand performance data, and are beginning to challenge not only the impact of NCRS on recorded crime but also the systems and processes in place to ensure NCRS compliance (**Case study 11**). On the other hand, there are still some authorities with little or no knowledge of their forces’ internal arrangements and limited ability to drive improvements.



99 Good practice was found to include:

- a lead member being identified for crime recording and NCRS implementation;
- regular reports being generated on crime recording performance;
- the implementation of key action plans monitored by the authority;
- the inclusion of data quality in risk management arrangements; and
- force arrangements and performance being appropriately challenged.

100 Aspects of management arrangements in need of improvement included:

- little knowledge of forces' internal arrangements for improving crime recording;
- limited capacity to challenge the force; and
- limited ability to drive improvements.

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## Case study 11

### Surrey Police

Overall responsibility for the NCRS is assigned to a senior officer (Assistant Chief Constable) who works with the FCR to devise and implement an annual strategic audit plan. The annual plan includes reviews at each base command unit in specific crime areas, based on an assessment of risk completed independently by the FCR.

Progress against the plan is reported to a performance panel, which is responsible for monitoring the performance of the force against its key operational delivery strategies, including the NCRS. The Assistant Chief Constable reports to the panel on a quarterly basis, presenting the outcome of the FCR's audit work over the previous quarter and also any other external inspection work completed across the force. The Assistant Chief Constable's report is not confined to NCRS compliance issues. It highlights any other performance issues affecting the force. The performance panel reports the outcome of its work to the police authority.

Surrey has shifted resources to tackle priority areas for improvement. For instance, additional training has been provided to assist officers in complying with the NCRS as it relates to recording race crime, and additional resources have been found within base command units to work proactively to improve the recording of domestic violence crime. Significant investment (over £1 million) has been committed to enhance the force's crime-related incident recording system. This will allow crime numbers to be allocated automatically in the future.

*Source: Audit Commission*

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# 3

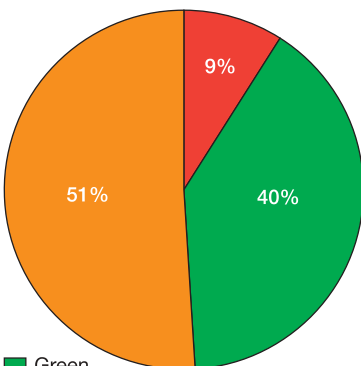
## Conclusion – overall assessments

### Summary of overall audit results for all forces showing changes from 2003 to 2004

	Number 2003	Movers up (red-green)	Movers up (red-amber, amber-green)	Movers down	Number 2004
Green	12	3	3	1	17
Amber	21	5	3	2	22
Red	10				4

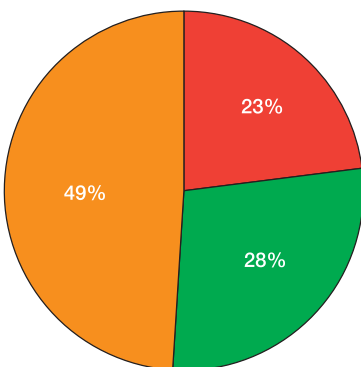
#### Exhibit 21 Overall results of Audit Commission crime data reviews

Overall assessments 2004



Green  
Amber  
Red

Overall assessments 2003



Source: Audit Commission reviews

- 101 This chapter brings together the results of the reviews of data quality and management arrangements to form a set of overall results.
- 102 Overall, the 2004 reviews indicate that there has been an improvement in crime recording. In this year's assessments, based on auditors' judgements of the 43 authorities in England and Wales:
- 17 authorities were classified 'green', compared with 12 in 2003;
  - 22 were classified 'amber', compared with 21 in 2003; and
  - only four were classified 'red', compared with ten in 2003 (**Exhibit 21**).
- 103 This means that 40 per cent of authorities have now reached the overall Home Office good practice standard for crime recording, and only one in ten authorities still has a serious problem to resolve. Eleven authorities out of the 43 were considered to have improved their overall crime recording performance between 2003 and 2004 and moved up a traffic light category: of the 17 'green' authorities, three had previously been classified 'amber' and three 'red'. Five of the 'amber' authorities had moved up from the 'red' category.
- 104 The results do, however, also indicate that 60 per cent of authorities and forces have not yet reached the Home Office good practice standard. In some cases, crime-recording performance has deteriorated, without any improvement in management arrangements to address difficulties.

