



An examination of how Dumfries and
Galloway Constabulary manages the very
high priorities of the Scottish Strategic
Assessment

For operational security reasons, small sections of this report have
been redacted. These are clearly indicated (*text redacted*)

December 2009

To monitor and improve the police service in Scotland



1. Executive summary

- 1.1 During the summer of 2009, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) conducted a high-level review examining how the eight Scottish police forces manage the very high priority (VHP) risk areas identified by the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment (see Appendix for a further explanation of these terms). This report presents our findings for Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary.
- 1.2 Overall, we found that Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary is well placed to develop and deliver a robust control strategy to manage those risks that pose the greatest threats to communities.
- 1.3 In particular, we found that the force manages the following areas well:
- ownership and commitment to the force control strategy from senior management;
 - identifying the staffing resources required to deliver the control strategy through the Resource and Business Continuity Group; and
 - monitoring the prevention, intelligence and enforcement activities for each of the control strategy priorities.
- 1.4 We identified the following key areas for improvement:
- the force's analytical capacity and resilience, and the capacity of its IT systems to support analytical work;
 - clearer links between the contents of briefings and control strategy priorities; and
 - using results analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of force activities.
- 1.5 We will be seeking assurance from the force that all the areas for improvement identified in section 10 are being addressed, and we request an update on progress by the end of March 2010.
- 1.6 In addition to reviewing how the force is managing the VHP areas, we also assessed its progress against recommendations from recent HMICS thematic inspections and the output from the self-assessment process undertaken in 2008. The findings of this work are summarised in sections 8 and 9 of this report.

2. Introduction

Background

- 2.1 During 2008 all Scottish forces completed an internal self-assessment exercise using the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. The intention was that forces would be the primary users of the self-assessment outputs, and that we would use the results to identify where further, more detailed, inspection work might be required.
- 2.2 Having reviewed the improvement action plans arising from each force's self-assessment, and how some of the evidence and related judgments were used in the process itself, we identified some specific areas for further examination, particularly around how forces manage the most serious risks identified through the Scottish Strategic Assessment. This was an area that had not been covered in detail by the self



assessment tool, and we wanted assurance that those risks were being managed effectively.

- 2.3 The 2009/10 Scottish Strategic Assessment was published in April 2009. We therefore took the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment as the starting point for this high-level follow-up. Our aim was to focus on what the Assessment had identified as the six VHP risk areas for Scottish policing – anti-social behaviour, terrorism, child protection, serious organised crime groups, drugs and violence – and within this to examine:
- how forces assess and prioritise risks;
 - how forces prioritise and co-ordinate activity related to these VHP areas, and how these activities are integrated into other force priorities; and
 - the impact of forces' activities in these areas over the last two years, i.e. what difference they have made.
- 2.4 The VHP risk areas remained broadly unchanged in the 2009/10 Strategic Assessment, apart from child protection now being included in the wider area of public protection. However, many of the recommended prevention, intelligence and enforcement (PIE) activities had been updated.
- 2.5 In addition to reviewing these six risk areas, we conducted a high-level assessment of forces' progress in implementing a) the recommendations from recent HMICS thematic inspection reports and b) the force-wide actions arising from their EFQM self-assessments.

Methodology

- 2.6 Data to inform our assessment was gathered through a combination of desktop research, and interviews and focus groups in forces. Forces were not required to prepare any additional information for this exercise.
- 2.7 The initial desktop research was undertaken by specialist advisers seconded from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) National Intelligence Model (NIM) team. The documents reviewed included forces' strategic assessments and control strategies, minutes from tasking and co-ordinating group meetings, intelligence requirements, policing plans and/or business plans and relevant performance information.
- 2.8 The purpose of this research phase was to examine how forces had addressed the priorities and recommendations in the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment, during 2008 and 2009.
- 2.9 In order to examine the impact of forces' activities on the VHP risk areas, we had intended to look at the indicators of the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF). We found few direct links, though, between the SPPF indicators and the six VHP risks, and we were therefore unable to make our assessments. The integration of the Scottish Strategic Assessment into the Framework is one of the national areas for improvement that we have identified.
- 2.10 We also reviewed both the outputs of the forces' self-assessment exercises and their progress in implementing the recommendations of recent HMICS thematic inspections.



