

**Finding the Balance:
matching human resources
with priorities in the Police
Service of Northern Ireland**

May 2013

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all





Finding the Balance: matching human resources with priorities in the Police Service of Northern Ireland

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May 2013



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List of abbreviations

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AWR	Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011
CID	Crime Investigation Department
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CSI	Crime Scene Investigator
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DoJ	Department of Justice
FSNI	Forensic Science Northern Ireland
HET	Historical Enquiry Team
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HR	Human Resources
ICS	Information Communications Systems
IT	Information Technology
MIT	Major Investigation Team
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NIPSA	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
OCMT	Occurrence and Case Management Team
OHW	Occupational Health and Welfare
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
R2R	Resource to Risk
R4	Right people, Right place, Right time, Right things
RASU	Road and Armed Support Unit
RDR	Risk, Demand and Resourcing Committee
TSG	Tactical Support Group
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations
UK	United Kingdom
VfM	Value for Money



Chief Inspector's Foreword

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has made significant progress since it was established in 2001 and has succeeded in achieving the vast majority of the Patten reform recommendations. However these reforms were achieved at a cost to policing in terms of a loss of skills at both executive and operational levels. The voluntary severance programme has now been completed and there is less of an argument for employing former police officers to support operational delivery.

This report examines the current efforts to modernise the workforce through initiatives such as *Resource to Risk (R2R)* and *Right people in the Right place at the Right time doing the Right thing (R4)*. We believe that the current austerity cuts means that there is both an imperative and opportunity to ensure that the workforce is delivering its service in the most effective and efficient manner.

The PSNI do have to factor in some unique societal challenges that continually bring the service into sharp relief against a backdrop of continuing inter-communal tension, public disorder and the activities of a small but dangerous group of dissident republican terrorists. All of this is happening at a time that there is across the board political support for policing and crime levels are at their lowest on record.

We accept the concept of having a mixed economy of police officers, support staff and managed services and believe that there is a compelling fiscal argument in pursuing this goal provided that a coherent case has been argued and communicated as widely as possible both within the organisation and with the wider stakeholder group.

Effective workforce planning, resource planning, succession planning and robust demand modelling across the service are key processes which should provide reassurance to both the police and their employer that the organisation is accurately predicting its present and future requirements and at the same time remain true to the founding principles of police reform.

This is a forward looking report written to help the PSNI move on and to find new solutions to the challenges that lie ahead. We make seven strategic recommendations which, if fully implemented, will enable the service to better meet current and future demands and satisfy its own staff and stakeholders that they are doing this in an open and transparent way.

This inspection was carried out by James Corrigan and Rachel Lindsay. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all those who contributed to this work.



Brendan McGuigan

Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland
May 2013



Executive Summary

Rising public expectations for policing, together with the increasing challenges around austerity have focused greater attention on how police services plan, manage, allocate and deploy their human resources. The workforce, a combination of employed police officers and civilian police staff working alongside private sector workers (managed services, temporary associates and staff substitution) accounts for over 80% of most police budgets. The consensus emerging from policing Inspectorates, audit organisations and from those who work in policing is that the need for efficiency cuts will continue beyond the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period and that sustaining and indeed improving service delivery will require more fundamental changes. This report is focused on helping the PSNI to move forward at a strategic level on workforce reform and to help it achieve its ambition to be the finest, personal, professional and protective police service in the world.

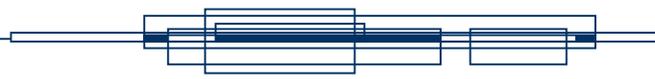
The PSNI workforce comprised 6,979 police officers, 540 part-time officers and 2,366 civilian police staff in January 2013. It was also supported by around 400 temporary associate staff and can draw upon external resources through its managed services contracts and one off consultancy and staff substitution assignments. The PSNI has gone through a period of major change with a high staff turnover and faces unique challenges in terms of a high security threat and the ongoing need to deal with legacy issues such as the high number of historical investigations and the additional costs associated with contested parades and public disorder. The Service has the highest workforce costs compared to other police forces in England and Wales i.e. higher costs per police officer, highest net expenditure per head of population. The PSNI budget for 2012-13 was £1.2 billion, which included relatively high pension costs¹.

The Service must deliver cumulative efficiency savings of £135 million over the four year financial settlement (2011-15) of the CSR. It has received an additional £245 million (£60 million per annum) from HM Treasury and the Northern Ireland Executive to deal with the security threat. Senior management in the PSNI have told Inspectors that this level of cuts, especially in the context of the stated challenges, has placed a significant burden on the organisation but that it is likely to achieve its financial targets. The availability of this security budget, in a period of a severe security threat, has helped to protect other parts of policing. The main challenge will therefore be in the next CSR period when additional efficiency savings may be required. As many of the more accessible cuts have already been made, there will be an increasing need to take a deeper and more fundamental look at how policing should be delivered in the future.

The response of the PSNI is not dissimilar to many other police forces – to continue with the thrust of existing workforce modernisation initiatives such as *Resource to Risk (R2R)* and *Right people in the Right place at the Right time doing the Right thing (R4)*. It has also continued to do workforce planning, primarily on the basis of short-term affordability in response to a mix of internal and external constraints. Senior management have confirmed that more structured workforce planning occurred through the R2R process and that the recent business transformation initiatives are designed to move this forward. There is however a recognition among some senior managers that tactical pro-rata efficiency cuts have been made in response to recent efficiency plans.

The key results achieved by the PSNI in 2012 include increased public confidence, falling crime rates, improved detection rates and better visibility through the deployment of more officers to front line policing roles – 600 officers were allocated to frontline policing in the Districts with most need. These are notable achievements in a period of major change and as budgets continue to contract.

¹ PSNI pension costs are comparatively high due in part to the Patten Change Programme.



But it is accepted that this is not an end point – the nature of current and future challenges in terms of efficiency cuts and public needs and expectations for policing require ongoing evolution and change to sustain and improve on current performance. Realising the vision and priorities of the Chief Constable requires an openness and commitment to more fundamental reforms, and the capacity to learn from and lead on best practice within and outside of policing. Delivering the Strategic Principles of the Policing Plan 2012-15, through stated initiatives such as demand modelling, the review of the operational policing model and the implementation of new technology such as the resource management and decision support system is a key part of delivering on this vision.

A starting point in any assessment of workforce reform is its strategic context including how these priorities are set and delivered. The current *People Strategy* became operational in 2010 and was intended to last for up to 10 years. It was developed in the context of austerity but was not linked to the financial plans of the PSNI and preceded the CSR. The views of police officers and staff, two years into its implementation, were mixed. While some, including senior management, stated that it represented and facilitated the broad strategic direction of travel for the Service, others considered it to be lacking in detail and not having enough relevance to their work.

The criticism around a lack of detail relates to the fact that the enabling documents such as the Medium Term Resource Plan and PSNI Governance arrangements, which senior management claim are critical to an understanding of the overall approach, are not mentioned in or linked to the strategy. For example, the promotion of a ‘mixed economy’ workforce is highlighted in the strategy, but its scope and manner of its implementation, through the use of managed services as an example, is largely absent. The strategy may have provided increased flexibility to decision makers, but it has also raised concerns amongst some staff and their representative bodies about a lack of consultation and shared understanding of the way forward. It is recommended that the review arrangements for the *People Strategy* should seek to integrate all of the relevant strategic and planning documentation including a delivery plan on how each objective will be achieved. The strategic assumptions should also be updated.

One of the biggest challenges for the PSNI is to better match its resources to current and projected demands for its services. This is becoming increasingly important as existing resources are stretched and many of the more accessible cuts such as the recruitment and promotion freezes have already been implemented. The Chief Constable has acknowledged that current recruitment and promotion policies are not sustainable in the longer term as the average age of the workforce approaches 40 years and new challenges emerge. A decision to re-start recruitment has been approved.

The Service, like its comparator police forces, must consider new ways of delivering efficiency whilst protecting the quality of its services. The more progressive forces in England and Wales are currently incorporating a demand modelling approach into their core business processes which assesses demands across all parts of their business (i.e. pan business) and then uses that level of data to re-align existing structures and resources i.e. a policing service shaped by the needs of the community rather than internal requirements. Inspectors welcome the commencement of demand and resources modelling within the Districts and recommend that this approach should now be applied across the whole organisation. It has potential to better inform decision-making across a range of issues such as the resourcing of the Districts, the funding and allocation of resources for specialist functions (e.g. within Crime Operations, Roads Policing), future forensic science needs, policing public disorder and any realignment of shift patterns.

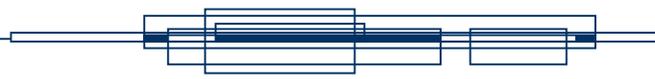


A second priority is the need for PSNI to further develop its workforce planning to better align with its longer-term strategic priorities. Effective workforce planning has been impeded by a number of constraints, principally the difficulties of managing the high turnover of police officers as a result of Patten severance programme and the resulting entry of new officers and police staff. This placed considerable pressures on many parts of the Service and contributed to a short-term approach to workforce planning, best demonstrated by the prolonged use of temporary associate staff. The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) found that the use of temporary staff did fill immediate skill gaps and could be justified under value for money, but it failed to be properly controlled and managed until 2011. It also had some negative implications for succession planning within the Service. The Chief Constable has accepted that a firmer corporate grip could have reduced the risks around this issue. On a broader level and with a view to future workforce planning, Inspectors would wish to see a stronger focus on skills and knowledge development within the PSNI including a clearer understanding of how succession planning will be implemented.

The Chief Constable has stated that the current four year CSR, which has led to a four-year Efficiency Plan in the PSNI, offers the potential to develop better workforce planning. There is however little scope for multi-year resourcing in that the PSNI, in common with other public sector bodies in Northern Ireland, does not have the flexibility to carry forward resources for example, any additional efficiency savings. This is different to forces in England and Wales which can use a strategic reserve and have access to local funding. This lack of financial flexibility inhibits medium to longer term workforce planning and provides little organisational incentive to deliver additional efficiency savings. The next CSR should be an opportunity for both the PSNI and the Department of Justice (DoJ) to seriously consider the scope to introduce increased flexibility for example, a strategic reserve and partnerships.

Comparing or benchmarking the performance of the PSNI with other police forces and indeed other public bodies is a necessary element of identifying good practice and areas for improvement. Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) strongly supports the current work being undertaken in this regard, as part of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Value for Money (VfM) inspections and also within a recent PSNI commissioned consultancy report. Inspectors would stress the need to define and quantify the parts of the business which are more unique to Northern Ireland (i.e. mainly the work on security), which will facilitate a more valid comparison of other costs. A PSNI estimate in 2010 put security at about 34% (£274 million) of the resource budget – this excludes about £50 million per annum from the specific security budget. Inspectors would encourage PSNI to undertake a more detailed costing project as part of any benchmarking work.

Any comparison of costs will need to consider the implications of a process of civilianisation which has proceeded at a slower pace compared to most forces in England and Wales, though notably more advanced than An Garda Síochána. PSNI figures show that about one quarter of the workforce was civilian staff compared to close to one third across England and Wales. Whilst this proportion has not changed in over 10 years, the nature of the roles has evolved (i.e. a move away from administrative roles towards front line operational). There are however increasing pressures on the civilianisation of employed staff as a result of austerity with more severe cuts to civilian graded roles already evident across PSNI. This is likely to continue into the next CSR period. At the same time, civilianisation in the form of managed services is likely to grow and become a more important part of service delivery. It should therefore be subject to strengthened contract management arrangements including the monitoring of equality and diversity issues.



The benefits of civilianisation, such as a better matching of skills to organisational needs, a re-deployment of police officers to front line operational roles and long-term cost savings can be demonstrated in functions such as scientific support services, file preparation and submission and call management. There have however been a number of road blocks caused in part, by the response to efficiency (i.e. easier to cut civilian roles), resistance to the civilianisation of some roles (for example, dispatch functions in call management), reverse civilianisation and a lack of uptake on roles already graded as civilian.