## Audit results for 2004 – overall assessments

Police authority	2004 overall	2004 data testing	2004 management arrangements
Avon and Somerset Police Authority	A	A	A
Bedfordshire Police Authority	G	G	A
Cambridgeshire Police Authority	G	G	A
Cheshire Police Authority	A	A	A
City of London Police Authority	G	G	G
Cleveland Police Authority	R	R	R
Cumbria Police Authority	R	R	R
Derbyshire Police Authority	G	G	G
Devon and Cornwall Police Authority	G	G	A
Dorset Police Authority	G	G	G
Durham Police Authority	A	A	R
DyfedPowys Police Authority	A	A	A
Essex Police Authority	A	G	A
Gloucestershire Police Authority	A	A	A
Greater Manchester Police Authority	A	A	A
Gwent Police Authority	A	A	A
Hampshire Police Authority	A	A	A
Hertfordshire Police Authority	G	G	A
Humberside Police Authority	A	G	A
Kent County Police Authority	G	G	A
Lancashire Police Authority	G	G	A
Leicestershire Police Authority	G	G	A
Lincolnshire Police Authority	G	G	G
Merseyside Police Authority	A	G	A
Metropolitan Police Authority	R	R	R

Police authority	2004 overall	2004 data testing	2004 management arrangements
Norfolk Police Authority	A	A	A
North Wales Police Authority	G	G	G
North Yorkshire Police Authority	G	G	G
Northamptonshire Police Authority	A	A	A
Northumbria Police Authority	G	G	G
Nottinghamshire Police Authority	A	A	R
South Wales Police Authority	A	A	R
South Yorkshire Police Authority	R	R	R
Staffordshire Police Authority	G	G	A
Suffolk Police Authority	A	G	A
Surrey Police Authority	A	G	A
Sussex Police Authority	A	A	A
Thames Valley Police Authority	A	G	A
Warwickshire Police Authority	G	G	A
West Mercia Police Authority	G	G	G
West Midlands Police Authority	A	A	A
West Yorkshire Police Authority	A	A	A
Wiltshire Police Authority	A	G	A

105 Three authorities moved down a category – one from ‘green’ to ‘amber’ and two from ‘amber’ to ‘red’. In each of these cases, auditors found that there had been a significant deterioration in crime data compliance, without any corresponding improvement in management arrangements. There were eight authorities in 2004 where some deterioration was evident, although this was not sufficient to cause a re-classification.

106 These results suggest that more sustained improvement needs to be made. Improvements have not been achieved consistently across the country, and the progress made in some areas has been offset by weaknesses emerging elsewhere. Not all the recommendations arising from the 2003 reviews have been implemented, and in some forces the drive to implement victim-focused crime recording that was evident two years ago has lost some of its impetus.

- 107 Some authorities and forces have achieved improved results through the introduction of additional administrative processes for recording and checking their crime records. While this has improved the level of compliance, it does not mean that crime recording is consistently ensuring the necessary focus on victims, as required by the national standards, because records are not entered correctly at the outset but are amended later. Moreover, it does not represent an effective use of police resources, and in many cases it will not be sustainable in the longer term.
- 108 Authorities and forces would derive greater benefits from ensuring that their staff understand and apply the necessary rules, rather than relying on corrective action at a later stage. Compliance with national requirements is not just about recording the right levels of crime; it is equally about the response to victims, and the quality and timely availability of recorded information to support policing activities.
- 109 Further progress will depend on authorities and forces developing their understanding of what needs to be changed, and having the will to change it. The starting point must be an understanding of the current position and concerted action to build on the progress already made. The following final chapter sets out the next steps.