The findings from each of these three research elements informed our subsequent interview and focus group questions.

- 2.11** The main aim of our visits was to obtain an up-to-date picture of how forces were managing the very high priority risks. The limited scope of our fieldwork means that our findings are necessarily high-level. The aspects that we covered in each force varied according to the findings of our desktop research. This approach has also meant that we have sometimes identified areas for improvement in one force that may not have been covered in other forces and therefore may not be unique to that force.
- 2.12** The fieldwork component of the inspection involved HMICS staff visiting Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary in August 2009. During this period we carried out interviews with individuals from the force and partner organisations. In addition we observed the force's strategic tasking and co-ordination group meeting.
- 2.13** We would like to thank Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary for the help and support we received in undertaking this work, and members of the ACPOS NIM team for their contribution to the desktop research.

3. Leadership of the strategic assessment and control strategy

- 3.1** The force executive provides clear leadership in developing and delivering the force control strategy. The chief constable endorses the strategic assessment and control strategy at the Force Policy Group meeting. The chief superintendent, who is a member of the force executive, chairs the force strategic tasking and co-ordinating group and is personally involved in setting priorities.
- 3.2** In most other forces the chief constable chairs the strategic tasking and co-ordinating group, and is therefore more directly involved in setting the force's priorities and establishing a clear direction. Given the size of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, and the good communication and close working relationships among the force executive, the current arrangements work well. The force may wish to keep these structures under review, to make sure that leadership of these important elements of the NIM process continues to be effective.
- 3.3** The force further demonstrates effective leadership through its practice of assigning strategic leads (action managers) to each of the priority areas of its control strategy. This promotes corporate ownership of the priority and raises staff awareness as each action manager takes responsibility for driving VHP activity throughout the force. Action managers are also charged with developing preventative, enforcement and investigative (PIE) actions to address their priority areas. This approach strengthens governance and accountability, as action managers are held to account for delivering the control strategy in their priority areas.
- 3.4** There is good integration of the force's planning and priority setting processes. The chief constable is the lead for the community safety strand of Dumfries and Galloway's single outcome agreement (SOA), '*Where people feel safe and respected in the community*', and there are clear links between the force's control strategy, its policing plan, the *Community Promise*, and the SOA.
- 3.5** There is scope to improve staff awareness of both the control strategy and force intelligence requirement. The force uses a range of methods to raise staff awareness of force priorities, including posters, the force intranet and daily briefings. Divisional staff



are encouraged to attend the fortnightly tactical tasking and co-ordinating meetings to improve their understanding of the process, and good use is made of specific intelligence requirements for localised problems or specific crimes. However, although staff were well aware of the force priorities, and in particular the themes of the force's policing plan, knowledge of the intelligence requirement and the control strategy was less widespread.

4. Assessment of risk

- 4.1 The force's strategic assessment is based on a systematic and robust assessment of risk, using a recognised risk-assessment model, and reflects both national and local priorities. It includes a matrix that clearly demonstrates the links between the Scottish Strategic Assessment and associated PIE recommendations, the force's previous recommendations, subsequent actions and current recommendations.
- 4.2 There is potential for the force to make greater use of partnership data. Although the force's strategic assessment is informed by police information and intelligence, and open source information from other agencies, analysts reported that it can sometimes be difficult to obtain data from partner organisations. The force should explore how data-sharing with external organisations could be improved.
- 4.3 The force's priorities are also informed by extensive community consultation. For example, for a number of years the force has run annual consultation days, attended by police officers and staff, partner organisations, elected members and members of "Community Voice" (members of the public who act as community advocates). These consultation days provide a forum for discussions between the force and its stakeholders, allowing the force to explain some of the significant but less apparent risk areas and the resources required to manage them, as well as listening to community concerns.
- 4.4 *(text redacted)*
- 4.5 Divisions do not produce their own strategic assessments or control strategies, and instead look to the force control strategy to direct their activities. Given the size of the force, and the geographic and demographic similarities of the areas it covers, the value of developing separate divisional strategic assessments is questionable. The force should ensure that where local priorities are agreed at divisional level, there is clear risk-based evidence for doing so.
- 4.6 Dumfries and Galloway Community Safety Partnership has produced its own strategic assessment, prepared by a police analyst funded by the council. There are clear links between the force control strategy and this partnership strategic assessment.
- 4.7 Force analytical capacity is often stretched and can suffer from a lack of resilience. In one area, for example, insufficient analytical resources meant that a tactical assessment had to be produced by a field intelligence officer. The creation of a senior analyst post has had a positive impact on both the analytical staff and the quality of the work they carry out. The force has been unsuccessful in filling the position during a temporary period of absence. Nor does it have a separate principal analyst post.
- 4.8 Analytical capability is further constrained by the force's IT systems. The force's command and control system, IMAGE, cannot be interrogated to produce analytical data. Its crime file database, though searchable, is sometimes not properly completed by staff