The close comparators with England and Wales means that benchmarking offers opportunities to identify real cost savings. Areas of note include a comparison of ranks and grades. The PSNI achieved savings through a rank ratio review a few years ago and there is scope to apply a similar process for civilian staff in view of the increased proportion of senior grade staff since 2002. The grading of temporary posts, filled by associate staff, also showed evidence of grade inflation in the NIAO report.

The future success of policing in Northern Ireland is dependent on an organisation which can respond effectively and efficiently to changing levels of demand. The PSNI can be guided in this endeavour by a willingness to openly engage with its staff and stakeholders to learn from past experiences and adopt best practice, where appropriate. Sustaining and building upon current achievements will also require a closer partnership with other criminal justice organisations so that limited resources are best deployed in areas such as criminal justice diversions, file quality, court attendance and fine enforcement. The proposed criminal justice reforms around 'speedy justice', which are strongly promoted by the PSNI, have the potential to release significant savings in resource intensive areas while planning for the utilisation of shared facilities should also be progressed.



Recommendations and Areas for Improvement

1. The review arrangements for the *People Strategy* should seek to integrate all of the relevant strategic and planning documentation including a delivery plan on how each objective will be achieved. The strategic assumptions should also be updated (paragraph 2.12).
2. The managed services contract should be subject to rigorous management to ensure that key performance indicators are delivered and no additional costs are borne by the PSNI. The PSNI should ensure that equality and diversity is monitored (paragraph 3.13).
3. Demand modelling should be implemented on a pan-business approach within the PSNI (paragraph 3.25).
4. The PSNI and the DoJ should consider the scope to introduce increased flexibility for example a strategic reserve as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (paragraph 3.36).
5. Longer term workforce planning should be strengthened in the PSNI with a stronger focus on utilising good practice. This should include the implementation of effective succession planning to address ongoing skills and knowledge gaps (paragraph 3.42).
6. The PSNI should define and categorise its spending on national security (paragraph 3.44).
7. The PSNI should benchmark all of its departments and functions with other comparable police forces and then utilise this information to reconfigure its services and appropriate level of resources (paragraph 3.64).

Section



Inspection report

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction and structure



- 1.1 This report on human resource allocation and management is a forward looking inspection in that it is focused on improving the delivery of policing in the PSNI through the better use of its most significant resource – its people. It does however take account of the effectiveness and efficiency of past and current approaches to workforce modernisation and its impact on current performance. It also takes account of some external issues, which were beyond the direct control of the PSNI. The Terms of Reference for the inspection are included as an appendix to the report.
- 1.2 The PSNI budget for 2012-13 was £1.2 billion. A breakdown of expenditure for 2011-12 showed that payroll (police officers and staff) accounted for £538 million, which represented 46% of resource spend. Total staff costs, which included related expenditure accounted for over 80% of the annual resource spend – this included 24% of resource spending on police pensions which was relatively higher than any comparator police force in England and Wales.
- 1.3 The policing budget has been augmented by a temporary budget of £245 million (about £60 million per annum) to deal with the additional costs of the security threat. This is funded by HM Treasury and the Northern Ireland Executive and is primarily allocated to workforce related expenditure such as additional police officer posts, temporary associate staff and overtime payments. It has funded 260 police officers and 100 civilian staff (including 76 associate staff) as of March 2012. The availability of this additional funding has helped to protect other parts of the policing service, which would have faced more severe cuts in view of the high security threat.
- 1.4 The actual strength of the PSNI workforce was 6,979 police officers, 540 part-time officers and 2,366 civilian support staff in January 2013.² Police staff (civilians) accounted for 24% of the overall composition of the workforce. In addition, the Service had over 400 temporary associate staff. The managed services contract has proposed a range of services and hours which PSNI has estimated to equate to be the equivalent of 687 posts. The Service can also draw upon more specialist consultancy and staff substitution services for a range of assignments.³
- 1.5 One of the most significant developments within the public sector has been the increasing use of the private sector to deliver services that were previously undertaken by public servants. It is known as outsourcing or managed services and involves the transfer of service delivery to private companies in return for an agreed fee (contract). The range of managed services within policing has expanded from generic services such as cleaning and estate security to include new functional areas such as call handling – these posts have been re-classified as police staff. This ‘mixed economy’ model now forms a key element of the current PSNI workforce strategy.

² *Strength of Police Service Statistics*, PSNI website, February 2013

³ CJI has published two separate inspection reports on *Improving Procurement in the Criminal Justice System* (2007) and *The Use of Consultants by the Criminal Justice System* (2010) which have covered these issues in some detail for all the criminal justice organisations.



Context for workforce reform

- 1.6 The past decade has seen a radical transformation of the policing landscape with resulting changes in the size and composition of the PSNI. The PSNI is still notably different from other police organisations in England and Wales - a Home Office staffing model of comparable geographical areas and population indicated a service of around 4,300 officers and 1,700 civilians i.e. 62% of current police officers and 72% of current police staff. A HMIC 20:20 report suggested a service of 6,028 officers in 2007. A later review by HMIC in 2010 agreed a service of 7,271.
- 1.7 Ongoing bespoke work by HMIC on VfM has found that the PSNI workforce costs significantly more than any comparable force in England and Wales. The costs per police officer are significantly more expensive than the average in England and Wales. The use of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in England and Wales (10% of all police officers) has certainly reduced their comparative costs relative to the PSNI. Police staff costs in the PSNI are also higher than the average for England and Wales, though the difference is much less than comparative figures for police officers. Non staff costs are nearly three times more expensive than the average cost per head of population in England and Wales, much of which has been attributed to the extra security costs such as an armoured fleet of vehicles and landrovers.⁴
- 1.8 There is little doubt that the security threat and legacy issues such as the re-investigation of historical cases from the Troubles, continue to place a noteworthy demand on the resources of the PSNI. A PSNI review and analysis in 2010 found that security constituted about 34% (£274 million) of the overall resource budget.⁵ It found that 43% of police officer payroll expenditure was dedicated to security duties and functions compared to 28% of police staff payroll. The ongoing commitment to the policing of contested parades and demonstrations also places additional pressures on the Service, as was demonstrated again during 2012⁶ and again in late 2012/early 2013.
- 1.9 The relatively high cost of the PSNI can also be linked to the nature of its staff transformation programme - going from an organisation of nearly 16,000 personnel in 1999 to one that employs just under 10,000 in 2012. This reduction in the strength of PSNI was counter to the broader trend in the United Kingdom (UK) and Republic of Ireland where police and staff numbers had significantly increased over the same period.
- 1.10 It must however be noted that much of the change in terms of overall numbers had been achieved in the early years (the Patten Commission recommendation of 7,500 regular officers was achieved in 2004). A typical police force would also have seen a considerable turnover of staff, including leavers during this period. An analysis of leavers in the period 2005-09 showed that 25% had left for reasons other than the severance programme.⁷ The PSNI have told Inspectors that managing the leavers and achieving a more representative workforce remained key challenges. Inspectors would add that one of the main challenges in the later years would appear to be one of skills development and succession planning.
- 1.11 In other ways the PSNI shares many characteristics with other police forces, especially in England and Wales. Most of its policies, standards and processes, which govern the allocation and use of its resources, are based on those in England and Wales. This is strengthened by common leadership (i.e.

4 HMIC has conducted a Value for Money Profile of all forces in England and Wales which included an analysis of workforce expenditure and revenue. A similar exercise was commissioned by PSNI and was underway during the course of this inspection. A final report was due to be completed in early 2013.

5 *Outline costing for current expenditure on security within PSNI*, PSNI, 2010.

6 Data provided to the Policing Board by PSNI shows that it cost £7.4 million to police parades and associated public disorder from April to September 2012 inclusive.

7 Freedom of Information Request, PSNI, F-2010-01631



Association of Chief Police Officers – ACPO), similar career development and pay and pensions arrangements for its employees. The approach of successive United Kingdom (UK) governments on reform of policing, including the implementation of the CSRs and VfM, also applied in Northern Ireland. The strategic direction within the PSNI has been to mirror, or slightly amend, most policing developments from England and Wales in areas such as civilianisation, outsourcing/managed services and the increasing emphasis on front line operational policing.

- 1.12 Despite the decreasing size of its workforce, the PSNI had an expanding policing budget in line with all other police forces in the UK and Ireland – a budget of £652 million in 2001 had grown to £1,200 million in 2011-12, though a significant proportion related to higher than average pension costs. The PSNI, like all other police forces, must now also deal with the implications of austerity, which requires cumulative savings of £135 million in its budget over four years to March 2015. This is an actual reduction of £48 million (6.3%) in the resource budget over the four years. The reduction is just less than 15% in real terms. HMIC has assessed that any cuts above 15% would require transformational change. PSNI is on track to achieve its current CSR financial targets, helped in part by higher than projected number of leavers.
- 1.13 The PSNI staffing scenario until 2015 indicates that affordability, at a time of reducing resources, can be achieved mainly through natural wastage, some re-structuring of services and the increased use of a mixed economy model (for example, a larger managed services contract). Making provisions for a staffing scenario beyond 2015 is more problematic due to uncertainty around the nature and length of the next CSR as well as the lack of detail at

present on the likely implementation of reports such as the Winsor⁸ reviews on pay and conditions and the Hutton⁹ report on public sector pensions. The PSNI have stated that scenarios have been developed beyond 2015 and considered by the Resourcing Forum and the Risk, Demand and Resourcing Committee.

Structure and resources

- 1.14 The organisational structure of PSNI has changed significantly over the past decade in response to the recommendations of the Patten Commission and ongoing internal reviews and re-alignments. The most recent major re-alignment took place on the back of an internal strategic review of the organisation in 2009.
- 1.15 A breakdown of each department, including its functions and available human resources is provided in this chapter. It is based on data provided by the PSNI in April 2012. An organisational structure (map) is provided in Appendix 2. The Service can be split between three main functions: Headquarters which had 2,501 police officers (7% under establishment), District Policing Command including regional command which had 252 police officers (23% over establishment) and Urban and Rural Districts which had 4,320 police officers (3% over establishment) in April 2012 – establishment refers to funded posts in the organisation while under establishment equates to vacancies. A small number of additional police officers were attached to Service Overhead. The equivalent breakdown for police staff was 1,625 in Headquarters (7% under establishment), 172 in District Policing Command (1% over establishment) and 496 in the Districts (1% over establishment). Gaps in resources and skills in the civilian posts have been generally filled though security and external funding budgets.

⁸ The two Winsor reports on police officer and staff pay and conditions in England and Wales included a number of recommendations which could deliver efficiency savings such as the possible withdrawal of Special Priority Payments and Competency Related Threshold Payments. The last report was published in March 2012. The DoJ and Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) have been considering the way forward for the PSNI since the failure to agree was lodged at negotiations in July 2011.

⁹ *Independent Public Service Pensions Report: Final Report*, March 2011



Command

- 1.16 The Command Department comprises four distinct functions: Command/Departmental Staff, the Legal Services Department, the Historical Enquiry Team (HET) and Media. The Command Secretariat and Departmental Staff functions had eight police officers (including the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables) together with 20 police staff.
- 1.17 The Legal Services Branch had one superintendent¹⁰, 28 police staff and 32 temporary agency staff – it is headed by a civilian lawyer. The Branch has grown considerably in recent years in response to a major spike in demand for legal services – much of this related to the thousands of hearing loss litigation cases brought against the Service by retired and serving police officers and the work associated with legacy work and public inquiries. The resourcing model employed by the Service to deal with these demands was the subject of a recent CJI inspection report on legal services across the criminal justice system.¹¹
- 1.18 The HET was created in 2005 reporting to the Chief Constable. It is a completely civilianised unit of the PSNI with operational independence for conducting re-examinations of older (pre-Belfast Agreement of 1998) unsolved crimes, attributable to ‘The Troubles’. It has 132 staff divided across nine teams. The reliance on associate staff for administrative roles is being reduced in favour of more employed permanent staff. Most of its staff are former police officers, drawn from Great Britain (GB) forces and some from the PSNI, for their investigative skills and experience. The HET had intended to complete its case load by May 2014, though this is likely to require some revisions.

