



STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

5 – 9 SEPTEMBER 2005

**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER
COMPLIANCE REPORT**

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a Police National Computer (PNC) Compliance Inspection of Staffordshire Constabulary between 5th and 9th September 2005.
- 1.1.2 The Constabulary was subject to a PNC Compliance Audit using the July 2005 Protocols on PNC Compliance. Her Majesty's Inspector would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Force and also to place on record his thanks to all members of staff who contributed to this report and provided assistance during the inspection.
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from strategic, PNC and customer level management and users at Force Headquarters and at 2 of the 4 Basic Command Units (referred to as 'Divisions'). These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors (hereafter referred to as HMIC Auditors).

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Staffordshire Police consists of four operational divisions, Chase, North Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Trent Valley which are each divided into local policing units. It is responsible for policing an area of 1,048 square miles, with a resident population of over one million. Staffordshire is a medium sized shire county located in the heart of the country with a mix of both urban and rural areas. The main centres are around the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and the major towns of Newcastle under Lyme, Stafford, Burton upon Trent, Tamworth and Cannock. The economy of the area is diverse and includes engineering, ceramics, agriculture, tourism and automotive components industries. The average earnings of the region are significantly lower than the national average, as is the average house price.
- 1.2.2 The Force headquarters is located in Stafford. The chief officer group comprises a Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable with responsibility for performance and corporate development, best value, technology services and professional standards, an Assistant Chief Constable responsible for territorial policing, and an Assistant Chief Constable for operations with a director of resources covering organisational support. In terms of staff numbers Staffordshire Police employs around 2,300 police officers, 1,320 police staff, 55 police community support officers and 400 special constables.
- 1.2.3 The updating of the PNC is carried out by the PNC Bureau (PNCB). Within the PNCB there are 5 Phoenix inputters who work Monday to Saturday 07.00 till 23.00 and undertake the arrest summons (A/S) report update onto the PNC. There are an additional 5 teams of 2 staff who work 24/7 who are responsible for updating wanted/missing reports, disqualified drivers, vehicle and property updates. The PNCB also provides specialist PNC services to the Force such as Vehicle On-Line Descriptive Searches (VODS) and Queries Using Extended Search Techniques (QUEST). The 24/7 cover for the ViSOR system

(violent and sexual offender register) is also maintained within this environment.

1.2.4 The remaining updates to the PNC names records are carried out by the Central Prosecutions Department (CPD) staff based at Hensford. The CPD is staffed Monday to Friday during standard office hours. The Force has access to an Equis terminal within the building, which allows them to print off the court results as soon as the courts have validated the result. At the time of the report the Force had taken the decision not to update bail conditions onto the PNC.

1.2.5 The Crown Court results are received via the Xhibit application which has improved the timeliness of this information. The Force has set up a secure email facility with the Crown Court to receive details of indictments so although the Force has to wait until these are received in order to update the PNC record they generally arrive within 2 to 3 days of the result from Xhibit.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 A full inspection against the 2005 PNC Protocols was carried out, covering the sections of Leadership, Policy and Strategy, People, Partnerships and Resources, Processes and Results.

1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of:

- **Excellent** – Comprehensive evidence of effective activity against all protocol areas.
- **Good** – Evidence of effective activity in many areas, but not comprehensive.
- **Fair** – Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others.
- **Poor** – No or limited evidence of effective activity against the protocol areas, or serious concerns in one or more area of activity.

1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC Auditors with documentation to support its adherence to the protocols. This was followed up by a visit to the Force with HMIC Auditors conducting numerous interviews with key staff. The visit to the Force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection, which was based upon reality checks. The reality checks included reviewing PNC data against source documents and a review of PNC policy documentation.

1.3.4 Using the evidence gathered during each stage of the inspection, this report has been produced based upon the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) format.

1.4 Current Performance

1.4.1 On 27th April 2000, ACPO Council endorsed the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling:

- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Relevancy

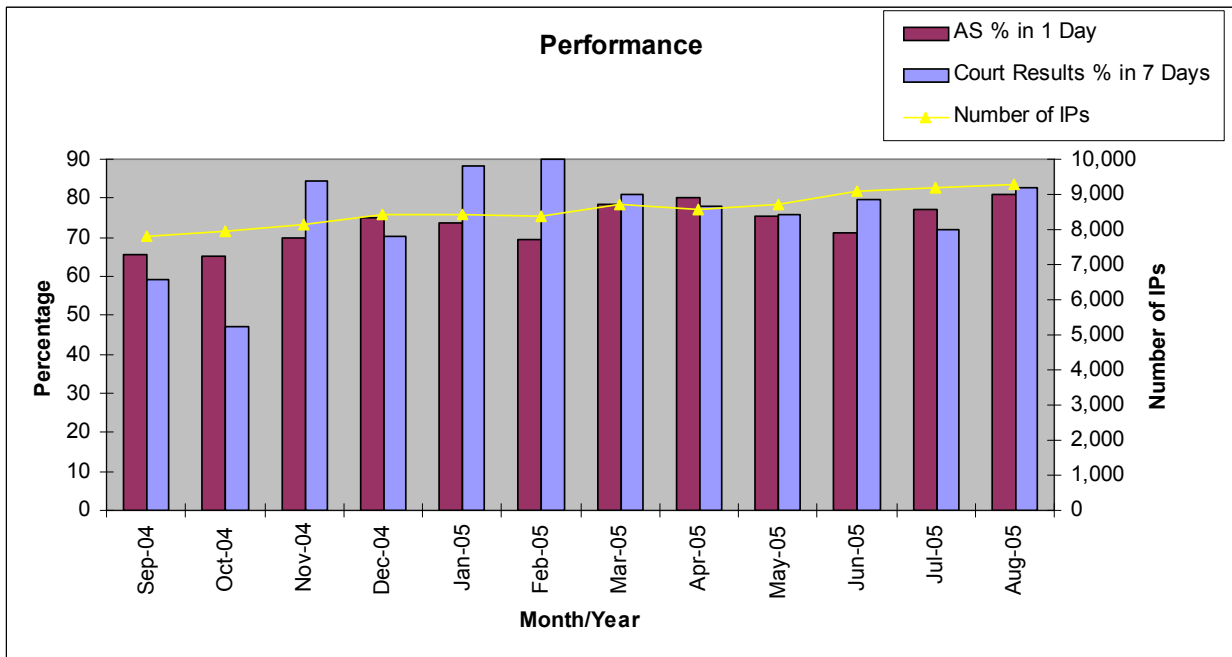
1.4.2 The strategy is owned by ACPO but is also reliant on other partners taking responsibility for key actions within the strategy. The partners include Centrex, HMIC, Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and individual forces.