entering information such as whether or not drugs and alcohol were involved in an incident. This latter omission is of particular concern given that the force is about to include alcohol as one of its priority areas.

5. Resources to support the control strategy

- 5.1 The force has a practical and pragmatic approach to dealing with the resource and operational requirements of its control strategy. Weekly meetings of its Resource and Business Continuity (RABC) group address the present and future business needs of the force and are clearly focused on the control strategy priorities. The group is chaired by the chief superintendent (a member of the force executive who chairs the strategic tasking and co-ordinating group) and all relevant senior positions are represented. All senior staff whom we interviewed as part of our fieldwork strongly endorsed this approach.
- 5.2 The force has yet to review systematically what training it needs to provide in order to deliver its control strategy. The development of a training strategy, which was being prepared at the time of our fieldwork, provides an opportunity for the force to address this. However, in common with other forces, there has been training in some VHP areas, notably the force has delivered briefings for staff (and partners) on counter-terrorism and training on child protection.
- 5.3 Again in common with other forces in Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary has limited understanding of the detailed costs associated with particular PIE activities. Without this understanding, it cannot draw conclusions about the relative cost-effectiveness of the different activities it undertakes. The new financial coding regime currently planned to be introduced across Scotland from April 2010 should assist in this area. The force should ensure that this regime is able to provide information that will help it to understand the costs related to delivering its control strategy.
- 5.4 The force has recently undergone some limited restructuring, designed to help it respond more effectively to the requirements of the control strategy. This has included the reorganisation of its public protection unit, which now includes an information-sharing team to improve the protection of children and vulnerable adults and is responsible for co-ordinating domestic violence and youth offending work across different services. Other changes have included the reorganisation of the Force Intelligence Bureau and, as mentioned previously, the appointment of a senior analyst.
- 5.5 There is scope for the force to improve the strategic management of partnership working. Although we found many examples of effective collaborative working at a local level, most were being undertaken informally. The force should ensure that the potential of partnership working to address the range of VHPs and contribute to delivering the control strategy is fully realised.
- 5.6 The disparate organisation of community safety resources in Dumfries and Galloway Council has restricted the extent of effective partnership working between the force and the council in recent years. An officer seconded from the force has now completed a review of the council's community safety organisational structures. The recommendations of the review, which have yet to be implemented, should be acted upon as soon as possible.