Media and Public Relations

- 1.19 The Media and Public Relations/Corporate Communications Department has no police officers. It had 24 police staff and 4 associate staff in April 2012. This is a reduction of 3 staff from 2011.

Professional Standards

- 1.20 The Professional Standards Department was under-going a process of re-structuring at the time of this inspection. It had 35 police officers (31 in Operations) and 21 police staff in April 2012 and had received new functions from the Service Improvement Department. The Professional Standards Department was subsequently transferred in whole to the Service Improvement Department. This forms part of the wider service improvement regime which aims to develop and improve consistent standards across the Service. The problems associated with file quality in the PSNI have been covered in some detail by a number of CJI reports on Avoidable Delay.¹²

Crime Operations

- 1.21 The Crime Operations Department was established in March 2004 with responsibility for the investigation of all serious and organised crimes including national security. This was in line with the Patten Commission which recommended a merger of Crime Branch and Special Branch under a single unified command. The Department is now split into five functional areas: Intelligence, Organised Crime, Serious Crime, Specialist Operations and Scientific Support. All of the branches are headed by a Chief Superintendent except for Scientific Support¹³. The overall composition of Crime Operations, as of April 2012, was 1,292 police officers, 532 police staff and 185 temporary agency staff.

¹⁰ The Superintendent post was temporary and has been redeployed.

¹¹ *Use of Legal Services by the Criminal Justice System*, CJI, June 2011

¹² *Avoidable Delay*, CJI, May 2006; *Avoidable Delay*, CJI, June 2010; *Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report*, CJI, June 2012.

¹³ The post of head of Scientific Support was unfilled at the time of inspection. A senior police officer was allocated as head on an interim basis.



- 1.22 The largest branch within Crime Operations is Intelligence which includes the Analysis Centre. As of April 2012, it had 546 police officers, 146 police staff and 66 associate workers – 31 of the associate workers were funded from short-term security/external funding.
- 1.23 The Serious Crime Branch had 333 police officers, 101 police staff and 81 agency workers (41 funded by the security grant). Many of its officers are deployed in its eight Major Investigation Teams (MIT). It has access to 21% of all associate staff, all of whom were ex-police officers often with a detective background.
- 1.24 The Specialist Operations Branch had 247 police officers, 22 police staff and 27 temporary associate workers. In addition, the head of the Branch confirmed that an additional 33 police officer posts were funded through security funding. The remit of the Branch is to provide specialist skills and capacity across the Service in areas such as surveillance, specialist firearms, command and control for specialist operations, air support unit, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and the under cover unit.
- 1.25 The Scientific Support Services Branch has been transformed over a decade from a predominantly police led function to one that is now staffed by specialist police staff. It has 176 police staff and eight agency staff. The evolution of the Branch has been covered by a number of joint CJI/HMIC inspection reports and reviews.¹⁴ It has also been targeted as an area for improvement under the new business transformation programme initiated by the PSNI as a result of work commissioned by the PSNI.
- 1.26 The smallest Branch is Organised Crime with 126 police officers, 30 police staff and one associate (i.e. property manager). The work of the Branch is targeted at high end criminality and includes criminal and financial investigations into drugs gangs, human

trafficking, smuggling, fuel laundering etc. The Branch deals with 30-40 investigations at any one time and is aware of at least 130 crime gangs – this has increased from about 70 gangs a decade ago. Organised Crime, along with Dissident Republicans, are the two strategic priorities in the Service's Strategic Assessment.¹⁵

Service Improvement

- 1.27 The Service Improvement Department has been going through a process of significant re-structuring over the past few years. The name of the Department was changed from Criminal Justice in May 2012. The extent of this re-structuring makes comparisons in resource allocation and deployment more problematic. The Department had 43 police officers, 97 staff and 38 agency workers in 2011. This had increased to 94 police officers and 261 staff in 2012 – the number of associate workers had been reduced to just four. The main factor in the increased resource has been the establishment of a justice management section which included the transfer of the Occurrence and Case Management Teams (OCMT) from the Districts. One of the largest functions, call management, was not included in the April 2012 resource profile. The strategic direction and delivery of contact management has been the subject of a recent CJI report.¹⁶
- 1.28 The re-structuring of the OCMTs has taken place in the context of the Speedy Justice initiative, which has focused on the need to improve the quality and timeliness of files sent to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). The function accounted for 62 police officers, 162 police staff and two agency workers in April 2012. Back in 2009, the OCMTs had 210 police officers. The current four-year efficiency plan does not envisage any significant change in the composition of the OCMTs over the next few years with the number of police officers expected to remain the same.

14 A Review of Scientific Support Services in the PSNI, CJI/HMIC, December 2005 and subsequent follow-up reviews in August 2007, May 2008 and October 2009.

15 Strategic Assessment Review, PSNI, April 2012

16 Answering the Call: Police Service of Northern Ireland Contact Management, CJI, June 2012.



Finance and Support Services

- 1.29 The Finance and Support Services Department includes a range of finance functions as well as estates, procurement, Information and Communication Services (ICS) and transport. It is a larger department than many of its counterparts in other police forces due to the need for more secure and confidential systems such as communications. While it is a largely civilian function, headed by a Director of Finance, it had two Inspectors allocated to ICS and four Constables working on procurement and logistical services in April 2012.¹⁷ The bulk of the staff (443) are civilian employees, who are assisted by 14 associate staff (11 in ICS).
- 1.30 The transfer of ICS from the Operational Support Department has increased the size of the Department by 171 permanent staff (ICS had 183 staff in 2011). Most of the branches have less staff in 2012 compared to the previous year: ICS, transport, pay and pensions and estate services. There was a small increase in staffing in some functions.

Human Resources

- 1.31 The work of the Human Resources (HR) Department is central to the issues covered in this inspection. The function is split between the centre (the Department) and each of the Districts. Central HR has responsibility for the development and implementation of the *People Strategy* and workforce planning with resources split between departmental staff, Occupational Health and Welfare (OHW), Personnel and the Police College. Departmental staff comprises two police officers together with 20 police staff – the most senior being the Director of Human Resources. Neither OHW nor Personnel had any police officers. OHW had 37 police staff and Personnel had 45 police staff in April 2012. The Police College had 161 police officers, 115 staff and one agency worker in April 2012 compared to 166 police officers, 124 staff and nine agency workers in April 2011. The number of staff has decreased as recruitment has been frozen. Training and development of

existing staff continues.

Operational Support

- 1.32 The Operational Support Department comprises seven branches - Operations, Operational Support, Close Protection Unit, Events, Information Assurance Unit, Data Protection and Freedom of Information (FOI) and Statistics Branch. The branch has changed significantly since the inspection fieldwork. As of April 2013 there were 697 police officers, 32 police staff and three associate staff in Operations which is the largest branch in the Department containing the Tactical Support Group (TSG) and Road and Armed Support Unit (RASU). Operational Support contains the Security Branch, Operational Policy, Conflict Management, Emergency Planning functions and is comprised of 19 police officers, four police staff and four associate staff. The Close Protection Unit has 119 police officers and Events has 13 police officers and four associate staff. The Information Assurance Unit is comprised of one police officer and 11 police staff. Data Protection and FOI have one police officer, nine police staff and one associate staff member. Central Statistics has 13 police staff.

District Policing Command

- 1.33 District Policing Command comprised 245 police officers, 169 police staff and 30 temporary associate staff in April 2012. The number of police officers (Constables) was significantly over establishment at the time of the inspection. Most of the police officers and staff are attached to contact management.

Districts

- 1.34 There are eight Districts split between Urban and Rural command. The allocation of officers within each District is divided between response, neighbourhood and Crime Investigation Department (CID). The number of response and neighbourhood officers has increased in the period from 2009 to 2011

¹⁷ All police officers, except one Sergeant have since been redeployed.



while District CID has remained static. A review of police officer staffing within the regions shows that the largest District in terms of resources was 'E' District (731), followed by 'G' (587) and 'A' (562). The smallest number of police officers was allocated to 'H' (393). The Districts had an over establishment of about 2% in April 2012.

- 1.35 The number of civilian staff based in the Districts is split between 264 in Urban and 231 in Rural and ranges from 57 in 'A' to 71 in 'D'. The Districts had an over establishment of 1% in April. The number of police staff was significantly reduced on the previous year. The number of temporary associate staff (14) attached to the Districts was considerably less than the previous years.
- 1.36 A recent trend has been the sharing of resources between certain Districts on civilian roles such as Head of Business Services and Head of Human Resources (e.g. 'E' and 'F' Districts). This reverses a previous trend in which each District had their own separate HR and business management teams. A process of developing a centre of excellence or hub is ongoing which will further rationalise the number of posts across the organisation.

Other

- 1.37 The PSNI has a number of other commitments, outside its main departments, which require an allocation of police officer and civilian staff resources. This included the staff associations (four police officers and six police staff). The 10 officers including four Inspectors who were on the high potential development scheme in 2011 have been moved to permanent substantive posts in 2012. The number of student officers (pending allocation) was 238 in April 2011 but just three one year later due to the freeze on recruitment. There were also 34 officers and 44 staff on long-term career breaks and 12 officers and four civilians on secondments outside of the Service. The latter would appear to offer some flexibility in terms of filling some current vacancies and skill gaps.

CHAPTER 2:

Strategy and governance

Strategic context

- 2.1 The strategic intent of the PSNI in relation to the best utilisation of its workforce is outlined in the vision of the Chief Constable for the finest personal, professional and protective police service in the world.¹⁸ Personal policing includes a commitment to reducing anti-social behaviour and the level of crime. Professional policing encompasses many of the workforce modernisation issues such as policing with the community (for example, more time on patrol), value for money (for example, better workforce mix) and reducing bureaucracy (for example, less time on paperwork). Protective policing is focused on tackling serious and organised crime.
- 2.2 The PSNI has five Strategic Principles incorporated into the *Policing Plan 2012-15* – one is specifically focused, ‘in terms of resources and time, on making sure that we have the right people in the right place to prevent harm, protect you and inspire confidence in us’. There is also a focus on a responsive and flexible round the clock service and to challenge the set ways of doing things. The *Policing Plan 2012-15* includes a number of priority initiatives as part of continuous improvement which impact on the use of the workforce. This includes demand modelling, modernising the workforce, review of the operational policing model and resource management and decision support system.
- 2.3 The commitment to demand modelling in the Policing Plan is to develop a model to better understand the nature and extent of the demand for the police and then to use this information to make sure that the right number of officers with the right skills are in place to meet this demand. This was scheduled to be delivered by March 2013. Modernising the workforce is defined as making the best use of the workforce and mix of skills, efficient structures and processes, and use of technology, against what is affordable for this CSR period. It has a timeline of March 2015.
- 2.4 The *People Strategy* is the means of linking the delivery of the strategic priorities to the Human Resources policies and practices with the aim of improving organisational performance. It became operational in 2010, after it was approved by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), and was intended to last up to 10 years. The Chief Constable has summarised the *People Strategy* as ‘the Right people in the Right places at the Right times, doing the Right things in partnership for the public’. The strategy is relatively short and focused on top level principles and objectives. It is grounded on a number of strategic assumptions.
- 2.5 The first strategic assumption refers to the policing delivery model which mentions policing with the community as the primary approach to service delivery (taking the political and security environments into consideration). It also refers to greater visibility, proactive policing, and better matching of resources to risks and demands. The actual delivery model is clearly aimed towards the greater use of more ‘mixed economy’ teams and use of managed services and outsourcing.

¹⁸ *The Policing Plan 2012-2015*, The Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2012.