1.4.3 On 1st January 2005, the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy were replaced by the timeliness standards contained within the newly published Code of Practice for the PNC. The PNC Code of Practice, developed by the National Centre for Policing Excellence and endorsed by ACPO, is a statutory code made under s.39a of the Police Act 1996 (inserted by section 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002). It provides scope for the Home Secretary to invoke statutory intervention for forces failing to comply. With regards to individual forces, a number of performance indicators (PIs) specifically for PNC data standards were set. Each force has a responsibility to achieve the standards set within the Code of Practice. The timeliness standards within the Code are as follows:

- 90% of recordable offences entered onto PNC within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings. The commencement of proceedings being defined as when a person is arrested, reported or summonsed.
- From the 1st July 2005, the target is for 75% of all finalisations being entered onto PNC within 7 days of the information being received by the police. For the previous 6 months the target was for 50% of the court results to be entered within 7 days. Courts have their own

target of 3 days for delivery of data to the police. Therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 10 days.

- 1.4.4 In August 2005, Staffordshire Police input 80.8% of arrest summons (A/S) updates on the PNC within 24 hours. This shows an improvement in performance in the 12 months to August 2005 from 65.6% in September 2004. Such an improvement is to be commended particularly as the Force has adopted the full powers of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act which has resulted in an approximately 50% increase in the number of A/S reports that the Force has to process on a monthly basis. Staffordshire has significantly reduced the number of days it takes to input 90% of A/S reports from 20 days in September 2004 down to 6 in August 2005. However, whilst the performance in this area has shown an overall improvement, there have been a number of months where performance has dipped. HMIC Auditors would encourage the Force to ensure that it is satisfied it has the processes in place to maintain this improvement and to further improve to achieve the target of 90%.
- 1.4.5 Staffordshire's performance in terms of court results is much more consistent. From January to June 2005 the Force has only failed to meet the ACPO Code of Practice once in the PITO produced statistics. The days to enter the quickest 75% of court results have also shown a steady improvement from 13 days in September 2004 to 7 days in August 2005.
- 1.4.6 In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs) Staffordshire has shown an increase in the 12 months to August 2005 from 7,815 to 9,303. The percentage increase for this period is 19%. This is far less than the percentage increase in the arrest summons processed every month as a result of implementing the 2003 Criminal Justice Act. HMIC Auditors have expected the number of IPs to increase and now, as in Staffordshire's case, be levelling out but at a slightly higher level than they were previously. HMIC Auditors were informed that there is a continual process in place within the CJSU to ensure that old cases are reviewed on a regular basis to provide assurance to the Force that all cases over 12 months old are legitimately outstanding.
- 1.4.7 A graph illustrating Staffordshire's performance in the 12 months to August 2005 is shown below:



1.5 Conclusions

1.5.1 HMIC’s assessment of PNC compliance within the Force has been assessed as:

Fair – Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others.

1.5.2 This assessment is based on the detailed findings of the report which highlight concerns in some areas of activity, but recognises that the direction of travel is towards a good grading:

- Divisions need to be held clearly accountable for the submission of the data to the PNC so that the Force can achieve the Code of Practice target (90% within 24 hours), for the input of Arrest Summons reports.
- The Force is in the process of developing a strategic PNC action plan.
- The Force has a robust Data Protection audit regime.
- The use of the PNC Guard software to carry out transaction monitoring and the proactive monitoring of PNC use by PSD has yet to embed into the Force ethos.
- The Forces has an effective PNC communications strategy utilising the professional skills of the Corporate Communications and Marketing Department.
- The Force does not input bail conditions onto the PNC.

1.5.3 The findings of this report should be read in conjunction with the previous reports and recommendations relating to the PNC. The previous reports are:

- Police Research Group Report – ‘Phoenix Data Quality’, *published 1998*
- HMIC Thematic Inspection Report – ‘On The Record’, *published 2000*
- HMIC Report – ‘PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 1st Report’, *published 2001*
- HMIC Report – ‘PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 2nd Report’, *published 2002*

1.5.4 A summary of good practice points, along with recommendations for improvement can be found at Appendices A and B of this report.

