

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date 6 July 2022

Subject: Analysis and Service Improvement – Assurance and Audit Plan update

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Purpose of the report:

This report provides an overview of progress with the Force Crime Data Integrity and Assurance Audit Schedule.

Findings and recommendation from recent audits that have been presented to the Warwickshire Assurance Board are also outlined.

Recommendation:

That the current progress of the scheduled audits is noted along with the findings of recent audits.

Background:

At the beginning of the financial year the Force Crime and Incident Registrar (FCIR) presents a draft audit schedule to the Warwickshire Assurance Board for approval. The schedule comprises two types of audits:

- Crime Data Integrity (CDI). These audits follow the methodology detailed in the Home Office Data Quality Assurance Manual (DQAM) and are used to test compliance with Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). The audit themes are selected by the FCIR based on a risk assessment of CDI vulnerabilities.
- Assurance audits commissioned by Warwickshire Assurance Board. These are audits of operational records to assess compliance with force policy, procedure and guidance.

The findings from these audits are presented to the Assurance Board with a number of recommendations. If agreed, a senior manager is appointed to provide a management response detailing the proposed activity to be undertaken in response to the recommendation.

The FCIR maintains a tracker of recommendations and agreed management actions to record progress. The FCIR has a standing agenda item at the Assurance Board that enables progress against the recommendations to be reported and issues to be raised.

Crime Data Integrity Audits

The Home Office Data Quality Assurance Manual (DQAM) has been produced to provide guidance and assistance to Force Crime Registrars who have a responsibility to ensure consistency and accuracy of crime and incident data in support of the policing vision for crime recording - "That all police forces in England and Wales have the best crime

recording system in the world: one that is consistently applied; delivers accurate statistics that are trusted by the public and puts the needs of victims at its core”.

The purpose of DQAM is to assist Force Crime Registrars to test and assess the quality of their crime and incident data as well as following up areas of weakness identified in previous national or local audits.

The Warwickshire's risk based audit plan enables known areas of risk to be considered and for decisions to be made (and authorised) with regards to how appropriate audit resources might best be used to ensure compliance and drive improvement activity. Each incident to crime audit will be based on a methodology similar to that used by HMICFRS providing a significant sample size equating to approximately 300 records. For other audits, for example outcomes and cancelled crime a dip sample of usually between 60 – 100 records are conducted to provide an indication of compliance and risk. Again, this is similar to the approach taken by HMICFRS.

Assurance Audits

Assurance audits are designed to ensure that Warwickshire Police complies with the General Data Protection Regulations, Management of Police Information (MoPI), Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and its own local Policy & Procedures. The audits are commissioned by Warwickshire Assurance Board.

Executive summary:

The FCIR now produces a summary report of audit findings and risk to each Warwickshire Assurance Board together with the detailed audit reports.

The format of the report reflects the Audit and Assurance Update papers presented to JASC. The report presented and accepted at Warwickshire Assurance Board in June 2022 is attached at Appendix A.

The findings from the audits of incident and crimes overall indicate a good level of compliance with Home Office Counting Rules in that the majority of crimes reported to the Force are recorded as notifiable crimes.

These audits do identify areas for improvement particularly around the timeliness of recording so all reported crimes are recorded within 24 hours. The assurance element of the audits have identified opportunities to improve aspects of investigations and the recording of Victim Code compliance.

Appendix A

Introduction

This report provides Assurance Board with a summary of progress against the Audit Schedule and recent findings from completed audits.

Audit Schedule

The current 2022 – 2023 audit schedule has commenced with the planned audits completed.

Since the last Assurance Board, the following additional audits have been requested and are completed or in progress:

Outcome 12 Review - (Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute or is confirmed to have died either before the crime was reported to police or before enough evidence to charge could be obtained).

Requested by D/Supt Hill from a recommendation in the HMICFRS Thematic - Individuals with mental health needs/disorders through the Criminal Justice System.

It had the following recommendation: Dip sample (outcome code) OC10 (Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest - police decision) and OC12 cases to assess the standard and consistency of decision making and use this to determine any training or briefing requirements and the need for any ongoing oversight.

The Designated Decision Makers in the Resolution Centre (DDMs) apply Outcome 10 and it is used infrequently. The FCR reviewed a sample of Outcome 12 and found that on the whole the outcome was correctly applied and where it was assessed as not the correct outcome the rationale behind the finalisation was reasonable.

Outcomes applied by Harm Assessment Unit (HAU) Detective Sergeants – Due to the Athena permissions provided to detective sergeants working in Child Abuse Trafficking and Exploitation team (CATE)/HAU they are able to apply outcomes 1-18, 20-22 that are normally applied by DDMs if they do not use the correct Athena task.