- 2.6 A second strategic assumption deals with funding with the central premise that budgets must be balanced and that affordability will determine what can, and should be achieved in terms of workforce reform. The expenditure profile, including how affordability would work in practice, was subsequently outlined in the four-year efficiency plan. The separation between the finance and people strategies was identified as a risk for the delivery of efficiency savings in an external assessment of the Efficiency Plan.
- 2.7 The strategic assumption on headcount is as expected linked to affordability with the proposition that efficiencies can be delivered through natural wastage, minimal recruitment and reductions in other areas of expenditure. A more detailed options analysis would have provided scope to explore other resourcing options – while such options have been discussed internally by the PSNI, they have not been outlined or incorporated into any strategic document.
- 2.8 The *People Strategy* also includes two strategic assumptions on organisational structure and development – no significant changes in the District structure and a commitment to better align organisational design to corporate priorities. There is little detail in the Strategy or supporting/linked documentation on how organisational design might be changed. The response of the Service to the findings of a newly commissioned report on affordability and business transformation has superseded this assumption.
- 2.9 The internal PSNI strategic review in 2009 found that there was limited understanding of the ‘Vision’ of policing, organisational priorities and how these influenced and supported officers and staff at the point of service delivery.¹⁹ The review, which had a five-year time span, identified a concentration of four areas, all of which have a relevance to the workforce: achieving integrated governance, having the flexibility to reconfigure resources, delivering quality of service, and valuing and developing our staff. This included delivering a better match of organisational supply to community demand. It also proposed a costed ‘roadmap’ of alternative staffing configurations.
- 2.10 The *People Strategy* does provide a number of indicators and outcomes, which are used by the Service to measure its performance. The indicators of success are: public confidence in policing, victim confidence, visibility, reported crime rates and detection rates. The outcomes, which are broader and longer-term include: a workforce that is reflective of society and deployed to deliver the strategic principles; that has the skills and necessary experience, whose personnel are valued and motivated and which delivers value for money. These are the types of indicators and performance outcomes which would be expected in a people or workforce strategy. There is however little information on how these outcomes can be achieved. For example, key objectives such as ‘to match all police officers to policing demand’ and ‘to have an effective approach to succession planning based on identified critical posts’ would have benefited from further exploration in the strategy or supporting documentation. The PSNI has told CJJ that it does have a mechanism in place, through the HR Monitoring Framework, to review the measures of the strategy every four months. Matching police officers to demand is monitored by the Risk, Demand and Resourcing (RDR) Committee every three months.
- 2.11 The views of police officers (mainly District Commanders and heads of Branches) and police staff on the value of the Strategy were mixed, with some stating that it provided the necessary strategic direction whilst others stated that it lacked detail and had limited impact on broader HR issues. Some were more critical in that the Strategy ‘didn’t get much purchase’ and therefore had little impact on the more complex elements of civilianisation such as call management. A senior police officer commented that central

¹⁹ *The Strategic Review 2009: Making Choices for the Future*, PSNI, 2009.



HR should have been provided with a clearer strategic direction on the best use of the workforce (i.e. from the Service Executive Team), which in turn would have informed the *People Strategy*. The Director of HR is a member of the Service Executive Team.

- 2.12 Inspectors recommend that **the review arrangements for the People Strategy should seek to integrate all of the relevant strategic and planning documentation including a delivery plan on how each objective will be achieved. The strategic assumptions should also be updated.**

Governance

- 2.13 The governance structures for the delivery of the PSNI workforce priorities are incorporated into the overall corporate model. The top level governance is provided by the RDR Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and has responsibility for the delivery of the *People Strategy*. The two main HR priorities of the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable in the current CSR period are to balance the budget and to maximise operational capability. It is supported by the Efficiency Forum, which has a focus on finance and efficiency and the Resourcing Forum which concentrates on HR issues.²⁰ The next level is the Programmes Boards, such as Service Excellence, which have responsibility to progress strategic objectives and projects such as R4.
- 2.14 The Resourcing Forum, comprised of representatives from across the PSNI business areas and jointly chaired by the Director of HR and an ACC (Rural), was established to ensure that resources matched the overall budget availability. This was determined through challenge meetings with heads of Departments and Branches where bids were examined in the context of available resource and projected demands. The onus was on making reductions as a means of ensuring

affordability and sustainability. The main output of the Forum has been a high level Human Resources Distribution Model, which was used to allocate resources across the Service. It has also developed affordable headcount scenarios.

- 2.15 Members of the Service Executive Team have told Inspectors that this process is working well and that it has led to the development of four future staffing scenarios for the workforce. Issues discussed over the past year include the design of the HR Distribution Plan, approval for police selection competitions, redeployments, Detective shortfall, realignment of the Establishment, affordability and the use of temporary workers. A review of the Minutes of the Resourcing Forum in 2012 show considerable discussion devoted to workforce planning within the context of an '*escalating complexity of funding*'.
- 2.16 A review of the minutes of the Resourcing Forum in 2012 has also presented the challenges of managing and allocating resources where bids from Districts and heads of Departments compete with a reduced budget. This can result in 'tactical' pro rata cuts across the Service rather than a planned and structured approach. Members of the Forum have presented senior management within the RDR Committee with some critical corporate risks. These include the risk that in the absence of effective long-term resource planning, staffing may become unaffordable. A related risk is that the reduction in police officers and police staff will adversely affect organisational capability if there is no change to existing working practices.
- 2.17 The NIPB is responsible for the oversight of the PSNI with specific responsibility for the delivery of an effective, efficient, impartial, representative and accountable police service. The Policing Board has a statutory duty on Value for Money under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. It has three committees with a specific interest in workforce issues: Human Resources; Resources and

²⁰ The potential amalgamation of the Efficiency Forum and Resourcing Forum has been raised at the RDR Committee.



Improvement; and Audit and Risk Management. A more streamlined structure is planned for 2013.

- 2.18 The Policing Board has set a number of performance targets in the Policing Plan 2012-15 which are aimed towards maximising the contribution of the workforce in delivering the corporate vision and priorities of the PSNI. These are different to those set by the PSNI in its *People Strategy*. The Policing Board targets are based around the promotion of personal, professional and protective policing. Performance against the relevant targets is assessed in Chapter 4 of this report. The Board has also set a number of qualitative measures which include *'ensure the most effective workforce mix between police officers, police staff and outsourced contracts'* and *'continued implementation of the Four Year Efficiency Plan'*.

CHAPTER 3:

Delivery

Workforce trends

- 3.1 The PSNI was formed in 2001 as the successor to the Royal Ulster Constabulary with a workforce of 14,357 employees (11,133 officers and 3,224 staff). The size of the workforce has shown a constant decline over the past decade – the number of officers had fallen to 8,223 (including part-time) in 2008, while police staff numbers had been reduced to below 3,000 (3,539 when agency staff are included). This contrasted with all other forces in the UK and the Republic of Ireland which had increased their workforces during the same period.
- 3.2 The past four years has seen declining police budgets across the UK and Republic of Ireland, with the result that workforce numbers have declined. Home Office data for the 12 months to September 2012 show that there was a decrease of 2.9% in full-time officers in England and Wales. All police forces, bar one, reduced their total police officer strength over the previous 12 months – the fall in police numbers has been continuous since 2009. An Garda Síochána has also seen a major reduction in police and civilian staff numbers over the past two years in response to a recruitment freeze.
- 3.3 One of the noticeable recent trends has been the disproportional reduction in police staff numbers. While police numbers have declined by 2.9% in England and Wales, the reduction for police staff was 4.9% in the 12 months up to September 2012.²¹ A similar trend was evident in the PSNI where police officer numbers fell by 3% (9% in part-time officers) compared to 10% for police staff. There are a number of factors behind this trend: it is easier to reduce staff posts; phasing out/rationalisation of back office and non-operational roles; ending of short-term contractual arrangements and; increased use of managed services contracts.
- 3.4 The cuts in workforce budgets have led to a commitment by police leaders, including the Chief Constable of the PSNI, to protect front line policing. In addition, the Chief Constable has also provided a reassurance on the resourcing of neighbourhood policing. The result of these commitments has been an extra deployment of 600 officers to front line policing. Most of the additional officers were deployed from other District functions such as file preparation, operational planning, call management, custody and training and development.
- 3.5 At the same time, neighbourhood policing in the Districts has been strengthened by an increase in the number of neighbourhood officers from 552 in 2009 to 700 in 2012. This type of re-deployment of resources has been facilitated by corporate projects such as *Resource to Risk (R2R)*, which involved a review of every post in the PSNI to determine its contribution to the broader policing objectives.

Delivery Model

- 3.6 The Target Operating Model for the delivery of policing is founded on the principle of a 'mixed economy'. This involves the use of employed staff (police officers and civilian staff) in conjunction with the services of the private

²¹ *Police Service Strength, England and Wales, 30 September 2012*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 01/13, 31 January 2013.



sector, through temporary associate staff and managed services. The mixed economy model is applied in all police forces in the UK and Republic of Ireland, though its actual mix varies considerably between police forces.²² The use of the private sector to deliver key policing services, through a managed services contact is now considered standard practice in policing though there are mixed views amongst Chief Constables as to its overall benefits for policing.

- 3.7 The stated benefits of managed services include the introduction of new skills and experiences, the application of new (private sector) approaches and the delivery of efficiency savings. Those opposed to managed services cite the loss of policing skills and expertise, increased risks around resilience (i.e. ability to respond to major events and crisis), low morale amongst employed staff caused by a perceived loss of career development opportunities and longer terms costs (for example, need to re-tender). They also argue that costs will also increase in the short-term as new managed services contracts will not deliver immediate cash savings – indeed, they will incur additional expenditure at the outset.
- 3.8 A number of CJI inspections have looked at the implementation of the mixed economy workforce within PSNI. For example, the Legal Services Branch was inspected as part of a thematic inspection on the use of legal services across the Criminal Justice System.²³ Inspectors reiterated the importance of benchmarking the provision of legal services with other forces including a profile of the relative costs of internal provision vis-à-vis outsourcing to a centralised public sector (Crown Solicitors' Office/Departmental Solicitor's Office) and/or private solicitors and barristers. The continued use of government legal services together with the use of some temporary legal and administrative associate staff appeared to be the most prudent and flexible short-term approach to the spikes in

demand at the time of the inspection. An earlier internal PSNI review of the Legal Services Branch indicated that some, if not most, of the functions of the branch could be provided by government legal services or externally under managed services.

- 3.9 The corporate view of the PSNI (as expressed by the Service Executive Team) is that the managed services approach should be expanded to cover new parts and functions of the business. This view is demonstrated by the size and scope of the newly awarded managed services contract (£150 million over seven years), which brings together existing outsourced functions such as station security, custody suites (Civilian Detention Officers), station enquiry and call handling as well as new areas such as criminal investigation (Assistant Investigators), Fixed Penalty Processing Centre, District Property Management and Postal and Courier Services. It also leaves some scope to consider new areas, though limited by the current financial ceiling of the approved budget and procurement rules on contract variation.
- 3.10 The strongest opposition to managed services and to this contract in particular has come from the largest staff Trade Union (NIPSA). It has been given leave to have a judicial review on the awarding of this contract and argues that the PSNI has acted illegally on the outsourcing of certain functions and does not accept the proposed level of efficiency savings.
- 3.11 A review of the business case for the managed services contract shows that the financial benefits of replacing police officer posts with private sector workers is evident - one police officer is equivalent to 2.59 managed services staff. The benefits of managed services vis-à-vis using civilian employees is more marginal at 1.16 and therefore justified on the basis of other variables such as reduced sick pay and less line management responsibilities. Senior management have told Inspectors that there are significant savings on pensions in the use of

22 Lincolnshire Police has outsourced a wide range of functions to G4S under a 10-year contract. The model is being considered by 10 other police authorities in England and Wales.