2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Leadership

2.1.1 Role of the PNC Steering Group

2.1.1.1 The HMIC Auditors were encouraged to find effective leadership in relation to the PNC, to be an area of strength within the Force. The ACC has ownership of the PNC issues within her portfolio and there was evidence during interview of a good level of knowledge and understanding with regard to PNC issues. This was complemented by the open lines of communication between the PNC Liaison Officer and the ACC. It was reported that the PNC Steering Group (chaired by the ACC), meets every quarter. Good practice in relation to the PNC Steering Group would be for the meetings to be held quarterly. As this is seen as good practice, the Force is therefore encouraged to continue with this meeting regime.

2.1.2 Responsibility and Accountability

2.1.2.1 With regard to the overall Force performance against the ACPO PNC Code of Practice, this is continually monitored by the PNC Liaison Officer. At the time of the inspection statistical information had just been provided on the intranet to identify individual officers who supply late source input documents (SIDs). This is then reviewed and actioned by the Operational Management Unit Inspectors to prevent reoccurrences of late submissions. This information had only been available for a week so the process is yet to embed into the Force culture.

2.1.2.2 However, management information for the submission of SIDs is not yet available on a divisional basis, the Divisional Commanders are therefore not aware of the overall performance of their Division. Previous inspections elsewhere have identified that the provision of this data is good practice as it enables the Force to drive performance improvements in the arrest summons target by holding the Divisional Commanders accountable. In a number of forces the PNC Code of Practice performance information forms part of the monthly BCU review so that all levels of the management structure have a responsibility for the timely submission of this data.

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force improves its monthly performance data collation and publication thus developing a culture of performance management within this discipline with accountability being held by the Divisional Commanders.

2.2 Policy & Strategy

2.2.1 PNC Policy and Strategy

2.2.1.1 HMIC Auditors were provided with a copy of the Force's Action Plan for PNC. This document identifies issues surrounding the published HMIC PNC Protocols. This document is viewed within the Force as a working document and is therefore regularly updated. Having such a document in place is established good practice.

2.2.1.2 HMIC auditor were made aware that the Force has separate action plans to cover the future developments that impinged on the operation of the PNC for example the National Firearms Licensing Management System and the introduction of NSPIS Custody and Case preparation applications. However, the strategic overview of the development, operational use and the performance of the PNC still remains with the PNC steering group. Therefore, reference to these on going developments within the PNC Action Plan would enable the Force at a strategic level to continually monitor and address any issues that arise that would impinge on the PNC.

2.2.1.3 Staffordshire has a comprehensive draft policy PNC policy document which is waiting for chief officer approval. HMIC Auditors reviewed the document and encourages the Force to authorise and issue the policy so it can support the use of the PNC throughout Staffordshire Police.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force expands the current PNC Action Plan to include future changes to the PNC to enable it to prepare a strategic position to forthcoming developments and to respond effectively at an operational level when these changes are introduced.

2.2.2 PNC Security

2.2.2.1 With regard to system security, HMIC Auditors reviewed five key areas. These are User Access, Transaction Monitoring, Data Protection Auditing, the Role of Professional Standards and Information Security Policy. Each of these is discussed further below and raised some areas of good practice but also some areas of concern.

2.2.2.2 User access to the PNC in Staffordshire is managed by the PNC Bureau which retains a list of all active users on the system. There is no formal process to ensure that all officers and staff who change job roles, and with that their level of PNC access, have their authorisation either deleted or changed. Whilst HMIC Auditors do not question the integrity of the work of the PNCB, there is some risk to the organisation in both the absence of a formalised process and having an operational unit able to make such changes to system access. The HMIC Auditors could find no evidence of an independent audit of the process or of the record keeping.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Staffordshire Police:

- **Introduces a process to ensure that movers have their access altered or removed from the system as appropriate;**
- **Introduces an independent audit, at least annually, of all user access administration.**

2.2.2.3 The undertaking of transaction monitoring is a requirement of the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual. It is a process where police officers and staff are asked to verify their reasons for performing transactions on the PNC and, as such, is an important activity in the prevention and detection of misuse or abuse of the PNC. At the time of the inspection Staffordshire were piloting an electronic facility known as PNC Guard that randomly generates messages onto the screen of the PNC operator requesting them to record the reason for the check. The way the system has been set up, it is only checking the validation of the PNC enquiry of the operator. If the Force continues to use the PNC Guard in its current set up it will miss validating checks requested by police officers either over the telephone or over the radio.

2.2.2.4 In addition, the Force would need to analyse the data being provided by the PNC Guard software so that it could identify any unusual trends in the PNC usage of its staff, or further investigate any replies that did not satisfy the policy use of the PNC.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that it has the processes in place to eliminate the weaknesses described above and to apply effective monitoring analyses of all PNC usage throughout the Force.

- 2.2.2.5 The Force produces a three year risk assessed Audit Programme in line with the ACPO Data Protection Manual (ADPM). The audits and the subsequent reports also adhere to the guidelines within the ADPM. The Information Security Review Board (ISRB) has ownership of these reports, which secures the independence from the PNC system owner.
- 2.2.2.6 The Force has a computer based training package available on the intranet comprising of four modules which cover data protection, information security, freedom of information and the government protected marking scheme. The completion of these modules is set as an objective within the appraisal process, both for supervisors to ensure that their staff are given the time and as part of the individual's objective to complete the modules. The module completion statistics are presented to and monitored at the ISRB meetings.
- 2.2.2.7 HMIC Auditors also reviewed the role of the Professional Standard Department (PSD) with regard to PNC issues at Staffordshire. Within PSD a proactive unit that was set up in July 2005 to dip sample PNC use. Whilst this would be seen as good practice in the longer term, the process is too new within Staffordshire in order for the HMIC Auditors to make such a comment, however it does offer the green shoots of a worthwhile development. The PSD is independent of operational activities and reports to the DCC. Such independence is viewed as good practice.
- 2.2.2.8 During the inspection HMIC Auditors were made aware that the Force Information Security Policy had not been reviewed since 2000. In light of the increasing use of IT systems and the availability of PNC access through mobile data terminals and hand held data terminals, it is the view of the HMIC auditors that a review is overdue.

