

Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee Report Summary

Meeting Date 29 November 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 audit schedule 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 report presented and accepted at Warwickshire Assurance Board in September 2022 is attached at Appendix A.

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 audit has been undertaken:

Athena Investigations Requiring Completion

Over 120 Athena investigations created since 2017 were identified as having a task Requires Completion unactioned. This indicates that the initial creation of the investigation had not been fully completed and transferred to the Investigation Management Unit (IMU) for Quality Assurance (QA) and Linking.

These investigations have been reviewed to ensure that there were no issues with the progression of the investigation and service to victims.

The review had identified that in most cases there had been a technical issue in Athena that had prevented the Officer in the Case (OIC) from completing the initial recording process. Most had gone on to create a new investigation meaning that there were duplicate offences recorded.

The Audit Officers are addressing the issues with these investigations.

Audits Completed

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

Child Protection Investigations Audit - A monthly sample of 10 investigations are audited to review the investigative response, safeguarding and voice of the child. These are reported to D/Superintendent Pete Hill and there is a process in place to provide feedback to officers and where required a further action.

Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) Investigations Audit – This audit was requested by D/Supt Middleton to review the response to investigations generated by the Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSET) team. Following an initial baseline sample of 25 each month 5 investigations are reviewed.

The audit reviews the timeliness of the investigation against the risk rating, investigative response and safeguarding of children and suspects.

The findings are reported to a monthly OCSET Tactical meeting, and where appropriate, actions raised to improve future activity.

Outcomes Audit - This audit had 2 elements:

1. Outcomes 1 – 10, 20 – 22. These are outcomes applied by the Designated Decision Makers (DDMs) in the IMU. This is the first systematic review of their application of HOCA and national guidance around outcomes.

2. Outcomes 11 – 18. These are outcomes applied by supervisors without further quality assurance.

The Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime (HOCR) require that all crimes must be assigned one of 22 outcomes. The outcome chosen must be an accurate representation of the investigation and meet the criteria set out in the rules. Accuracy is important for compliance with the Victim's Code, providing the Home Office with correct data and ensuring suspects are made aware that a crime has been attributed to them. A full explanation of outcomes can be found in the Outcomes Guide on the HOCR page of the force intranet.

The audit found that those outcomes applied by DDMs was of a high standard. The audit did identify an issue relating to Outcome 20 - *(Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action to be taken). It is not necessary for that further action to amount to criminal processes.*

There were a number of investigations created by the HAU following referrals where from the outset a decision was made that the response would be by another agency. To apply the outcome requires the victim or their representative to be aware of this decision, it was evident on some investigations that there had been no police contact with the victim. This has been raised with D/Supt Hill.

The audit examined 165 outcomes 10 – 18 that were applied by sergeants/supervisors usually without any further quality assurance. The audit found that just 70% had the correct outcome applied. 95 had a documented rationale by the supervisor to explain the reason for the outcome.

The documentation of victim updates and the safeguarding actions taken was not always present on the investigations audited.

Many of the issues identified are similar to those highlighted by HMICFRS in the Victim Service Assessment (VSA) audit. The findings have been verbally presented to the Investigation Standards and Outcome board and the Investigations Standards meeting and the audit report circulated to D/Chief Supt Baker and Chief Supt Bastone. A proposal to adopt a set of finalisation questions used by Essex Police is currently being considered.

Current Audit Activity

Audit of Referrals to HAU – The HAU are one of the other main reporting routes for crime and this audit is examining emails that contain referrals to assess compliance with HOCR.

The audit is due to be completed by the end of August.

Planned Audits

Handling of Covert Product – A revisit of an audit conducted earlier in the year in advance of a future Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) inspection. The audit reviews how covert product is stored, shared and managed once it has left the secure environment of the Covert Authorities Bureau (CAB) and the CYCOMMS application. (At the request of ACC Gardner this has now been rescheduled to January 2023).

ASB Personal Incidents – This audit has been scheduled to assess whether the risks around the recording of disclosed notifiable offences has been addressed by the improvement activity that has taken place.

Audit of Stop and Search – A request has been made to undertake an audit of stop and search records to provide an insight into compliance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and Force policy. The audit will include the review of body worn video if recorded during the search.

Proposed replication of VSA audit methodology – The audit schedule currently contains 3 large sample audits each year to assess HOCR compliance in respect of reported incidents of violence, sexual offences and other crime. These audits are intended to provide the force with a benchmark against the HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Inspection (CDI).

The force audits conducted since the last CDI inspection in 2019 have shown a consistent level of CDI compliance similar to that achieved during the inspection. With the recent experience of the Victim Services Assessment (VSA) inspection the force now has access to the audit methodology, assessment criteria and application by HMICFRS auditors.

It is proposed that the audit schedule is revised to facilitate a twice yearly combined CDI and VSA audit. The audit would have the following aspects:

- A large sample of incidents reporting violence, sexual and other offences. This replicates the CDI element of HMICFRS inspection.
- A sub-set of the above sample, 30 investigations for each crime type, is subject to a file review to follow the VSA methodology.
 - Call handling – Listening to calls and assessment of Threat Harm Risk Investigation Vulnerability Engagement (THRIVE)
 - Resourcing and deployment
 - Investigation – This aspect will look at the investigative response, victim code compliance and safeguarding through to the outcome. This is broadly the methodology that the FCR Audit Officers have been applying to their reviews of investigations.

As the force develops its response to the PEEL inspection report adopting the above audit methodology will assist in the ongoing monitoring of improvement activity. It is suggested that the first audit is undertaken after initial improvement activity has taken place with time to bed in.

The audit is not intended to replace ongoing quality assurance activity but to provide an objective assessment of progress. (This audit methodology was approved at Assurance Board).

Appendix 1- Audit Schedule October 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)												
VSA Audit												
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												
Assurance - THRIVE audit												
Stop and Search												