# 4

## Next steps

- 110** It is essential to have good-quality data in order to make important decisions about policing services and the use of resources. Consistent and reliable information is also fundamental to the national aims of improving performance and public awareness, and to securing public confidence in crime statistics and police action to reduce and manage crime.
- 111** The government's National Policing Plan (**Ref. 7**) is explicit about the intention to ensure that milestones and improvements it sets out are achieved. Variations in the way that police forces collect information on crime have the potential to affect the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of performance information and, as a consequence, the robustness, relevance and reliability of the performance measures for which it is used.
- 112** While it is clear that many authorities and forces have done a great deal to secure the implementation of the NCRS and to improve their approach to crime recording, some have made the transition more successfully than others. Police authorities have a vital role to play in driving improvement. The 2004 review has shown that whilst significant improvement has been achieved in some places, there is still some way to go before all authorities and forces can meet the Home Office good practice standards.
- 113** Each police authority should ensure that it receives regular reports on the implementation of the NCRS and the extent to which the force is complying with standards. This should go beyond the headlines and now that forces have put in place corporate policies and procedures, police authorities should concentrate on the successful implementation of these both at corporate and at BCU level. Police authorities should use their scrutiny role to challenge performance in this area and ensure that all concerned understand how compliance with the NCRS contributes to improved levels of victim satisfaction and better service delivery overall.
- 114** Improvement plans have been agreed between appointed auditors and all police authorities and forces. These set out the actions needed to improve performance. Police authorities and forces need to monitor closely the implementation of these plans over the next six months and to ensure that ongoing performance management and scrutiny arrangements continue to support sustained improvement thereafter.
- 115** Increased compliance and better-quality data will not happen unless staff at all levels, regardless of the extent to which they consider themselves involved with data quality issues, recognise that they are the key to generating, and making use of, information on crime. This information is fundamental to the performance improvements envisaged by the police reform programme, and will be used to measure the progress of forces towards the goals set out in the National Policing Plan.

- 116 The ultimate beneficiary of such improvements will be the service user. Police authorities and forces are increasingly required to take account of the needs and the opinions of the public and service users in planning and delivering local services. But developing an approach that is more centred on service users is not just a regulatory obligation, it is also fundamental to good management and high-quality service provision.
- 117 During 2005 the Audit Commission will review the progress of police authorities and forces in England in addressing the issues identified in the first two years of crime data reviews. This will involve assessing progress against agreed action plans, assessing management arrangements and applying a range of data tests. It is likely that the level of audit input will be based on the results of previous reviews, and that the review approach will address the issues identified in 2003 and 2004.
- 118 The Audit Commission in partnership with the Police Standards Unit will use the findings from these reviews to develop a range of effective ways to support forces in making further and sustained improvements, especially through the sharing of good practice. The Commission will participate in Home Office good practice events to be attended by police forces in 2005.
- 119 The Audit Commission recognises that the investment in management arrangements made in the first two years has been a vital foundation for improvement. By next year it would be reasonable to expect high standards of data compliance and sustained improvement overall.
- 120 We would like to thank the police service in England and Wales for their assistance to us and our auditors in carrying out this review. We hope that our findings will help the service to continue to move forward.