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review and update its Information Security Policy to ensure that it effectively meets the risks to which the Force is exposed.

2.3 People

2.3.1 Marketing and Awareness

2.3.1.1 During meetings and focus groups, HMIC Auditors were pleased to note a good all round awareness of the PNC functionality enhanced by the use of the PITO presentations. Staff were also aware of how they could obtain the different types of PNC enquiries. Staffordshire are in the process of piloting real time intelligence units (RTIs) on division. From previous inspections HMIC Auditors see this as good practice, not only do the RTIs make good use of the PNC and all the different types of searches available, but they also promote the use of PNC amongst operational officers as they become used to receiving PNC results prior to arriving at an incident.

2.3.1.2 The pre-read material sent to the HMIC Auditors included a formal communications strategy for the PNC prepared and directed by the corporate communications and marketing department. HMIC Auditors view this as good practice as it effectively deploys the specialist skills housed in the department and greatly enhances the understanding of the product.

2.3.1.3 There was however one area where the Force could benefit by widening the scope of the communications strategy this is within the criteria of objectives and evaluation. The strategy specifies targets for VODS and QUEST searches which are only two of a number of intelligence type enquiries that can be performed on the PNC. In order to set itself more targets the Force could look to increase its use of the vehicle partial searches, the vehicle postcode searches and the transaction enquiries. Statistical information on the use of these, and all other transaction is provided monthly by PITO and could be used as a measure of how effective the marketing strategy is proving to be.

2.3.2 PNC Training

2.3.2.1 Overall HMIC Auditors were satisfied with the quality of the PNC training being delivered within Staffordshire. There is a training strategy that covers the design, delivery, evaluation and monitoring procedures for the training courses. At the end of each course, the trainee must sit an assessment and obtain a 70% pass mark to be given access to the PNC. The Force is using the Kirkpatrick Learning Evaluation Model which is an internationally recognised framework for monitoring the effectiveness of training, and should therefore benefit both in terms of course design and operational needs from the feedback it receives as a result.

2.3.2.2 It was reported that all the control room staff had recently undertaken PNC refresher training. The HMIC Auditors see this as good practice as it reminds the staff of all the PNC functionality, and in turn they are able to more competently advise officers when they are requesting PNC checks.

2.3.2.3 HMIC Auditors were nevertheless slightly disappointed to note that the PNC refresher training had not been undertaken by members of staff outside the control room environment potentially minimising the opportunity to add value by taking a less parochial view of the use of the PNC.

2.3.2.4 Training for the staff in the CJSU is provided by a two stage process. Initially, new staff must successfully complete an enquiry course with the force training school. Following completion of the enquiry course an experienced operator within the CJSU provide the PNC court resulting training. This experienced operator is not an accredited PNC trainer and does not provide training against structured lesson plans with specified aims and objectives. This approach has implications for the Force and is contrary to the principles of the Code of Connection and also the guideline provided by the PNC Manual:

It is essential that all personnel having contact with PNC facilities must be trained to the correct standard by trainers who have themselves been fully accredited by Centrex.¹

The provision of training to update staff within Staffordshire is in contravention of the code and therefore, must cease immediately. All update training must be provided by PNC trainers accredited by Centrex.

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force immediately ensures that all update training is delivered by a PNC accredited trainer and encourages all PNC trained staff to be provide with refresher training.

¹ Extract from Section 5 (Training) of Volume 1 of the PNC Manual, version 4.01, March 2004.

2.4 Partnerships and Resources

2.4.1 Relations with the Courts

2.4.1.1 The Force has placed itself in a good position with its criminal justice partners in the management and the use of the PNC. The Superintendent who is Head of the Criminal Justice Unit attends the Local Criminal Justice Board and is able to progress issues with the delivery of the court registers at that level. In addition, there have been informal meetings with the Head of Court Services in order to influence the provision of court registers in a timely manner.

2.4.1.2 The Staffordshire Police Crown Court Liaison has also developed a good working relationship with their equivalent numbers within the Crown Courts. This has proved particularly beneficial and has enabled these two criminal justice partners to work together in the introduction of the Xhibit application which provides the crown court disposals electronically.

2.4.2 Non Police Prosecuting Agencies

2.4.2.1 Under national agreements police forces are responsible for updating the PNC with data from Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs). In order to ensure that PNC records are complete, accurate and up to date forces need to introduce arrangements to ensure that all NPPA information is received in a timely manner and that the data received is of the quality expected from its own officers and staff.

2.4.2.2 At the time of the inspection, Staffordshire Police had recently undertaken a process to contact all their main NPPAs via a letter to remind them of their responsibility to provide the police with this information in a timely manner. This had proved productive and had resulted in an improvement in the provision of this data.

2.4.3 Information Sharing Protocols

2.4.3.1 HMIC Auditors were provided with evidence of comprehensive information sharing protocols between Staffordshire Police and outside agencies. The policies and procedures provide clear guidelines for staff to refer to if they are in any doubt as to whether information can be shared or not.