The DDMs identified a number of investigations where these outcomes had been incorrectly applied by the detective sergeants. A search was built and 118 investigations were identified where a CATE DS had finalised an investigation with an outcome that should have been applied by a DDM. All Outcomes 1 – 10 were audited and a dip sample of Outcomes 20 – 22, this resulted in a review of 49 records. 14 of the outcomes were incorrectly applied.

D/Supt Fowler has issued a reminder to the sergeants to finalise investigations using the correct Athena task and further monitoring will be undertaken.

Review of HMICFRS Victim Services Assessment (VSA) Audit – The audit officers have reviewed 32 investigations where HMICFRS auditors identified 81 issues relating to call handling, resource deployment and investigation.

Following the review HMICFRS were asked to further review 7 investigations and 21 of the assessments relating to call handling, in particular inconsistency between auditors over their assessment of THRIVE.

9 investigations were returned during the VSA for immediate attention, operational supervisors reviewed and presented detailed responses. HMICFRS were asked to further review 5 of those investigations.

Review of OP Zakynthos decision making – Det C/Supt Baker requested a review of patrol investigations finalised as part of Op Zakynthos to apply proportionate investigation principles to outstanding investigations.

The request came following a concern raised about a domestic abuse investigation that was assessed as being inappropriately finalised. The review focused on investigations that could be potentially high risk with vulnerable victims so included offences of stalking, harassment and domestic related assaults.

The following questions were used to assess the investigation and decision making:

- Was a timely investigation conducted?
- Is there evidence of clear supervisory decision making?
- Has the score matrix been applied?
- Has vulnerability and safeguarding been documented and addressed?

The audit looked at a number of investigations that had been finalised with no further action, the majority had been finalised by Patrol sergeants with some as part of the review by the Prisoner Processing Team.

The audit found a lack of clear documentary rationale from supervisors for the filing of investigations and found that Outcome 16 was being used to facilitate filing with no further action without any recording of the victim's wishes.

Over half of the investigations reviewed evidenced slow progress or in some instances no investigative actions prior to filing. The officer in case (OIC) had not documented an action plan in 22 out of 29 investigations.

The findings have been reported to D/Chief Supt Baker and these have been discussed at the Investigation Standards and Outcome Board and Investigation Standards Meeting. The findings have informed the ongoing work to raise the quality of investigations.

Review of Reported Incidents of Modern Slavery (N200s) - At the end of April 2022 DCI Dave Andrews, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking & Organised Immigration Crime Lead, raised a concern that there had been incorrect recording of Reported Incidents of Modern Slavery (N200s) together with a failure to reclassify some to substantive modern slavery offences in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR).

DCI Andrews provided a spreadsheet maintained by the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Modern Slavery SPOC, he had reviewed all recorded N200s and had identified a number of errors. These were reviewed by the Force Crime Registrar (FCR) who confirmed the HOCR errors and corrected the records.

In light of the errors identified all N200s for 2021 – 2022 have been reviewed, this has again highlighted a number of errors in the recording of N200s that have now been corrected.

The review identified that a working practice in the Incident Management Unit (IMU) requiring staff to register an interest for the Designated Decision Makers (DDMs) for them to review modern slavery investigations was not always being followed. The existing working practice document has been reviewed and updated and IMU staff reminded to follow the process.

A force order entry has been published to clarify the recording requirements around modern slavery.

The FIB SPOC has agreed to request reclassification of investigations when she receives reasonable ground decisions from the Single Competent Authority (SCA). This will mitigate the risk of OICs failing to make the request.

An audit of recorded Modern Slavery investigations is included in the current year audit schedule and will enable a further review of HOCR compliance.

Online Child Sexual Abuse Team (OCSET) Investigations

An initial audit of 25 Indecent Image of Children (IIOC) investigations undertaken by CID/Child Abuse Trafficking Exploitation team (CATE) commissioned by D/Supt Middleton. After this initial sample a monthly/bi monthly small sample audit will be undertaken depending on the volume of packages.

This audit is in progress.

Audits Completed

The following audits have been completed since the last Assurance Board.

Single Online Home (SOH) and Contact Us

This audit reviewed 120 online communications received by Warwickshire Police via the Single Online Home (SOH) and Contact Us facilities. The nature of the communications was varied but all crimes / crime related incidents had received attention.

One third (40) of the communications reviewed contained reports of notifiable crimes. 60 SOH submissions were audited, and 30 notifiable crimes were disclosed within 27 of these, and 25 of these had been recorded at the time of the audit.