# Appendix 1

## Overall assessments results for individual police authorities

Police authority	2004 overall	Change	2003 overall	2004 data testing	Change	2003 data testing	2004 management arrangements	Change	2003 management arrangements
Avon and Somerset Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↑	R	A	↔	A
Bedfordshire Police Authority	G	↑	A	G	↑	A	A	↔	A
Cambridgeshire Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	A	↔	A
Cheshire Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↑	R	A	↔	A
City of London Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↑	A
Cleveland Police Authority	R	↔	R	R	↔	R	R	↓	A
Cumbria Police Authority	R	↓	A	R	↓	A	R	↓	A
Derbyshire Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↑	A
Devon and Cornwall Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	A	↔	A
Dorset Police Authority	G	↑	A	G	↑	A	G	↑	A
Durham Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	R	↔	R
DyfedPowys Police Authority	A	↑	R	A	↑	R	A	↑	R
Essex Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	A	A	↔	A
Gloucestershire Police Authority	A	↓	G	A	↓	G	A	↓	G
Greater Manchester Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↑	R	A	↔	A
Gwent Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	A	↔	A
Hampshire Police Authority	A	↑	R	A	↑	R	A	↑	R
Hertfordshire Police Authority	G	↑	R	G	↑	R	A	↔	A
Humberside Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	A	A	↔	A
Kent County Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	A	↔	A
Lancashire Police Authority	G	↑	R	G	↑	R	A	↔	A

Police authority	2004 overall	Change	2003 overall	2004 data testing	Change	2003 data testing	2004 management arrangements	Change	2003 management arrangements
Leicestershire Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	A	↔	A
Lincolnshire Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↑	A
Merseyside Police Authority	A	↑	R	G	↑	R	A	↔	A
Metropolitan Police Authority	R	↓	A	R	↓	A	R	↓	A
Norfolk Police Authority	A	↑	R	A	↑	R	A	↔	A
North Wales Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↔	G
North Yorkshire Police Authority	G	↑	R	G	↑	R	G	↑	R
Northamptonshire Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	A	↔	A
Northumbria Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↑	A
Nottinghamshire Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	R	↓	A
South Wales Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	R	↓	G
South Yorkshire Police Authority	R	↔	R	R	↔	R	R	↔	R
Staffordshire Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	A	↓	G
Suffolk Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	R	A	↔	A
Surrey Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	A	A	↔	A
Sussex Police Authority	A	↑	R	A	↑	R	A	↑	R
Thames Valley Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	A	A	↔	A
Warwickshire Police Authority	G	↑	A	G	↑	A	A	↑	R
West Mercia Police Authority	G	↔	G	G	↔	G	G	↑	A
West Midlands Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↔	A	A	↔	A
West Yorkshire Police Authority	A	↔	A	A	↑	R	A	↔	A
Wiltshire Police Authority	A	↔	A	G	↑	R	A	↔	A

## Appendix 2

### Data results for individual police authorities

Police authority	Overall	Correct closing of crimes							Correct closing for all incidents							
		Burglary	Criminal damage	Vehicle crime	Violent crime	Domestic violence	Racial Incidents	Disturbance	Burglary	Criminal damage	Vehicle crime	Violent crime	Domestic violence	Racial Incidents	Disturbance	Correct closure of 'no crimes'
Avon and Somerset Police Authority	A	G	R	A	A	G	A	R	G	R	A	A	G	A	G	A
Bedfordshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	R	A	R	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G
Cambridgeshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G
Cheshire Police Authority	A	A	G	G	A	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	R	A	A	R
City of London Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G
Cleveland Police Authority	R	A	A	G	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	A	R	R	R	R
Cumbria Police Authority	R	A	A	G	A	R	R	R	A	A	G	A	A	A	A	A
Derbyshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Devon and Cornwall Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	R	G	R	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G
Dorset Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A
Durham Police Authority	A	G	A	G	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	A	R	R	G	G
DyfedPowys Police Authority	A	G	G	G	A	R	A	R	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	R
Essex Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	G	G	G	A	G	A	G	G
Gloucestershire Police Authority	A	G	A	G	A	R	A	R	G	A	G	A	G	G	G	A
Greater Manchester Police Authority	A	A	A	G	A	R	A	R	G	A	G	A	R	A	R	A
Gwent Police Authority	A	G	G	G	A	A	R	R	G	G	G	G	A	R	R	R
Hampshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	G	A	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	A
Hertfordshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Humberside Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A
Kent Police Authority	G	G	G	G	R	G	R	G	G	G	G	A	G	A	G	G
Lancashire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G