23 *Use of Legal Services by the Criminal Justice System*, CJI, June 2011.



managed services as well as temporary associate staff. Police managers are also reluctant to make long-term investments (i.e. 35 years) in permanent staff and have also cited difficulties in recruitment/deployment in certain parts of Northern Ireland.

- 3.12 With the view that managed services will continue to be a key part of the delivery model for policing, Inspectors would want to see a strengthened approach to contract management to ensure that projected benefits are realised and that any cost overruns are minimised. There is also an obligation, in the view of CJI, that the PSNI should be more proactive on monitoring the impact of managed services and the use of temporary staff on diversity and equality across the service.
- 3.13 The growing importance of managed services as a means of delivering key policing services as well as efficiency savings requires a robust corporate approach to contract management. Inspectors have been told that the PSNI have been trying to improve the quality of contract management through training and development. It is recommended that **the managed services contract should be subject to rigorous management to ensure that key performance indicators are delivered and no additional costs are borne by the PSNI. The PSNI should ensure that equality and diversity is monitored.**
- 3.14 The financial benefits of the managed services contract are also likely to be longer term as increased expenditure does not deliver immediate cashable savings (i.e. police/staff numbers are not reduced in tandem with additional inputs of managed services). There is also an onus on management to better explain the scope of the managed services contract to its staff, including any implications for career progression. Extending managed services to other functions such as HR and Finance may be an option in the future. The latter two function areas are also likely to change with the

increased use of shared services across government and the public sector.

- 3.15 Representatives of the largest staff Trade Union have told Inspectors that current police staff have been disadvantaged in terms of reduced career development and promotion opportunities, while the PSNI as a whole will have increased risks in terms of sustainable skills and capacity. The position of the PSNI management is that the use of managed services presents medium to longer term efficiency savings, will lead to greater flexibility in terms of the use of human resources and that existing police staff will not be disadvantaged. Management have confirmed that no staff will be subject to a Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE) to the private sector providers.²⁴ There is also a commitment that there will be no compulsory redundancies in the current CSR period.

Demand modelling

- 3.16 The ability to better match available resources to current and future demands for policing services is a key determinant of workforce effectiveness and efficiency. Much of the effort in recent years has been on the supply side i.e. reviewing and re-deploying internal structures and resources in projects such as R2R and R4. The PSNI, in common with most police forces, has been slow in establishing the systems and processes to better understand and profile its type and levels of current and future demands. HMIC has found that many forces in England and Wales are finding it difficult to assess their policing demands. Similarly An Garda Síochána Inspectorate found the force was unable to match resources to demands.²⁵
- 3.17 The recent experience from England and Wales, as reported by HMIC, was that all forces were doing demand analysis (i.e. frequency, times and demand for specific services) as a means of better informing

²⁴ Two thirds of civilian staff working for Lincolnshire Police transferred to G4S in April 2012 as part of a 10-year outsourcing contract.

²⁵ *Resource allocation*, Garda Síochána Inspectorate, 2009. It stated that 'in the absence of systems to measure and manage Garda workload and officer availability, the Garda Síochána cannot achieve close matching of Garda resources to demands for police services'.



decisions on re-structuring and best use of shift patterns.²⁶ This included the shifting of resources from response functions to neighbourhood policing as well as work on investigation departments and public protection services. The more progressive police forces have applied a pan-business approach (i.e. applying the model to the maximum departments/functions of the organisation), which facilitates a broader discussion and consensus around the allocation and management of the whole budget and helps to develop a shared view around sensitive issues such as organisational/structural re-alignment and a reallocation of resources.

- 3.18 The PSNI has recognised the importance of better demand profiling, as it was advocated in its own internal strategic review and is an objective of the subsequent *People Strategy* and the four year Efficiency Plan. It is also a priority in the *Policing Plan*. Meetings with District Commanders, heads of Branch and other senior officers have also indicated their desire for a more informed analysis of demands as a means of improved HR/workforce planning.
- 3.19 The PSNI approach to date has been cautious and incremental. It has asked the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) for specialist advice and has commissioned a university to gather and assess statistical research leading to the development and implementation of a Police Operations Decision Support System. The work is primarily focused on District Policing starting with response, then neighbourhood and with a possible inclusion of CID.²⁷ There are no plans at this stage to extend the approach beyond the Districts. The main outputs will be a demand model (to predict demand), a supply model (to represent resources) and the development of optional deployment models.
- 3.20 The main benefit of the demands analysis within the Districts is that it should facilitate a shift away from incremental budgeting towards

a human resourcing model based on current and projected demands. The historical incremental budgeting system has been in place since the establishment of the eight Districts which, in turn, was based on the resourcing of the earlier 29 District structure. This has meant that most District Commanders have been unable to demonstrate whether their current number of police officers and staff is the right number – the primary focus has been on retaining existing resources in line with the establishment (budget) numbers. CJI Inspectors found that some forms of demand projections have been undertaken within the Districts but that there was no corporate version.

- 3.21 The inclusion of District CID in the current demand profiling project would help to address some workforce issues that were raised as part of this inspection. In particular, Inspectors were told of the need to better align the workload and activities of the Crime Operations Department and District CID. There is also a wider workforce planning issue regarding the recruitment to specialist Crime Operations functions such as the MITs, which tends to come from the Districts and CID in particular. Inspectors are aware that the internal Process Improvement Unit of the PSNI is undertaking some work with regard to District CID and would consider it advantageous to link this work to the demand modelling project. HMIC has also recommended that demand analysis should be conducted by forces that have combined roads policing with firearms officers so that resources and skills are effectively utilised.²⁸
- 3.22 Realising the full benefits of demand modelling will require its application across the whole organisation. For example, a demand analysis of District CID, in the absence of a similar analysis in Crime Operations, presents an incomplete picture and may therefore inhibit decision making around future re-structuring. The inclusion of departments such as Crime

²⁶ *Policing in austerity: One year on*, HMIC, 2012.

²⁷ The pilot project has commenced in 'G' District.

²⁸ *Policing in austerity: One year on*, HMIC, 2012.



Operations in demand modelling would also be an opportunity to review a critical function of the Service, which has operated within a similar budgeting and resourcing remit for nearly 10 years. The view of some District Commanders as well as some on the Service Executive Team is that Crime Operations has been over-resourced for many years relative to other parts of the business.²⁹ In that period, the need to review resourcing was identified by the PSNI – an internal review called for activity-based costing as a means of assessing resource levels in comparison with 2004 and taking account of developments in areas such as national security – but that was later dropped by the PSNI as it was not considered to be productive. It was later decided by the PSNI and other England and Wales police forces to introduce an element of benchmarking of performance such as the current HMIC VfM profiles. The R4 project also did not apply to the Crime Operations Department.

3.23 Inspectors accept that demand modelling is more problematic in a department where a significant level of resource is devoted towards proactive policing and where major events and the high security threat incidents can draw down a high level of resources. Nevertheless, there are considerable parts of the Department, such as the investigation of serious and organised crime which are well suited to this type of analysis. The two Branches responsible for serious crime and organised crime have seen considerable changes in the nature of their work over the past 10 years with falling numbers of murders, but also a movement towards the re-investigation of historical cases (in conjunction with the HET).³⁰ Organised crime has continued to grow. The recent increase in the number of vacancies in Crime Operations has also placed a spotlight on filling the gaps through getting the right people in the right place.

3.24 The absence of demand modelling has also inhibited the best use of forensic science for a number of years. Findings from an ongoing CJI inspection of Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) shows that the laboratory has struggled to deliver an effective service due in part to the uncertainty around fluctuating levels of demand from the PSNI – this is demonstrated by the divergences in demand set against the annual Service Level Agreement (i.e. anticipated needs of PSNI).³¹ Senior management in FSNI have stated that they will continue to have difficulties in delivering an effective service to the PSNI and wider criminal justice system in the absence of a better understanding of current and future police forensic science needs. The key challenge for the PSNI is to better manage the demand for forensic science services.

3.25 It is recommended that **demand modelling should be implemented on a pan-business approach within the PSNI.**

3.26 A service-wide demand model which incorporates historical demand (i.e. calls for service over the past year) and then adds elements for projected future changes (growth/reduction) and also proactive work has the potential to better inform workforce planning. The future projections and proactive elements will require 'professional judgement'.

3.27 Inspectors were told of the problems of the existing shift system which is regarded as too rigid by managers and sometimes fails to deal with periods of high demand. A recent consultancy report commissioned by PSNI stated that efficiency in contact centres and dispatch could be improved by up to 45% by better matching shifts to demands and better performance management. It concluded therefore that demand needs to be analysed and understood in more detail. It also found

29 The response of senior management in PSNI was that this view should be contested on the basis that the R2R review was a root and branch review process, that Crime Operations has been operating below its approved level and that there has been an oversupply of officers in Districts for some time.

30 The work of the Serious Crime Branch including its resources was the subject of three reports via HMIC by Crompton (2002), Blakey (2003) and Stevens (2003).

31 Demand for a range of products and services have regularly exceeded agreed limits. Performance on drugs analysis has been negatively impacted by over demand (over 100% on some ACPO products).





that under-performance of Crime Scene Investigators (CSI) could be linked to a lack of alignment of shift patterns and location to demand.

- 3.28 This is an area where other parts of the public sector, particularly the health services, have invested considerable effort in recent years and where adaptations were taken from earlier modelling in telecommunications and traffic engineering. One of the biggest challenges for the health services is the need to predict the health needs of the future, including the skills required and the nature and location of facilities.³²

Workforce Planning

- 3.29 Workforce planning is a business process where the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation are aligned with the capacity of its workforce to deliver its stated results and outcomes. This requires access to required skills/knowledge either through direct employment or use of a 'mixed economy' model. Two broad types of workforce planning are referred to in HR and organisational literature. The first is operational workforce planning which is process based and supported by relatively simple, sometimes manual, workforce tools. As the processes become embedded, there is evidence of a growing level of sophistication as HR planning is linked into existing and new Information Technology (IT) systems. The second type is strategic workforce planning where the links between corporate and strategic objectives and their implications for the workforce are clearly demonstrated. This type of planning is firmly based on skills and knowledge requirements, which include new roles, skills, IT systems and projected demands.
- 3.30 The stage of workforce planning achieved by the PSNI is open to debate – senior management with responsibility for workforce

planning claim that it is advanced and comparable with their peer or similar police forces in England and Wales – this view is based on the findings of a HMIC assessment of the PSNI in 2010. The position of CJI is that circumstances have changed since the above report in 2010 and that the PSNI can learn from recent approaches in England and Wales. There is, according to HMIC, a variable quality in current HR/workforce planning in England and Wales with some forces implementing a more sophisticated workforce plan – this includes the use of computer-based workforce modelling, medium to long-term planning and the direct linkage between resources and projected future demands. The impetus for many forces is the austerity cuts, though the process tends to be driven by service delivery rather than just affordability.

- 3.31 One area of particular attention for CJI has been the resourcing of Policing with the Community.³³ Inspectors found that neighbourhood policing had been strengthened by the deployment of more police officers but that sustaining this level of service was threatened by a lack of progress on setting minimum operational levels for example, no policy that protected the number of officers specifically deployed to neighbourhood teams. Inspectors also found no service-wide model for resource allocation aligned with the *Policing with the Community 2020* strategy. It was unclear whether pressure to fully staff other elements of policing, such as Crime Operations or TSGs³⁴ would negatively impact on the sustainability of neighbourhood teams into the future.
- 3.32 A commissioned consultancy report for the PSNI found that there was also a need to develop a more sophisticated resource model for call management which could maximise the use of part-time working to meet known peaks of demand. This view was based on the experiences of other police forces in terms of

³² A queuing theory model, used by some health services, has been used to manage variable demand in a fixed capacity environment such as patients attending Accident and Emergency and to help deliver reduced waiting times and hospital costs.

³³ CJI inspected Policing with the Community in 2009 and published a follow-up review on progress achieved in September 2012.