6. Activity related to the VHP risks

- 6.1 Our desktop research revealed clear links between the PIE recommendations in the 2007/08 Scottish Strategic Assessment and subsequent force control strategies. All recommendations are discussed and agreed at the strategic tasking and co-ordinating group, with the force taking account of local elements where relevant. The force should ensure that it continues to adopt a robust approach to developing PIE activities, giving due consideration to their potential effectiveness. This is of particular importance when it is diverging from the recommendations in the Scottish Strategic Assessment.
- 6.2 *(text redacted)*
- 6.3 Force briefings are not aligned with the force control strategy. The selection of material to be included in briefings to staff appears to be arbitrary and ad-hoc. Many staff still rely on self-briefings. The introduction of electronic screens in a number of stations presents an opportunity to introduce a more consistent approach to briefings linked to the control strategy priorities.
- 6.4 Although the force has encouraged the partnerships it is involved in to adopt the tasking and co-ordinating group meeting format, it does not involve partners in its own similar internal meetings. Greater involvement of partners in the force tasking and co-ordinating process at both strategic and tactical levels could help the force to tackle the full range of VHP areas in its control strategy.
- 6.5 The following paragraphs give a brief overview of some of the activities undertaken by the force in managing the VHP risks.
- 6.6 **Anti-social behaviour** - there are many examples of the force working effectively with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and, in common with other forces, this is the focus of much of the day-to-day work of divisions. Examples of initiatives include the joint anti-social behaviour tasking and co-ordinating group in Dumfries and a joint social work, health and police operation to counter underage drinking.
- 6.7 **Terrorism** - *(text redacted)*
- 6.8 **Public protection** - the force makes good use of the Impact Nominal Index (INI) system to share information on 'persons of interest', and provides training in child protection to its community officers. Frontline staff in focus groups also showed a good level of knowledge of local sex offenders. There are a number of partnership initiatives in this area, including a text messaging initiative to community partners to alert them when a vulnerable person goes missing. The force has also recently extended a joint pathfinder project to improve information-sharing about children affected by domestic abuse, to the whole force.
- 6.9 In April, 2008 HMIE published a report of its joint inspection of services to protect children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway Council area. One of the areas of activity highlighted for improvement was the force's recording systems. The force has since reviewed its procedures and is exploring IT systems that might further enhance its ability to manage this kind of information.
- 6.10 **Drugs** - the force recognises drugs to be a significant problem. *(text redacted)*.



6.11 Serious organised crime groups and violence - *(text redacted)*

7. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the control strategy

7.1 The force has a systematic process for assessing progress against its control strategy. It has developed a set of performance indicators for each control strategy priority, directly linked to the prevention, intelligence and enforcement recommendations, which are monitored monthly. Performance is formally reviewed at the six-monthly strategic tasking and co-ordinating group meeting, where each of the action managers is held to account for their respective priorities. The force is now integrating these measures into its existing performance management regime, in order to rationalise its data collection and align reporting more closely with the Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF) where possible.

7.2 Many of the indicators used by the force reflect levels of operational activity (i.e. numbers of visits, reports, searches, etc) rather than the outcomes these activities are intended to achieve. Assessing the impact of different activities or changes in operational approaches is important. On their own, it is not always clear whether an increase or decrease in numbers reflects good or bad performance, nor what outcomes they should reflect. While we accept that this is a challenge for some of the VHP risk areas, clearer links between activity levels and outcomes would help the force to monitor its control strategy more effectively.

7.3 In common with most other forces, Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary needs to strengthen arrangements for managing performance against its control strategy in two further areas:

- results analysis is not yet undertaken routinely, so there is no basis on which to assess the effectiveness of particular interventions; and
- *(text redacted)*

7.4 Linking outcomes to PIE activities remains a challenging area for all forces. While the strategic assessment covers emerging trends in the VHP risk areas, these are not linked to specific force activities. Greater use of results analyses would give the force more opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of its control strategy.

8. Progress against the recommendations of recent HMICS thematic inspections

8.1 HMICS thematic inspections focus on particular themes affecting policing. Topics are identified following consultation between HMICS and ACPOS, the Scottish Government, police authorities and other stakeholders. They can also arise from forces' self-assessments or reflect particular public or national issues. Over the past two years we have carried out eleven thematic inspections, the recommendations of which are intended to support continuous improvement in the police service in Scotland.

8.2 As part of this inspection we took the opportunity to review what progress the force had made against outstanding recommendations. This was not a significant element of our fieldwork and we did not conduct a comprehensive review of all outstanding recommendations.

8.3 A number of recommendations are in fact being taken forward nationally, through various ACPOS working groups such as the National Custody Forum. We are currently in



discussion with ACPOS about arrangements to monitor the progress in these instances and for this reason have excluded such recommendations from this review. Nor did we examine progress against the recommendations of our thematic inspections on *CONTEST: Prevent* and *The Police Use of Firearms*, as these will be followed up separately.