2.5 Processes

2.5.1 Compliance with the Codes of Practice

2.5.1.1 On 1st January 2005, the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy were replaced by the timeliness standards contained within the newly published Code of Practice for the PNC. The PNC Code of Practice, developed by the National Centre for Policing Excellence and endorsed by ACPO, is a statutory code made under

s.39a of the Police Act 1996 (inserted by section 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002). The Code stipulates that 90% of recordable offences be entered onto PNC within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings. The commencement of proceedings is defined as when a person is arrested, reported or summonsed.

2.5.1.2 Staffordshire Police are commended for applying the full powers of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act. The Force is therefore gaining the opportunity to retain DNA and fingerprints on the national database and the potential for increased detection

2.5.2 Source Input Document (SID)

2.5.2.1 Staffordshire Police are also given credit for inputting the full SID at the time the arrest summons report is created. This procedure has two main advantages to the Force and every other police force that carries out searches across the PNC. The full offender details are available as soon as the A/S report is created and therefore can be searched from that moment onwards. In addition the Force does not have to create a procedure to ensure that it updates all the skeleton records, it knows that all the names records that are input by Staffordshire PNCB include the full update details.

2.5.3 Non-Custody Cases

2.5.3.1 These are cases where an arrest summons needs to be created onto the PNC but the offender is not required to attend at a custody unit. These are often recordable summons cases as a result of road traffic offence, cautions, reprimands and final warnings. As there is no compulsion to complete the paperwork, such as releasing the offender from the custody unit, these cases often do not reach the PNC until outside the 24 hour period, yet their entry onto the PNC still counts towards the performance indicator. HMIC Auditors are aware of a number of forces who have carried out an intensive review of all submissions to the PNC over a set time period, a week for example, and have identified that it is the non-custodial submissions that are inhibiting them from reaching the 90% A/S target.

2.5.3.2 Anecdotal evidence was provided to the HMIC Auditors that some officers will choose to report an offender rather than transport them to a custody unit as a result of the time involved in the transportation process. This paperwork could easily miss the 24 hour target.

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force undertakes a review of the late arrest summons report submissions to the PNC in order for Staffordshire to identify where the shortfall is occurring.

2.5.4 Warning Signals

2.5.4.1 The process within Staffordshire for entering a warning signal (W/S) onto the PNC is for the officers to submit the details onto the Staffordshire Police Intelligence System (SPIN), where they are then entered onto the PNC by the PNCB. There is a risk however that the Force could miss inputting a warning signal if the officer fails to enter the details onto SPIN. The PNCB staff who enter the SID data onto the PNC have no remit to prompt the officer to enter a warning signal even though the offence will often be a strong indication that a warning signal is required on the record. Using the PNCB staff would provide Staffordshire with a 'control' mechanism to ensure that all relevant information is entered onto the PNC, although the ultimate decision would always remain with the police officer.

2.5.4.2 It was reported to the HMIC Auditors during the inspection that divisional staff now have the responsibility for reviewing current warning signals on the PNC, providing some reassurance that they are being re-assessed and managed.

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review the process for the input of warning signals onto the PNC.

2.5.5 Quality of Data on the PNC

2.5.5.1 HMIC Auditors carried out reality checks comparing the SID (Source Input Document) with the information contained on the PNC. The checks revealed that 65% of the SIDs checked contained minor errors. A further 4 disqualified driver records were checked, 3 of which contained the incorrect date of birth. A VODS check on the stolen reports entered by Staffordshire Police showed that a number contained non-standard abbreviations and insufficient location details. This contravenes the instructions in the PNC Manual.

2.5.5.2 Currently the new Phoenix staff are subject to 100% quality assurance of their work until they reach the required accuracy. After that the staff provide the supervisor with a selection of their work to be quality assured. If the supervisor identified a quality issue this would form part of the appraisal process. However, HMIC Auditors are of the opinion that by allowing the PNC operators to choose the work to be quality assured the procedure potentially loses its credibility and independence.

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review the effectiveness of its current practice of quality assurance within the PNC Bureau.

- 2.5.5.3 During the reality checking a magistrates court register was verified against the information recorded onto the PNC. HMIC Auditors identified a 25% error rate. These errors all involved changes to offence details made during the court proceedings which did not adhere to the guidance provided by the PNC Manual. This could be due to the CJSU PNC resulters being trained by a non-Centrex accredited trainer. See recommendation 6.
- 2.5.5.4 The court resulting staff are subject to a quality assurance process using a random selection of work twice a month. Any errors that are identified are graded and recorded. They would be used to identify any trends which could indicate a training need and they would be used within the appraisal process if it was appropriate.
- 2.5.6 Ad Hoc Intelligence Updates²
- 2.5.5.1 Staffordshire Police captures ad hoc intelligence updates, for example a change of address or a new tattoo, on the local intelligence system (SPIN). It was reported to the HMIC Auditors that there is a policy to cover the submission of this data to the PNC, anecdotal evidence revealed that this policy is not widely adhered to as staff were not aware of it. There was not therefore, a robust process in place to ensure that this information is transferred to the PNC if it is appropriate.
- 2.5.5.1 Similarly, Staffordshire update the national ViSOR application (Violent and Sexual Offender Register), with new information appropriate to the person, but again there is no procedure to ensure that the PNC holds the same information. The Force runs the risk that the two national systems that it has access to will not contain matching records.