³⁴ 55 officers in 'G' District have applied for the most recent TSG competition.



improved productivity and performance. The same report also suggested that the allocation of volume crime investigation was driven by capacity rather than the resources with the most appropriate skill mix. It called for more effective short and medium-term resource planning to meet demand.

3.33 There is little doubt that effective workforce planning within the PSNI has faced a number of constraints. The principal constraint has been the large turnover in staff which included the exit of nearly 8,000 regular and full-time reserve officers together with over 1,600 police staff over a 10-year period. During the same period, the PSNI recruited 4,240 new police officers. The management of this level of staff turnover has clearly stretched the capacity of the Service and led the Chief Constable to comment that “*sophisticated succession planning was impossible...not possible to plan into the long-term*”.³⁵

3.34 The corporate response to the skill gaps that emerged was to engage temporary agency staff in conjunction with the continued recruitment and training of police officers and police staff. This use of associate staff was examined by the NIAO, which accepted the justification (for example, value for money) for using temporary staff to cover short-term skill shortages and vacancies but was critical of how it was managed and controlled prior to 2011. It concluded that that “*the re-employment of temporary staff to cover key posts does not, in our view, properly address the risks – with no permanent ties to the organisation temporary staff can leave with little if any notice, taking essential skills with them*”.³⁶ It concluded that succession planning for key posts was therefore inadequate. The Deputy Chief Constable has acknowledged that “*succession planning was a huge challenge during the 10 years of the Patten change process*”.³⁷

3.35 The NIAO did find that “*the arrangements for appointing temporary staff have improved significantly since January 2011. New procedures have introduced central oversight and challenge, and a greater degree of consistency in the use of temporary staff across the PSNI.*” The PSNI has committed to further reducing its reliance on temporary staff, which has fallen from a high of 700 in 2007 to 400 in 2012 but have told Inspectors that this has also increased risks associated with employing permanent staff (for example, affordability and flexibility). A similar exercise was conducted in 2007 with limited effect on the overall numbers as the skills gaps were not filled by any alternative approach. The flexibility associated with using associate staff has shifted with the implementation of the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 (AWR) which has extended rights associated with employed staff to those in temporary positions.

3.36 A second constraint raised by senior management has been the short-term budgetary settlements which have impeded medium to long-term workforce planning. The Chief Constable has stated that current CSR has helped the Service to develop a four-year Efficiency Plan and to “*plan the workforce mix far more effectively*”.³⁸ There is however little scope for multi-year resourcing in that the PSNI, in common with other public sector bodies in Northern Ireland, does not have the flexibility to carry forward resources for example, any surplus savings. This is different to forces in England and Wales which can use a strategic reserve and have access to local funding. This lack of financial flexibility inhibits medium to longer term workforce planning and provides little organisational incentive to deliver additional efficiency savings. **The PSNI and the DoJ should consider the scope to introduce increased flexibility for example, a strategic reserve as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review.**

35 *The PSNI: Use of Agency Staff*, NIAO, 2012.

36 *ibid*

37 Deputy Chief Constable to Northern Ireland Assembly Public Accounts Committee, 10 October 2012.

38 Chief Constable to Northern Ireland Assembly Public Accounts Committee, 10 October 2012.



3.37 There is however an increasing predictability concerning austerity for the next five years and all public bodies such as the police should therefore develop workforce planning on the basis of likely additional expenditure cuts. The PSNI have told Inspectors that scenarios for various cuts have been developed. A lack of certainty on the specifics of a new CSR should not in itself act as an impediment to the development of more effective workforce planning – in many respects it can help inform the discussions around the impact of the next phase of budgetary plans.

3.38 A third constraint in workforce planning has been the evident lack of consensus among some in the PSNI in relation to the way forward. A growing level of unease can be expected where police officers and police staff perceive the ongoing cuts as threatening the quality of service delivery as well as their individual circumstances. Senior management have however provided reassurances, through a Staffing Scenario 2011-15 that reductions in the workforce will be through natural wastage as opposed to redundancy. Redundancies have already occurred in England and Wales. The views of some staff, including NIPSA, were that these reassurances were not sufficient in the absence of any transparent and detailed road map on workforce reform. This included their view that the *People Strategy* or any associated workforce plan did not provide the required level of detail on critical issues such as the scope of managed services.

3.39 Both police staff and police officers expressed some concerns around the perceived lack of promotion and career development opportunities. Inspectors had expected to hear such views in the context of the austerity cuts and their impact on career mobility i.e. no recruitment, few promotions etc. There was however an added dimension in their criticisms around the use of temporary associate staff to fill specific skill gaps. Police officers and staff stated that these types of opportunities were denied particularly at the lower and middle

ranks/grades. There is also a view that the implementation of the managed services contract may continue this practice as might the implications of the AWR ruling. This has led to reduced morale among some police staff in particular and has contributed to some resistance to managed services.³⁹ Police officers also referred to corporate uncertainty around the conduct of its promotion boards and the need to better plan for future vacancies.

3.40 The inadequacy of succession planning for key posts was raised as a concern in the recent NIAO report and this view is shared by Inspectors. The minutes of the PSNI Resourcing Forum also confirm that members had expressed risks around long-term succession planning in the context of the use of temporary workers.

3.41 Inspectors have been told by senior management that workforce planning continues to be strengthened. There is an onus on an organisation, which seeks to be the finest policing service in the world, to be open to new approaches and to adopt and lead on good practice, whether that is from workforce planning elsewhere in policing or from other parts of the public/private sector. The importance of rigorous and high quality workforce planning is essential in the delivery of an effective policing service to the public.

3.42 It is recommended that **longer term workforce planning should be strengthened in the PSNI with a stronger focus on utilising good practice. This should include the implementation of effective succession planning to address ongoing skills and knowledge gaps.**

Benchmarking the Workforce

3.43 CJI has drawn on the benchmarking work being conducted by HMIC as part of its VfM inspection work across England and Wales as well as Northern Ireland. A comparative

³⁹ NIPSA has successfully requested a Judicial Review on the PSNI managed services contract which was scheduled for court in December 2012.



analysis of the efficiency of the PSNI, broken down by its workforce and functions, has the potential to identify areas of good practice and divergence. For a comparison to be effective, there is a need to better define and quantify the parts of the business which are more unique to Northern Ireland (i.e. mainly the work on security but also legacy issues and policing a land border), which will then facilitate a more valid comparison of other policing costs.

- 3.44 A PSNI estimate in 2010 put security at about 34% (£274 million) of the resource budget – this excludes about £60 million per annum which is allocated to security under a separate temporary budget. Inspectors would encourage the PSNI to undertake a more detailed costing project as part of any benchmarking work. It is recommended that the **PSNI should define and categorise its spending on national security.**
- 3.45 This inspection report also draws upon a consultancy report, which was commissioned by the Service to benchmark the PSNI against a broad range of police forces and organisations in England and Wales. That report, provided to Inspectors in November 2012, forms the basis of a new programme of work being undertaken by the PSNI. The early focus is on six work streams: call handling; witness care; CSI attendance; workforce modernisation; court attendance; and volume crime investigation.
- 3.46 Inspectors welcome the commitment and priority accorded to broader transformation initiatives, which is an attempt to move away from the tactical and pro rata cuts (sometimes referred to as the ‘salami slice’ approach) of the last number of years in favour of a more targeted and structured programme. It does however require a clearer delivery plan for the *People Strategy* and access to a more comprehensive body of hard data on projected policing requirements (for example, demand modelling).

Civilianisation

- 3.47 There are a range of factors which will impact on any benchmarking of VfM and workforce performance. One of these factors is the rate of civilianisation i.e. roles that don’t need the warranted powers of a police officer. The process of identifying, grading and filling roles that do not require a warranted police officer has been operational in the PSNI for over a decade. The benefits are generally accepted in terms of long-term efficiency savings, re-deployment of police officers to front line policing and opportunities to improve the quality of services.
- 3.48 However the PSNI has claimed that the rate of progress has been impeded by a lack of flexibility on reducing police officer numbers until 2009 and by the continuing security threat. There has also been some reluctance within the Service to extend civilianisation to some traditional police roles such as intelligence, investigation and call management. At the same time the impact of austerity, which has disproportionately impacted on civilian posts (due in large part to the lack of flexibility on reconfiguring police officer numbers), has undermined civilianisation.
- 3.49 The level of civilianisation in the PSNI is 24% of the workforce, which compares to an average of 34% in England and Wales in 2011. It has also fallen from a high of 28% of employees in 2007 (when PSNI still had a cap of 7,500 police officer posts). Home Office data for 43 police forces in England and Wales in March 2012 shows that 31% of full-time equivalent police workers were police staff.⁴⁰ Some forces are at 50% civilianisation though some have expressed concerns around resilience and capacity to respond to critical incidents and public order.
- 3.50 The main progress on civilianisation has been in functions such as scientific support services, file preparation and submission to the PPS, custody and detention and the introduction of Assistant Investigators and Intelligence

⁴⁰ The police staff numbers exclude community support officers, designated officers, traffic wardens and special constables.



Support Officers. Scientific support services is perhaps the best example of civilianisation in that a predominantly police officer-led branch has been transformed over the past decade into an almost complete civilianised branch. The process has faced many challenges, which included the introduction of Crime Scene Investigators (CSI), the strengthening of internal property management and the evolving relationship with its main provider of specialist forensic science services (FSNI). One of the main cultural challenges has been the need to raise the profile and credibility of civilian staff within the organisation including the development of improved promotion and career pathways. The evolution of the Branch has been covered by a joint CJI/HMIC inspection report and follow-up reviews.⁴¹ The productivity of CSI staff is also a specific work stream under the proposed transformation programme.

- 3.51 The function of file preparation and submission to the PPS is covered by the OCMT. The function had 62 police officers, 162 police staff and two agency workers in April 2012. Back in 2009, the OCMTs had 210 police officers. The current four-year efficiency plan does not envisage any significant change in the composition of the OCMTs over the next few years with the number of police officers expected to remain the same. Inspectors accept the need to retain a certain number of staff with policing skills within OCMT, but would not preclude the need for change in the coming years as the level of demand is likely to change in response to various criminal justice initiatives around reducing avoidable delay (for example, more streamlined files; increased use of discretion; non-court disposals) and as civilian staff develop their skills in this work.
- 3.52 Call management was the subject of a recent CJI inspection.⁴² The inspection report found that the PSNI had moved from an eight-centre contact management model to a four-centre

one in a relatively short time span. Service excellence, which was at the centre of the contact management strategy, had improved in areas such as reduced abandoned call rates and improved timeliness in answering emergency calls. However the civilianisation of roles that do not require a serving police officer has been delayed. For example, the largest centre in Belfast had 131 police officers and 91 police staff in 2011 – all dispatch personnel were either serving officers or ex-police officers working under the agency contract. Two of the key recommendations of the report for the PSNI are to *'actively pursue the deployment of non-police members of staff as dispatchers to reduce its dependence on serving police officers within contact management centres'* and to *'revisit their staffing model for contact management to see if further efficiencies can be delivered'*. Providing a better and more consistent emergency and non-emergency response service is a key component of an effective resource allocation model.

- 3.53 There is also some evidence that reverse civilianisation (i.e. police officers filling civilian vacancies) has occurred in PSNI. Indeed it was first identified as a risk in the internal PSNI strategic review due to a lack of flexibility on police officer establishment numbers. This trend has been seen in some English and Scottish forces as a result of the larger cuts in civilian staff compared to police officer numbers, which means that civilian posts are filled by police officers.⁴³ Some PSNI senior officers and police staff have referred to the relatively high number of police staff vacancies and the need to fill these positions with police officers. For example, one District stated that they had to replace some Station Enquiry Assistants (half of whom were agency staff) with police officers. Inspectors would regard this as counter productive from a skills and value for money perspective and would expect the issue to be monitored and covered in any revised *People Strategy* and workforce plan.

41 A Review of Scientific Support Services in the PSNI, CJI/HMIC, December 2005 and subsequent follow-up reviews in August 2007, May 2008 and October 2009.