Police authority	Overall	Correct closing of crimes							Correct closing for all incidents							
		Burglary	Criminal damage	Vehicle crime	Violent crime	Domestic violence	Racial Incidents	Disturbance	Burglary	Criminal damage	Vehicle crime	Violent crime	Domestic violence	Racial Incidents	Disturbance	Correct closure of 'no crimes'
Leicestershire Police Authority	G	G	A	G	A	A	G	R	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	A
Lincolnshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Merseyside Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	R	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G
Metropolitan Police Authority	R	A	R	A	R	R	R	R	A	R	A	R	R	R	R	R
Norfolk Police Authority	A	G	A	G	A	R	R	R	G	G	G	A	A	R	G	G
North Wales Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G
North Yorkshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G
Northamptonshire Police Authority	A	G	R	G	A	G	R	R	G	A	G	G	G	A	G	R
Northumbria Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Nottinghamshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	A	A	R	G	G
South Wales Police Authority	A	G	R	G	R	R	R	R	G	A	G	R	A	R	R	G
South Yorkshire Police Authority	R	G	A	G	R	R	R	R	G	A	G	R	R	R	R	G
Staffordshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G
Suffolk Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Surrey Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A
Sussex Police Authority	A	G	G	G	G	R	R	A	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	A
Thames Valley Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	R	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G
Warwickshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A
West Mercia Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
West Midlands Police Authority	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	R	G	G	G	G	A	A	R	A
West Yorkshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	R	R	A	R	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A
Wiltshire Police Authority	G	G	A	G	A	R	A	G	G	A	G	A	G	G	G	G

# Appendix 3

## Management arrangements results for individual police authorities

Police authority	Overall	Corporate arrangements									BCU arrangements							
		Leadership	Policy	Training	Resourcing	Systems	Process	Auditing	Quality of service	Police authority role	Leadership	Policy	Training	Resourcing	Systems	Process	Auditing	User focus
Avon and Somerset Police Authority	A	A	A	R	G	R	R	A	A	A	A	A	R	G	R	R	A	A
Bedfordshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A	R	G	G	G	A	R	G	G	A
Cambridgeshire Police Authority	A	G	G	A	A	A	A	G	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	G	G	A
Cheshire Police Authority	A	A	A	A	G	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	G	A	A	A
City of London Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G
Cleveland Police Authority	R	R	A	A	R	A	R	R	A	R	R	A	R	R	A	R	A	R
Cumbria Police Authority	R	R	A	R	R	A	R	A	A	A	R	A	R	R	A	A	R	A
Derbyshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G
Devon and Cornwall Police Authority	A	G	G	A	A	G	A	G	A	G	G	G	G	A	G	A	G	A
Dorset Police Authority	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G
Durham Police Authority	R	R	A	R	R	A	A	R	A	R	A	A	R	A	A	A	R	A
DyfedPowys Police Authority	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	R	A	A	A
Essex Police Authority	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	G	A	A	A	A	A	G	A
Gloucestershire Police Authority	A	A	A	R	G	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	R	G	A	R	A	A
Greater Manchester Police Authority	A	R	G	A	R	G	A	A	A	A	R	A	R	R	G	A	R	R
Gwent Police Authority	A	R	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	R	A
Hampshire Police Authority	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	G	R	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A	R
Hertfordshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	A	A	G	A	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	G	A	A
Humberside Police Authority	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	A	G	R	A	A	G	A	G	G
Kent County Police Authority	A	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	A	G	A	G	A	G	A	G	G	A
Lancashire Police Authority	A	A	G	A	R	G	A	A	G	G	A	G	A	R	G	A	A	G