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force widely publicise and market the policy to update the PNC with ad hoc intelligence recorded on the SPIN and ViSOR to improve the quality of the information contained on the system.

- 2.5.7 Bail Conditions
- 2.5.5.2 Currently Staffordshire Police do not input bail conditions onto the PNC. Part of the reasoning behind this decision is that the Force is concerned that it will not be informed if the bail conditioned are changed or withdrawn by the courts. The bail conditions are input into the SPIN system which is a local intelligence application only used by Staffordshire Police. Staffordshire is a county completely surrounded by other police forces who rely on the information being on the PNC for them to access it. The V festival, which is a large open air concert attracting 60,000 spectators had recently taken place within Staffordshire. It will have been attended by people who live outside of

² Information applicable for update to PNC that originates from a source other than the creation of an Arrest/ Summons report.

the Staffordshire area and any bail conditions during that time will only be available to Staffordshire officers who have access to SPIN.

Recommendation 11

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review its decision not to input bail onto the PNC in the light of the benefits it would bring to operation policing for the whole community.

2.5.8 Crimelink and SCAS

2.5.8.1 These are two applications that allow the police to record and search upon unsolved crimes. Crimelink is a recently developed system which shares its keywording criteria with the PNC. There has been a delay in the training for the system, nevertheless the Regional Intelligence Group attended by Staffordshire Police have decided to use Crimelink for certain categories of crimes. Staffordshire have established a procedure to identify and enter these crimes onto the database.

2.5.8.2 SCAS - Serious Crime Analysis Service, is a facility provided by the Crime Faculty at Bramshill. Forces are requested to identify and provide details of unsolved serious crimes for entry onto the database. HMIC Auditors were informed that Staffordshire Police have a process for using this service and are one of the highest users in the country. HMIC Auditors are of the opinion that Staffordshire Police should be commended for their provision of data and their use of both these data bases.

2.6 Results

2.6.1 In terms of Arrest/ Summons (A/S) updates Staffordshire has seen an approximately 50% increase in the number of reports that the Force has to input on a monthly basis as a result of undertaking the full powers of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act. Whilst the Force is commended for undertaking this additional work it has potentially caused the Force's performance to be inconsistent within this performance indicator. The general trend shows an improvement in performance, over a 12 month period, with the Force in September 2004 producing an input of 65.6% A/S reports within the 24 hours. 12 months later in August 2005 this had improved to 80.8%. Another positive trend is the number of days the Force takes to enter the quickest 90% of A/S reports. In September 2004 this was 20 days, which has now reduced, in August 2005 to 6 days indicating that the underlying trend is to submit the SID to the PNCB in a much more timely fashion.

2.6.2 Staffordshire's performance in the area of court resulting is a much more positive and consistent achievement. The average performance for the period July 2003 through to August 2004 was 74.3%, which was despite a 12 month low of 47% in Oct 2004 and including two months when the Force failed to perform above the English and Welsh national average. The good relations with the courts as mentioned earlier in section 2.4.1 has proved to have been a wise investment in personnel

time. In addition, the priority given to the entry of court disposals onto the PNC within the CJSU and the Crown Court Liaison unit has ensured that when the Force did fall short of the target in July 2005 it was for only one month and it was by only 3%.

- 2.6.3 With regard to outstanding impending prosecutions (IPs), the Force has allowed these to increase by 19% over a 12 month period. HMIC Auditors have accepted an increase in the outstanding IPs as a result of the Force processing an increased number of A/S reports as a consequence of the provisions of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act. However, the expectation now is that the number of IPs will level out at a slightly higher level than that prior to the increase in the section 37/3 police bail cases being entered onto the PNC. It appears from the July and August 2005 IP statistics that Staffordshire Police has reached that plateau. HMIC Auditors look forward to the IP process adopted within the CJSU for managing outstanding IPs on a monthly basis, being able to maintain Staffordshire's outstanding IPs at a steady level.

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFFORDSHIRE**Recommendation 1**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force improves its monthly performance data collation and publication thus developing a culture of performance management within this discipline with accountability being held by the Divisional Commanders.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force expands the current PNC action plan to include future changes to the PNC to enable it to prepare a strategic position to forth coming developments and to respond effectively at an operational level when these changes are introduced.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Staffordshire Police:

- Introduces a process to ensure that movers have their access altered or removed from the PNC as appropriate.
- Introduces an independent audit, at least annually, of all user access administration.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that it has the processes in place to eliminate the weaknesses described above and to apply effective monitoring and analyses of all PNC usage throughout the force.

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review and update its Information Security Policy to ensure that it effectively meets the risks to which the Force is exposed.

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force immediately ensures that all update training is delivered by a PNC accredited trainer and encourages all PNC trained staff to be provided with refresher training.

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force undertakes a review of the late arrest summons report submissions to the PNC in order for Staffordshire to identify where the shortfall is occurring.

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review the process for the input of warning signals onto the PNC.

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review the effectiveness of its current practice of quality assurance within the PNC Bureau.

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force widely publicise and market the policy to update the PNC with ad hoc intelligence recorded on SPIN and ViSOR to improve the quality of the information contained on the system.

Recommendation 11

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review its decision not to input bail conditions onto the PNC in the light of the benefits it would bring to operational policing for the whole community.