Out of 60 Contact Us submissions 16 notifiable crimes were disclosed within 13 of these, and 13 of these had been recorded at the time of the audit.

Although some notifiable crimes had not been recorded, the communications had been addressed but staff had failed to recognise crimes and / or ensure they were recorded.

All victims had been updated in accordance with their victim contracts, and most had been updated when their crimes had been filed. However, no evidence was found to show that other rights detailed in the Victims Code of Practice (VCoP) had been provided.

Public Safety Welfare (PSW) Incidents

A sample of 104 command and control incident logs with specific Public Safety Welfare (PSW) closure codes were reviewed to understand whether incidents containing reports of offences or potential offences are being missed and logs closed without sufficient victim service.

Only 3 crimes had been missed at the time of audit. There were some areas for improvement, particularly around the information obtained from the caller to determine the crime recording decision making process (CRDMP) and some gaps in HOCR knowledge around recording of public order offences.

Incident to Crime Audit – Violence

This audit is one of the 3 main Crime Data Integrity (CDI) audits conducted annually. This sample included 200 incidents which had been opened violence related STORM incident

opening codes. The initial identification and recording of notifiable crimes was good, and was further enhanced during the quality assurance process (QA) carried out by the Resolution Centre Investigation Management Unit (IMU).

Out of the audit sample 198 notifiable crimes were reported with 184 recorded at the time of audit a compliance of 92.9%. 140 of the reported crimes were recorded within 24 hrs a compliance of 76%. The main reasons for the delay in recording were:

- OCC not notifying IMU to record crimes when deferring incidents for diary appointments
- A failure to initially recognise/record crimes, which were subsequently recorded by the IMU after 24 hrs.

In addition to CDI compliance the audit assessed Victim Code compliance and investigative standards.

For Victim Code compliance the auditors found that 72% of victim updates had been undertaken in line with the agreed contact plan. There were 14 investigations where the victim's preference was unknown. When there had been significant developments with the investigation 68% of the records had updates indicating the victim had been informed. At the end of the investigation 72% of the records confirmed the victim had been told that it had been filed. While there are no specific targets for compliance there is ongoing work through the Victim Witness and Engagement Board to improve compliance with the Victim's Code.

Investigative standards were assessed by looking at how the Proportionate Investigation policy is applied and how that it is documented in accordance with guidance. The audit found that a quality investigation had been carried out, in accordance with appropriate directions, in respect of 66% investigations reviewed. Timely investigations were carried out in 72% of cases. The audit found evidence of effective/timely supervision in respect of 72% of the 184 investigations reviewed. Continued supervision was evident in respect of 80%. These findings have been discussed at the Investigations Standards and Outcomes Board and the Investigations Standards meeting.

Current Audit Activity

Child Protection Investigations - A monthly audit of 10 child protection investigations continues with the results provided to D/Supt Fowler.

Outcomes Audit – This audit has 2 elements:

1. Outcomes 1 – 10, 20 – 22. These are outcomes applied by the Designated Decision Makers (DDMs) in the Incident Management Unit (IMU). This is the first systematic review of their application of HOCR and national guidance around outcomes.
2. Outcomes 11 – 18. These are outcomes applied by supervisors without further quality assurance.

A request has been received from ACC Gardner to repeat an audit of the handling of covert product prior to the next anticipated Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office IPCO inspection in the autumn.

Appendix 1- Audit Schedule May 2022

Warwickshire Audit & Assurance schedule for 2022-2023												
Scheduled audits	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	Planned		In Progress		Complete		Paused					
	Assurance		CDI									
Dedicated Decision Maker (DDM) Out of Court Disposals Referrals												
Requests to review												
Incident to Crime - Violence. (CDI)												
Incident to Crime - Rape and Other Sexual Offences (CDI)												
Incident to Crime - Other Offences (CDI)												
Cancelled Crime (CDI)												
Classification -Modern Slavery - Audit recorded offences, intelligence logs. (CDI)												
Out of Court Disposals - Community Resolution, Cautions, Cannabis/Khat Warnings, PND (CDI)												
Outcomes 1- 18 (CDI)												
Classification - Harassment, Malicious Communications, Breach of Orders - Audit recorded offences (CDI)												
Outcomes 20 - 22 (CDI)												
Other Recording Routes - HAU, SOH, Contact Us (CDI)												
ASB Personal - (CDI)												
Assurance - Child Protection Investigations												
Assurance - Indecent Image of Children Investigations												
Assurance - Bail and RUI Audit CID Investigations												
Assurance - OP Zakynthos reiew.												
Assurance - Handling of Covert Product												