- 8.4 Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary has a systematic approach to ensuring that recommendations from HMICS thematic inspections are considered and acted upon where appropriate. Each thematic inspection report is assigned a lead officer who prepares a report for the force Policy Group, outlining the force position against each recommendation. Progress is then monitored at six-monthly intervals by the force's Policy Group and the council's Police, Fire and Rescue Committee.
- 8.5 The force has made good progress in implementing recommendations across a number of areas. Examples include:
- the introduction of procedures whereby the force communication centre now contacts people who report a crime or incident, to update them on how the force has responded;
 - a review and update of the force's detention of children protocol, to meet all recommendations from the thematic on the care of detained children;
 - a pilot of the new custody IT system for ACPOS, which has improved both the risk-management of people held in custody and the management information that can be recorded; and
 - the introduction of arrangements to conduct Multi-Agency Risk-Assessment Conferences (MARAC) for domestic abuse incidents.
- 8.6 While the force has started working with the NHS to improve medical services for people in police custody, progress here has been relatively slow. The force is awaiting proposals from NHS Dumfries and Galloway to establish a system similar to that recognised by us as good practice in Tayside.
- 8.7 The force intends to monitor the impact of the changes it has made in a number of areas, such as the effectiveness of its new arrangements to contact people who report an incident. There is the potential to report these in a more systematic way to the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee, as current progress reports tend to concentrate on just the implementation of outstanding recommendations.

9. Progress against EFQM self-assessment action plans

- 9.1 In 2008 we changed our inspection methodology to a system of annual self-assessment. This was conducted through a quality improvement framework that used the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. Police forces and services used this self-assessment model to inform their planning and performance regimes. In this way, they were able to decide themselves what their priorities for improvement and action should be.
- 9.2 This was a new approach for both HMICS and forces. One early learning point was the finding that our question set required participants to focus on forces' processes and internal communication rather than operational activities or outcomes.



- 9.3 The self-assessment exercise was to be carried out by individual divisions and departments, in order to identify separate improvement actions at these levels. Forces were also encouraged to draw up a force-wide action plan to capture any common areas for improvement. It is progress against the force plan that forms the main basis of our comments here.
- 9.4 For the purpose of the exercise, Dumfries and Galloway divided the organisation into three units - a single headquarters department and the two territorial divisions. The resulting force plan contained six force-wide actions.
- 9.5 The force has subsequently developed a single action plan covering force-wide areas for improvement emerging not just from the self-assessment (four actions) but from its recent staff survey and staff conferences (11 actions). Action managers have been assigned to all resulting actions, all of which have a deadline for completion of end of 2009.
- 9.6 The force has made progress in some specific areas, including:
- developing standard operating procedures for business continuity, which have been tested operationally and reviewed; and
 - establishing a continuous improvement group, which has launched a staff suggestion scheme.
- 9.7 The force intends to provide a full report of progress against all the actions to the Police, Fire and Rescue Committee in autumn of this year. The force should also consider how it intends to assess the impact of its improvement activities.
- 9.8 We had already had some discussions with forces about the 2008 self-assessment process prior to this work. These discussions, along with the findings from this review, have informed the development of the 2009 process, which we asked forces to complete during October and November.



10. Areas for improvement

No	Area for Improvement	Report Reference
1.	Staff awareness of the priorities of the force control strategy.	3.5
2.	The availability of data from partner organisations to inform the force's strategic assessment.	4.2
3.	The use of a standardised risk-assessment methodology at divisional level.	4.5
4.	The resilience of the force's analytical capacity.	4.7
5.	The capacity of the force's IT systems to support analytical work.	4.8
6.	The assessment of training required to deliver the force control strategy.	5.2
7.	<i>(text redacted)</i>	
8.	Briefing directly linked to force control strategy priorities.	6.3
9.	More routine use of results analysis to identify the most effective activities for managing the VHP risk areas.	7.3



Appendix

The National Intelligence Model

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is an intelligence-led business model used by the police to manage risk, identify operational priorities and allocate resources.

The **strategic assessment** is a key component of NIM and provides an overview of long-term issues that involve criminality or have community safety implications. Strategic assessments are produced at national, force and divisional levels.

The **control strategy** is derived from the strategic assessment and sets out the long-term priorities to be tackled.

Those priorities that are deemed to be of greatest risk are known as 'very high priority' risk areas (VHPs). The national VHPs are currently anti-social behaviour, terrorism, public protection, serious organised crime groups, drugs and violence.

The control strategy also identifies **prevention, intelligence and enforcement** recommendations (PIEs) that outline activity to tackle the VHPs.