Police authority	Corporate arrangements										BCU arrangements							
	Overall	Leadership	Policy	Training	Resourcing	Systems	Process	Auditing	Quality of service	Police authority role	Leadership	Policy	Training	Resourcing	Systems	Process	Auditing	User focus
Leicestershire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	G	R	A	G	A	A	G	G	A	G	A	A	G	A
Lincolnshire Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G
Merseyside Police Authority	A	A	G	A	R	R	A	A	A	A	A	G	A	A	A	A	G	A
Metropolitan Police Authority	R	R	A	R	R	R	R	A	A	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	A
Norfolk Police Authority	A	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
North Wales Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	A
North Yorkshire Police Authority	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	A
Northamptonshire Police Authority	A	A	G	A	R	A	R	R	R	A	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A
Northumbria Police Authority	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A
Nottinghamshire Police Authority	R	A	A	R	R	A	R	A	A	A	R	A	R	R	A	R	A	R
South Wales Police Authority	R	A	A	R	R	A	A	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	A	A	A	A
South Yorkshire Police Authority	R	A	A	R	A	R	A	R	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	R
Staffordshire Police Authority	A	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	A	A	A	A	G	G	A
Suffolk Police Authority	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	R
Surrey Police Authority	A	G	A	A	A	A	G	G	A	G	G	A	A	A	A	G	G	A
Sussex Police Authority	A	A	G	A	A	A	G	A	A	A	G	G	A	A	A	G	G	A
Thames Valley Police	A	A	G	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	A	R	R	A
Warwickshire Police Authority	A	G	G	A	R	A	A	G	A	G	A	G	A	R	A	A	G	A
West Mercia Police Authority	G	A	G	A	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	A
West Midlands Police Authority	A	A	A	R	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	G	A	A	R	A
West Yorkshire Police Authority	A	G	A	A	G	A	A	A	A	A	G	A	A	G	A	A	A	A
Wiltshire Police Authority	A	G	A	A	G	R	A	R	A	G	G	A	A	G	R	G	R	A

# Glossary

## 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.  
(ACPO website)

## 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 100-1,000 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)

## BCS

The British Crime Survey measures the amount of crime in England and Wales by asking people about crimes they have experienced in the previous year. The BCS includes crimes that are not reported to the police, so it is an important alternative to police records.  
(Home Office)

## CDRP

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 created 376 Crime & 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.  
(Audit Commission, Community Safety Partnerships – learning from audit, inspection and research)

## HMIC

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland through inspection of police organisations and functions to ensure that:

- agreed standards are achieved and maintained;
- good practice is spread; and
- performance is improved.

HMIC also provides advice and support to the Home Secretary, police authorities and forces, and plays an important role in the development of future leaders.

## 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.  
(Home Office)

## 'No crimes'

A record crime may be classified as a 'no crime' if one of the following criteria is satisfied:

- (a) the crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded;
- (b) where following the incident report that was recorded as a crime, additional verifiable information is available that determines that no notifiable crime has been committed;
- (c) the crime, as alleged, constitutes part of a crime already recorded; or
- (d) the reported incident was recorded as a crime in error.

(Home Office, Counting Rules for Record Crime)

## 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.

(Home Office, National Crime Recording Standard)

## 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 Standards Unit, Home Office)

## 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 and may in time include CDRP performance.

(Home Office)

## PSU

The Police Standards Unit was set up in 2001 to support the Government's police reform programme. PSU 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.

(Home Office)

## Police precept

The balance of police authority expenditure not covered by government block or special grant and which is funded through council tax by local households.

## 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.

(Home Office, National Crime Recording Standard)

# References

- 1 Research, Development and Statistics Department, *Home Office Rules for Recorded Crime*, Home Office, April 2004.
- 2 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, *On the Record*, Home Office, July 2000.
- 3 Simmons, J, *The Review of Crime Statistics: A Discussion Document*, Home Office, July 2000.
- 4 Association of Chief Police Officers, National Crime Recording Standard, April 2002 (an updated version is included as Appendix A to the Home Office Counting Rules dated April 2004).
- 5 Simmons, Legg and Hosking, *National crime Recording Standard: an analysis of the Impact on Recorded Crime. Companion volume to Crime in England and Wales 2003*, Home Office, 2003.
- 6 See for example: Dodd, Nicholas, Povey, Walker, *Crime in England and Wales 2003/04*, Home Office, 2004.
- 7 Home Office, *National Policing Plan 2005-2008*, November 2004.



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