APPENDIX B – SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES AT STAFFORDSHIRE

- The production of a three year risk assessed audit plan in line with the ACPO Data Protection Manual which drives the audits and reports.
- The computer based training package covering the modules of data protection, information security, freedom of information and the government protected marking scheme. The completion of these modules is set as an objective as part of the appraisal system.
- The independence of the professional standards department, reporting through the DCC.
- The communications strategy document prepared by the corporate communications and marketing department.
- PNC refresher training undertaken by all the control room staff.
- Effective meeting structure that the Force has developed with both the magistrates and the crown courts.
- Regular contact with the main non-police prosecuting agencies within the Staffordshire area, as a reminder for the provision of timely data.
- The documentation of the information sharing protocols.
- Full update of the source input document at the time of the creation of the arrest summons report.
- The usage of the Crimelink and SCAS databases.

APPENDIX C – ‘ON THE RECORD’**THEMATIC INSPECTION REPORT ON POLICE CRIME RECORDING, THE POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER AND PHOENIX INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM DATA QUALITY - RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 9** (Chapter 5 page 86)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all Forces produce position statements in relation to the 1998 PRG report recommendations on Phoenix Data Quality and the ACPO Compliance Strategy for the Police National Computer. He further recommends that Forces produce a detailed action plan, with timescales, to implement their recommendations. The position statements and action plans together with progress updates should be available for audit and inspection during future HMIC PNC Compliance Audits and inspection of Forces. Forces should send copies of action plans to HMIC's PNC Compliance Audit Section by 1 February 2001.

Recommendation 10 (Chapter 6 page 104)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces urgently review their existing SCAS referral mechanisms in the light of the above findings. These reviews should include verification with SCAS that all Force offences fitting the SCAS criteria have been fully notified to them, and updated. This process should be managed by Forces through their in-Force SCAS Liaison Officers.

Recommendation 11 (Chapter 7 page 111)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the marketing, use and development of national police information systems is integrated into appropriate Force, local and departmental, strategic planning documents.

Recommendation 12 (Chapter 7 page 112)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that where not already in place, Forces should establish a strategic PNC Steering Group. This group should develop and be responsible for a strategic plan covering the development, use and marketing of PNC and Phoenix.

Recommendation 13 (Chapter 7 page 118)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all Forces conduct an audit of their present in-Force PNC trainers to ensure they have received nationally accredited training. Any individuals who have not been accredited as PNC trainers by National Police Training should not conduct in-Force PNC training.

Recommendation 14 (Chapter 8 page 145)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces ensure that each Phoenix inputting department develops an audit trail to register the return of substandard PSDs, via line supervisors, to originating officers. The system developed should include a mechanism to ensure the prompt return of PSDs. Forces should also incorporate locally based audit trails, monitoring the passage of returned PSDs between line supervisors and originating officers.

Recommendation 15 (Chapter 8 page 146)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces develop clear guidelines to cover their expectations of officers on the return of incomplete or substandard PSDs. This guidance should be communicated to all staff and regular checks conducted to ensure compliance.

Recommendation 16 (Chapter 8 page 148)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces should develop a system to ensure that all ad-hoc descriptive and intelligence updates registered on local Force systems are automatically entered onto the Phoenix system. The policy should clearly outline whose responsibility it is to notify Phoenix inputters of any descriptive changes. Forces should also ensure that the policy is marketed to staff and that regular checks are conducted to ensure compliance.

Recommendation 17 (Chapter 8 page 150)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces develop a formal system to ensure that a proportion of each member of Phoenix inputting staff's work is regularly checked for accuracy. Forces should also consider the benefits of measuring other aspects of their work including speed of entry and compliance with policies. Performance outcomes should be evidenced in staff PDRs.

Recommendation 18 (Chapter 9 page 164)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends, where not already present, that Forces develop risk assessed Force Data Protection Officer audit programmes.

Recommendation 19 (Chapter 9 page 164)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces integrate PNC and Phoenix data quality compliance into their performance review and inspectorate programmes for BCUs and specialist departments.

Recommendation 20 (Chapter 9 page 165)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that PSD performance statistics should be incorporated in routine Force performance information. The statistics should identify omissions and errors in individual fields, in particular, descriptive information. Appropriate accountability measures should be established to ensure that any performance shortfalls identified are addressed.

APPENDIX D – PRG REPORT**“PHOENIX DATA QUALITY” RECOMMENDATIONS**

- National performance indicators and standards for timeliness of input, data fields to be completed, quality assurance requirements and the provision of training should be agreed by ACPO and promulgated to all Forces.
- Achievement against and compliance with these indicators should be audited after a period of 12 months, perhaps through the inclusion in the scope of HMIC audits.
- Senior officers take an active and visible role in policing compliance with agreed standards within their own Force.
 - ACPO performance indicators should be reflected in Force policy or standing orders (or the Force equivalent). Guidance should include the responsibilities of officers at each stage of the process e.g. for the provision of source documentation, for approval, time taken to pass to input bureaux, and the bureaux' responsibilities for data entry and quality control.
 - Line and divisional managers, as well as chief officers, should be held accountable for compliance with these standards. This could be achieved through inclusion in divisional efficiency assessments, and through the publication and dissemination of performance statistics throughout individual Forces and nationally.
- Source documentation should be common across all Forces, if not in design, in the information requested. A national format, stipulating a hierarchy of fields to be populated, should be developed.
- Programme(s) geared to raising awareness amongst operational officers and line managers of the potential benefits of Phoenix in a practical sense and their responsibilities of the provision of data should be developed. To ensure all officers have an opportunity to benefit from these programmes, consideration should be given to inclusion of a 'Phoenix awareness' module in probationer training, promotion courses and divisional training days.
- Best practice in administrative arrangements and organisational structures should be widely distributed. Internal working practices and organisational structures should be streamlined to remove any redundancies.