42 *Answering the Call: Police Service of Northern Ireland Contact Management*, CJI, June 2012.

43 HMIC Scotland referred to reverse civilianisation (Strathclyde) on functions such as custody suites, enquiry officers and control rooms.



3.54 There is also potential to further realise the benefits of civilianisation through action on roles which have already been ratified by the job evaluation panel as suitable for civilianisation. These roles include trainers, staff officers and quality assurance managers. Inspectors were also told by employees in the PSNI of roles, which were graded as civilian, but included a policing related requirement which favoured those with a policing background. This requirement for specific policing skills is not necessarily a barrier to civilianisation, but it does have implications for how recruitment is undertaken and the future composition of the workforce.

3.55 A similar issue arose in relation to temporary posts, where information supplied to the Policing Board showed that 41% of roles filled by retired police officers did not require police skills.⁴⁴

3.56 The scope of the 'Assistant Investigator' role is occurring within this context as it challenges traditional views on what roles require existing police skills and what can be developed and strengthened through internal training and career development. One of the proposals is to have a civilian assistant investigator in each of the MITs. The NIAO in its report on agency staff found that certain roles had a very high percentage of days provided by Patten retirees (i.e. those with policing skills) – this included 99% for Investigator, 97% for Intelligence Officer, 96% for Safety Camera Operator (which does not require policing skills) and 91% for Assistant Investigator.⁴⁵

3.57 Realising the full benefits of civilianisation is becoming more difficult during this period of austerity and budget reductions. As much of the workforce costs are either fixed or dependent on national agreements, the flexibility available to the PSNI is more apparent in relation to the use of civilian and temporary staff in civilianised roles. However,

the implications of making larger cuts in civilian staff are that the resulting gaps may have to be filled by a more expensive resource i.e. police officers.

Grading of posts

3.58 Another issue which may have implications for benchmarking is the grading of posts for police officers and police staff. Inspectors are aware that the PSNI examined this issue in its strategic review and that a rank-ratio review was conducted in 2008, which was designed to realign posts at rank in line with similar police forces. It resulted in a reduction of 240 posts at sergeant and above in the Service and a potential saving of £10 million. This exercise included the Crime Operations Department and its ACC confirmed that 48 posts were suppressed under the rank ratio review.

3.59 There is also scope to further benchmark the grading of civilian staff. The strategic review showed that between 2002 and 2008, there had been a decrease of 716 police staff at junior grades (i.e. Administrative Officer and Executive Officer 1) but that in the same period the number of staff at more senior level (i.e. up to Grade 6) had increased by 143. The PSNI responded that the higher grades are not always about a management role and often reflect the functional specialist responsibilities. A higher proportion of staff at senior grades would have cost implications for any benchmarking work against other forces.

3.60 The NIAO, in its report on the *Use of Agency Staff*, also found that *'many roles created for agency staff was not subject to sufficient job evaluation to ensure that the post was correctly graded or that there was an appropriate amount of work required to constitute a full-time role.'*⁴⁶ The PSNI have responded that improved arrangements are now in place, including the completion of business cases and the assessment of each post/grade against vacancies and funding.

44 PSNI response to written question from Policing Board meeting, 1 November 2012.

45 *The PSNI: Use of Agency Staff*, NIAO, 2012.

46 *The PSNI: Use of Agency Staff*, NIAO, 2012.



Support functions

- 3.61 One of the business areas well suited to benchmarking with other forces is support functions. Inspectors see merit in the benchmarking of those parts of the business which are comparable as well as benchmarking of skills and compliance against national standards. The PSNI Efficiency Plan made a commitment to deliver *'significant efficiencies in Support Services areas and to address the scope for further improvements in Workforce Modernisation...'*⁴⁷
- 3.62 The work undertaken by HMIC on the PSNI VfM profile points towards the potential for some significant savings in this area with elements of 'support functions' having the biggest variance compared to similar police forces. Some progress has been made by the PSNI at the time of this inspection. Inspectors accept that much of these additional costs may be due to a range of legacy issues as well as the need for more secure and confidential systems. These issues will need to be factored into any analysis.
- 3.63 The findings of the recent consultancy report also provide greater clarity on the costs of support services. It found that whilst back office functions such as Finance and HR had reduced their spend by 30% over the last five years, there was still a considerable gap or premium with other forces – 1.3% of headcount in Finance compared to a benchmark average of 0.9%; 2.5% of headcount in HR compared to a benchmark average of 1.6%. The PSNI is assessing the reasons for these variations.
- 3.64 It is recommended that **the PSNI should benchmark all of its departments and functions with other comparable police forces and then utilise this information to reconfigure its services and appropriate level of resources.**

Partnership

- 3.65 The required level of transformational change in workforce utilisation cannot be delivered by the PSNI alone. It requires the support and direct assistance of government in terms of policies and funding, but also the development of more joined-up working with other criminal justice organisations. The benefits of these partnerships can accrue across many justice bodies. For example, the work around speedy justice has the potential to divert more people from the courts, new types of disposals such as cautions can mean less paperwork and files going to the PPS, fewer cases adjourned in the courts can reduce police attendance etc. The culmination of these changes has the potential to free up considerable resources and allow a re-allocation based on the needs of communities.
- 3.66 CJI will therefore continue to inspect and promote the development of a more effective and efficient joined-up justice system. One such area is the enforcement of fines, which has been found to be resource intensive for both the PSNI and the Prison Service.⁴⁸ The DoJ has a strategy with a view of introducing new collection powers and a revised enforcement regime in the Faster, Fairer Justice Bill. CJI has stated that this will require new legislation, a new civilian enforcement agency and new processes. The PSNI estimate that a civilianised fine enforcement service would save the equivalent of 49 police officers, which could be re-deployed to frontline policing – the actual level of savings will be determined by broader government policy and approaches to fine enforcement.

⁴⁷ PSNI Four Year Efficiency Plan 2011/12 to 2014/15, PSNI, 2011

⁴⁸ The enforcement of fines: A follow-up review of inspection recommendations, CJI, July 2012.

CHAPTER 4:

Outcomes



- 4.1 The main purpose of this inspection report is forward looking - ensuring that the benefits of workforce modernisation are realised and that the Service continues to deliver on its objectives and vision to be the best in policing. This must occur in a period of continued efficiency savings and an ongoing security threat. The results to date, measured against the priorities of the Service, are covered in this chapter.
- 4.2 The Policing Board has set a number of workforce related targets to measure PSNI performance. These are structured around personal, professional and protective policing. Performance against these targets forms a key element of the annual report of the Policing Board.⁴⁹
- 4.3 PSNI performance on personal policing i.e. dealing with local concerns, for 2011-12 has been demonstrated as positive with falling numbers of burglaries and anti-social behaviour and an increased rate of detections for burglaries. Professional policing i.e. delivering an excellent service, includes a specific target on 'increasing the amount of time spent by each officer on patrol by 30 minutes per shift' – this had risen to 57% in 2011-12 compared to a baseline of 38%. Protective policing i.e. tackling serious harm, has been focused on reducing the level of serious crime and increasing the detection rate. The PSNI achieved four of the six serious crime targets showing reduced detection rates.
- 4.4 The assessment of performance against the PSNI continuous improvement plan for 2011-12 has been covered in the Policing Board Annual Report. Relevant projects include a Resource Management and Decision Support System which encompasses tracking technology to aid the deployment and management of operational resources. It was assessed as partly achieved in March 2012. The R4 project was assessed as achieved in having delivered improvements to case and contact management processes. It is envisaged that longer term benefits or results will include improved victim updates, increased police visibility and better meeting of community expectations.
- 4.5 The PSNI *People Strategy* has identified five strategic indicators in which performance can be measured. They are:
- public confidence;
 - victim confidence;
 - visibility;
 - reported crime rates; and
 - detection rates.
- Public confidence**
- 4.6 Public confidence in policing has shown a positive trend in recent years in line with the trend from England and Wales. It is relatively good, helped by a lower crime rate. Performance against the Policing Plan for September 2012 showed that overall public confidence had risen to 65.5% which is about 5% higher than the previous 12-month rolling average.⁵⁰ These confidence figures are not

⁴⁹ Annual Report and Accounts April 2011 – March 2012, Northern Ireland Policing Board, 2012

⁵⁰ Policing Plan 2012-2013 Performance Summary, 27th September 2012.



available for local neighbourhood level, which would provide a useful indicator for District Commanders in terms of the allocation of resources. A separate indicator of 'overall confidence in the police' was presented in a recent consultancy report which showed a level of 80% for the PSNI compared to an average of 73.5% for other comparative forces.⁵¹

- 4.7 The issue of public confidence was specifically raised by some Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) after the publication of the NIAO report on the use of temporary staff. This included concerns around value for money, lack of transparency, accountability and composition of the workforce. The latter was particularly linked to public confidence with the view that the use of temporary associate staff in particular, have not been subject to equality screening. This is likely to remain an important issue as more public-facing roles, previously undertaken by police officers become performed by police staff/managed services staff (for example, security duties, station enquiry assistants, call handling, custody detention officers etc.).⁵² The PSNI has stated that it is working with the Equality Commission to develop a process for equality screening the entire workforce model. CJI consider that the PSNI should be more proactive in this regard.

Victim confidence

- 4.8 PSNI crime data for 2011-12 shows that there were 70,356 victims of crime including 3,590 police officers and 21,145 business organisations. The largest proportion of crimes is against victims in the 20-24 age group. The views of victims have continued to show an increasing level of satisfaction with the PSNI. There is however considerable scope for improvement as shown in a recent CJI inspection on victims and witnesses in the justice system. The report included a range of

recommendations, including those directed at the PSNI to improve the level of service and information available to victims (for example, establishment of witness care units, training of officers in special measures for vulnerable victims).⁵³

- 4.9 Victims of crime account for 14% of the population. However, surveys such as the NIPB and Northern Ireland Crime Survey point towards victim dissatisfaction and a reluctance to report crime. There is also a continued high rate of the fear of crime. A previous CJI inspection report also found scope for the PSNI to better use survey information and feedback from victims to inform and improve working practices.⁵⁴

Visibility

- 4.10 An indicator on police visibility is based on the public reassurance of seeing a police officer. HMIC concluded that there was a link between police visibility and public confidence in the police.⁵⁵ The comparatively high number of police officers in Northern Ireland should be an advantage in this regard. The *People Strategy* includes an objective of 'less time in stations'. The response of the PSNI has been to deploy more officers to the front line and to ensure that officers are spending more time out of the station. Both of these initiatives could be considered a success in a broad sense.
- 4.11 The PSNI Strategic Review looked at this issue in some detail and found that too many officers were engaged in bureaucratic processes meaning that they spend 61% of time in police stations and that response and neighbourhood officers within Districts spent less than half their time performing patrols. This was made worse by the mismatch between the availability of police officers and demand (not enough officers available during peak times). This is known as the 'Visibility Gap' i.e. police officer

51 Police Service of Northern Ireland Final Report, KPMG, October 2012.

52 PSNI workforce composition figures for August 2012 show that 30% of police officers have a perceived Roman Catholic background compared to 19% of police staff. Some 64% of police staff is female compared to 27% of police officers.

53 *The care and treatment of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland*, CJI, December 2011.

54 *Police Service of Northern Ireland Customer Service*, CJI, May 2011.

55 *Demanding Times*, HMIC, March 2011.

availability and the levels of incidents reported. Recent activity analysis by the PSNI found that officers spend about 55% of their time in the station.

- 4.12 The investment in technology (for example, the roll out of smart phones across the Service) has facilitated more visible policing through less need to be based in stations. The PSNI has stated that the use of handheld mobile data devices have freed up about 90 minutes per officer per shift. The next stage is the development of a Global Positioning System (GPS) to identify the location of all on-duty officers and relevant police staff as a means of improving allocation and deployment.
- 4.13 One of the performance indicators used by the Policing Board is the amount of time spent by each officer on patrol. The target is 57%, which was slightly improved upon in July 2012 with a figure of 58.8%.

Reported crime rates

- 4.14 Data provided by the PSNI on performance against the Policing Plan targets shows that the overall level of crime has fallen by 4% in September 2012 compared to the previous 12-month rolling average. One of the biggest reductions was in burglaries, which was down nearly 9% from the previous year. On the other hand, the number of incidents of anti social behaviour – one of the more numerous types of crime, has increased by 1.5% to reach over 65,000 in the year to September 2012. The long-term trend for anti social behaviour is still downward.
- 4.15 A longer term analysis of recorded crime data was published by the PSNI in July 2012.⁵⁶ It shows a downward trend over 10 years with an average of 57 crimes per 1,000 population in 2011-12. The biggest falls were in property crime, whilst crime against the person and sexual crimes have continued to increase.

Detection rates

- 4.16 Detected crime describes offences which have been ‘cleared up’ by the police. They are classified as sanction and non-sanction detections. Sanction detections refer to offenders who have received a formal sanction such as charge, summons or caution. Non-sanction detections occur where the offence was cleared up but where no further action is taken against the offender.
- 4.17 The sanction detection rates have risen each year from 2001-02 until 2010-11 – the rate decreased by 1% to reach 26.3% of total recorded crimes in 2011-12.⁵⁷ The introduction of discretionary disposals may have contributed to the recent decrease. Performance on detection rates, as shown against Policing Board targets, have been variable with evidence of year-on-year improvement on serious sexual crimes and racist crimes (albeit from a low base), but slippage in relation to sectarian crimes and domestic violence. Two CJI inspection reports have made a number of recommendations in relation to the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse.⁵⁸
- 4.18 There are some differences of opinion on whether this is a valuable indicator of performance as some would point towards cases which are prosecuted as a superior measure. It also does not provide a full picture of police investigative performance. Nevertheless, it provides a valuable indicator of progress, with notable areas for improvement.
- 4.19 The Strategic Review found that the PSNI had 19,802 detections during the period March 2007 to February 2008, which represented 2.64 detections per officer and 13.07 crimes per officer.⁵⁹ This is significantly less than the Most Similar Forces which ranged from a low of 6.93 to a high of 12.00 detections per officer. While

⁵⁶ *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998-99 to 2011-12*, PSNI, 2012.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Domestic Violence and Abuse*, CJI, December 2010; *Sexual Violence and Abuse*, CJI, July 2010.

⁵⁹ *PSNI Strategic Review 2009: Making Choices for the Future*, PSNI, 2009.



this may be related to the higher number of police officers in Northern Ireland, it did raise some concerns around efficiency, productivity and the positioning of police officers. A VfM Profile prepared by HMIC in early 2012 showed that the PSNI was below average against its most similar group of forces in England and Wales – the average sanction detections rate for all crimes excluding fraud was 30%.⁶⁰ A consultancy report commissioned by the PSNI in 2012 showed that the PSNI had a significantly lower sanction detection rate compared to an average for other police forces in England and Wales – 22.4% for the PSNI compared to an average of 27.2%.⁶¹

Value for Money

4.20 The *People Strategy* includes VfM as a key outcome. It is therefore of longer term significance in terms of measurement and result. The PSNI Strategic Review in 2009 presented some views on a VfM outcome such as measures on workforce mix, centralised and devolved budgets, outsourcing and less reliance on overtime for core duties. The recently completed consultancy report on efficiency found that overtime constituted over 10% of total staff costs compared to an average of about 4% in other police forces. Much of this was attributed to the additional overtime spend on counter terrorism which was costed at £27.8 million per annum.⁶²

4.21 The ongoing comparative inspection activity by HMIC on VfM will make an important contribution to identifying potential areas for improvement and allow the PSNI to better determine its performance against this indicator. The need to define and assess the PSNI spending on security is a necessary element of this work.

4.22 The consultancy work, which was commissioned by PSNI, has also provided the Service with recommendations for immediate cash savings (i.e. continued stop on recruitment, suppressed staff vacancies and reduced overtime) as well as identifying a range of future efficiency work streams. The PSNI was considering their response to these recommendations during the final stages of fieldwork for this inspection. Inspectors see the merit in prioritising the implementation of these work streams and would regard the recommendations in this inspection report as a necessary strategic and operational framework.

60 HMIC analysis is based on Home Office Crime Statistics 2010-11.

61 *Police Service of Northern Ireland Final Report*, KPMG, October 2012

62 *Ibid.*

Section



Appendices



Appendix 1: Terms of reference

Introduction

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) proposes to undertake two inspections of workforce modernisation in the PSNI. The first will deal with the deployment and management of resources with the second focused on productivity and reducing bureaucracy.

Context

The strategic priority of the PSNI is encapsulated in the vision of the Chief Constable to deliver personal, professional and protective policing which aims to deal with local concerns, deliver an excellent service and tackle serious harm. The principal means of delivery is through a continuous improvement performance plan, which focuses on performance improvement in areas such as better resource management.

A key commitment of the Chief Constable is to the need to improve customer service through Policing with the Community and the increased visibility of police officers on the front-line. This is happening as greater emphasis is placed on the use of 'mixed economy' teams.

The cost of policing is determined by the demands and needs of the community as well as the availability and use of resources, of which the workforce is the dominant item of expenditure. Continuing to meet the changing needs of the community, as well as responding to the on-going security threat, will require continued attention to workforce modernisation, particularly when public expenditure is constrained.

Aims of the Inspection

This first inspection on Resource Allocation and Management has three main aims:

- to examine the PSNI approach to workforce deployment and management;
- to determine the effectiveness of delivery structures and activities; and
- to assess performance improvement through measurable outcomes.

The inspection will be framed around three key processes/stages:

Strategy

- Strategic, policy and procedural framework which determines the parameters for resource allocation and management; and
- structure and effectiveness of governance arrangements.

Delivery

- Progress in implementing relevant strategies (e.g. People Strategy 2010) and projects (e.g. Resource to Risk);
- alignment with corporate initiatives (e.g. R4: Right people, in the Right place, at the Right time, doing the Right job);
- how staff is deployed (e.g. shift system, use of overtime, management of sickness absence, attendance at court and training);
- how staff are managed (e.g. how level of demand is established; use of activity analysis; District priorities);
- delivery structures (e.g. Resourcing Forum; Service Excellence Programme Board); and
- technology that supports performance improvement.



Outcomes

- Analysis of performance against corporate objectives (e.g. effectiveness of workforce distribution and deployment; and a value for money policing service).

The inspection will draw upon good practice in other comparable jurisdictions and seek to benchmark performance against relevant standards, where appropriate. In addition, issues emerging during the course of inspection not apparent in the terms of reference may be subject to examination.

Methodology

All inspections conducted by CJI are based on the principles of inspection outlined in the Government's Policy on Inspection of Public Services. This includes:

- the purpose of improvement;
- a focus on outcomes, which means considering service delivery to the end users of the services rather than concentrating on internal management arrangements;
- a user perspective; and
- rigorous self-assessment by managers.

The principles of inspection are set out more fully on the CJI website at:
<http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/7d/7d3551e8-8b7e-4df1-a409-e448a1400ea2.pdf>

Design and Planning

The first stage of the inspection is focused on research, including gathering of information, and will include a number of preliminary meetings within the PSNI as well as liaison with, and site visits to other comparable police forces.

Delivery

Self Assessment

In line with standard CJI practice for single agency inspections, the PSNI will be asked to conduct a self assessment. It is intended that this self-assessment should be completed during the summer of 2011. An outline of the structure and requirements will be provided by Inspectors.

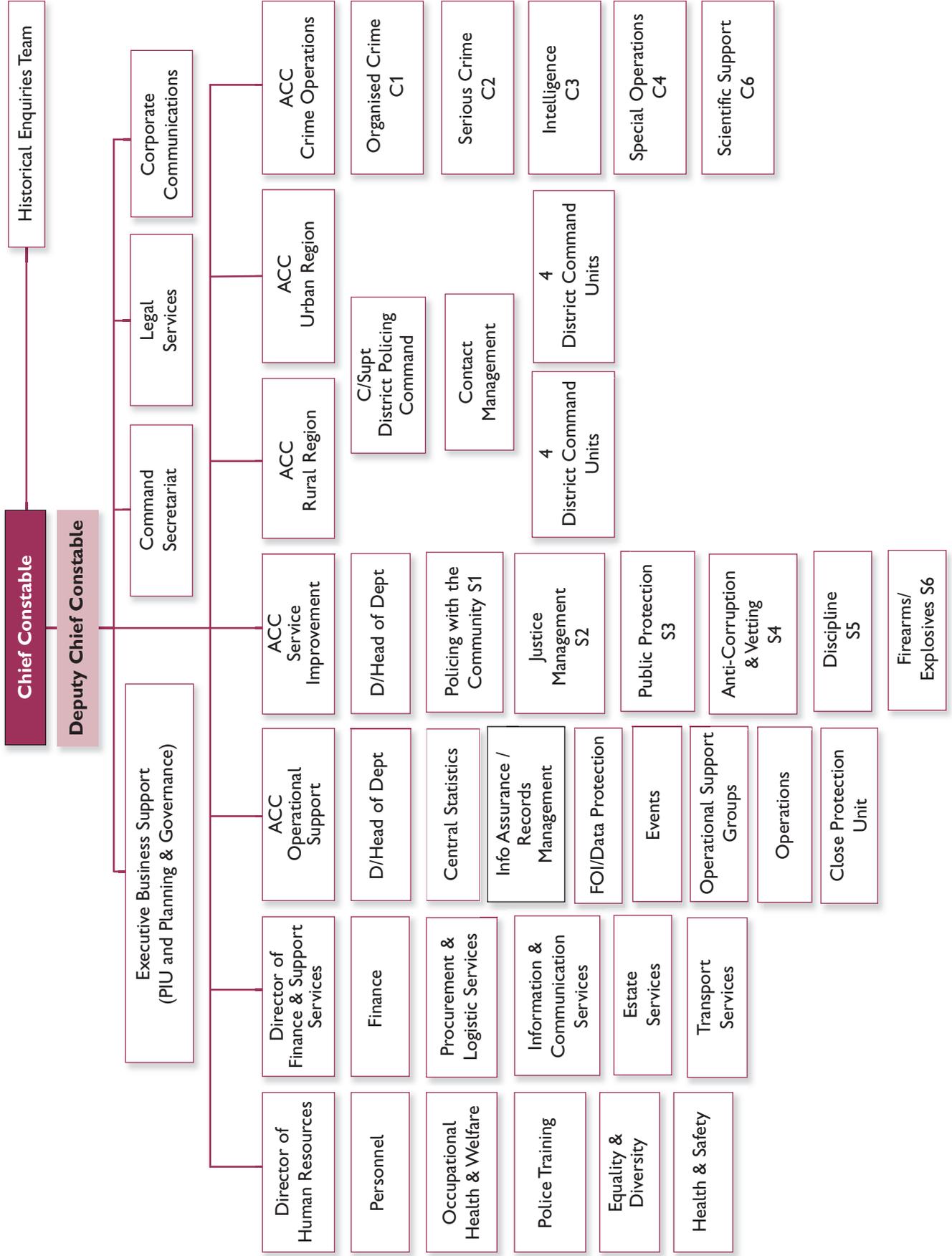
Fieldwork

The fieldwork phase of the inspection (interviews, focus groups and review of structures, procedures and systems) will take place in the autumn of 2011. It is proposed to conduct meetings with a wide range of police officers and police staff who allocate and manage staff resources as well as those who are operationally impacted.

Closure and Publication

The drafting of the inspection report will commence after the fieldwork, although a structure of the report can be agreed at an earlier stage. It is proposed to deliver an outline of the preliminary findings to senior management in the PSNI at this stage of the process. This is likely to include a discussion on the draft recommendations.

Appendix 2: PSNI organisational structure





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