- Greater computerisation of the transfer of results from courts direct to Phoenix should continue to be developed. In the shorter term, the Police Service is likely to retain responsibility of the input of court information. To minimise the resource burden on the Police Service in this interim period, the police and courts should work to ensure recognition of each other's requirements and to minimise any inconsistencies in their respective working practices.
 - In the first instance, this might be achieved by ACPO highlighting to Magistrates' Courts and to the Crown Court, perhaps through the Trials Issue Group, the importance of Phoenix records to the integrity of the criminal justice system as a whole. Liaison meetings could usefully be established to introduce greater consistency in working and recording practices between the courts and police Forces e.g. for recording data. In the first instance, this could be pursued locally, perhaps through the court user group. Issues considered by such meetings might include supplying additional information (such as Arrest / Summons numbers) to the Magistrates' Court system and to automated transfer of court registers.
 - Consistent practice and performance is also required from the courts. Recommendations referring to performance indicators and standards, audits and monitoring, senior level commitment, common recording practices, awareness of system customers and administrative 'best practice' could equally apply to the courts. Mirroring the responsibilities of Chief Constables for their Force, the Court Service and the Magistrates' Court Committee should be accountable for the performance of courts.
 - Consistent practice in advising custody details, including transfers and releases, is required. This includes consistency in advising CRO numbers to maximise the number of complete records. The police and prison services should liaise to encourage greater understanding and acknowledgement of each other's requirements.

APPENDIX E – 1ST PNC REPORT**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER DATA QUALITY AND TIMELINESS –
RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation One (Paragraph 5.2)**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that ACPO nationally review the position and priority of PNC within the structure of portfolio holders to reflect both the technical and operational importance of PNC.

Recommendation Two (Paragraph 5.11)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector draws renewed attention to Recommendations 11 to 20 of *'On the Record' (2000)*, and recommends that all forces develop appropriate systems, overseen at a senior level, to ensure that they are implemented.

Recommendation Three (Paragraph 5.19)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that PITO review, as a matter of urgency, the supplier/customer relationship between PNC and forces, particularly in relation to the marketing of PNC functionality, and the type, frequency and validity of management information reports produced.

Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.29)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that Her Majesty's Inspector (Training), in consultation with PITO and National Police Training, conducts a review of the quality and availability of accreditation training for PNC trainers and the extent to which they are subsequently employed in forces.

Recommendation Five (Paragraph 5.31)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that discussions take place between ACPO, PITO and other relevant stakeholders to examine what opportunities exist for a short term 'technology solution' for the inputting of Court Results, either involving NSPIS applications currently in development, or an interim solution.

Recommendation Six (Paragraph 5.34)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that renewed and re-invigorated discussions should take place between relevant stakeholders to, (a) Ensure that local systems are in place to maximise co-operation with the courts to achieve their respective 72 hours targets and, (b) Work towards Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts assuming full responsibility for inputting all case results directly onto PNC.

Recommendation Seven (Paragraph 6.10)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that following appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, a national inspection protocol for PNC data quality and timeliness be introduced.

Recommendation Eight (Paragraph 6.12)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that following appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Secretary of State should consider using his powers under Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1999, to require all police authorities to institute a Best Value Review of processes to ensure PNC data quality and timeliness. Such review should be conducted against a common template and terms of reference.

Recommendation Nine (Paragraph 6.14)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that in consultation with the Standards Unit and other stakeholders, HM Inspectorate should urgently review their current PNC audit responsibilities in the light of the findings of this report, with a view to adopting a more proactive stance in relation to force performance, data quality and timeliness.

Recommendation Ten (Paragraph 6.16)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that in consultation with other stakeholders, ACPO IM Committee initiate research with a view to encouraging mutual support between forces for out of hours PNC data entry purposes.

APPENDIX F – 2ND PNC REPORT**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER DATA QUALITY AND TIMELINESS –
RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 1**

The Home Office should lead and co-ordinate an urgent re-examination of the current PNC strategy and standards with a view to producing national binding performance and compliance criteria to which all relevant stakeholders and partners are agreed and committed.

Recommendation 2

ACPO nationally and Chief Constables locally must ensure that the national standards for PNC operation, resourcing and training are fully integrated into local Information Management Strategies and recognised as an important part of operational service delivery. This area must receive sustained high-level support through a 'champion' at chief officer level.

Recommendation 3

PITO should be tasked to consolidate the force 'profiling' approach as used in the inspection into the routine statistical returns provided to forces. PNC statistics should then be integrated into the mainstream suite of management information/indicators that inform decisions at force and BCU levels.

Recommendation 4

HMIC should be tasked to establish a risk-assessed programme of monitoring and inspection that is able to respond quickly and effectively to deviations from accepted standards. This programme should include;

- remote monitoring of performance (PITO profile statistics)
- regular collaboration and contact with force PNC Managers
- proportionate programme of visits and inspections
- targeted interventions to respond to identified problems

Recommendation 5

The Home Office should establish a structured process for addressing and remedying any significant and persisting deviation from the agreed national standards (see Recommendation 1). This process should identify the respective roles of HMIC, Police Standards Unit and police authorities. It should set out the escalation of responses, which might include an agreed action plan, re-inspection, Intervention, and ultimately withdrawal of facility.