The Strategic Policing Requirement

An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats to public order

Contents

Glossary

ACPO   Association of Chief Police Officers

AEP   attenuating energy projectiles (often referred to as rubber bullets or baton rounds)

Association of   a professional association of police officers of assistant chief
Chief Police   constable rank and above, and their police staff equivalents, in
Officers   England, Wales and Northern Ireland; leads and coordinates operational policing nationally; a company limited by guarantee and a statutory consultee; its president is a full-time post under the Police Reform Act 2002

authorised   instructions which have been approved by the College of
professional   Policing for use by the police in the course of their duties;
practice   authorised professional practice is available in various subject areas that are relevant to the Strategic Policing Requirement

bronze   a member of staff from one of the emergency services who
commander   controls an aspect of the incident response, implementing the silver commander's tactics

capabilities   what forces are able to do to counter the Strategic Policing Requirement threats, often working collaboratively with other police forces and national agencies

capacity   the combined number of police assets and resources available to respond to SPR threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought, drawn from local, regional and national strategies

Chief Constables'   the senior operational decision-making body for the Association
Council   of Chief Police Officers; brings together chief constables of police forces in the United Kingdom

chief officer   in police forces outside London: assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable; in the Metropolitan Police: commander, deputy assistant commissioner, assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner; in the City of London Police: commander, assistant commissioner, commissioner

collaboration	activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes activity between forces and with the public and private sectors, including contractors and business partners
College of Policing	the professional body for policing; its principal areas of responsibility include supporting police forces and other organisations to work together to protect the public and prevent crime
commoditised information technology	information technology where there is almost a total lack of meaningful difference between the hardware from different manufacturers
connectivity	the requirement for resources to be connected locally, between forces, and nationally; this should include being able to communicate securely, access relevant intelligence mechanisms and link effectively with national co-ordinating arrangements
consistency	the ability of the main specialist capabilities (whether in the police service or in other emergency services and agencies) to work together to ensure an effective response to the SPR threats
contribution	what forces supply to the national capacity which is aggregated to meet the national threats
control room	force facility that receives and manages emergency and non-emergency calls and manages the deployment of officers
fieldwork	inspection carried out within police forces at their premises or in their areas
front line	members of police forces who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and to enforce the law
go-forward tactics	tactics used by the police in public order situations that go beyond the containment of disorder; they allow the police to take positive action to end incidents of disorder before they escalate; tactics include advancing to disperse crowds, making arrests and working in situations where attenuating energy projectiles (AEPs) are used

gold commander	the person in overall charge of an incident; not usually at the scene but in a control room known as gold command, where they will develop an appropriate strategy for the police service to adopt when dealing with the incident
industry standard	an established standard, norm, or requirement in a particular area of business
interoperability	the ability of one force's systems and procedures to work with those of another force or forces
Mercury	a computer system used by the National Police Co-ordination Centre and police forces that assists in managing the mutual aid deployment of police resources across force geographic boundaries
mutual aid	provision of police officers or other assistance by one police force to another for the purpose of meeting any special demand, either on the application of the chief officer of the force receiving the assistance, or at the direction of the Home Secretary; the system was recommended by Desborough
national policing business areas	there are 11 national policing business areas, each led by a chief constable: uniformed operations, crime, terrorism and allied matters, criminal justice, equality, diversity and human rights, finance and resources, futures, information management, local policing and partnerships, performance management, and workforce development
national threats	the five threats referred to in Part A of the *Strategic Policing Requirement:* terrorism, civil emergencies, organised crime, public-order threats and large-scale cyber incidents
NPL	National Policing Lead – a police officer, usually a chief officer, who is responsible for developing policy and standards for defined areas of policing
NPoCC	National Police Co-ordination Centre

PCC	police and crime commissioner: statutory officer established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, elected for a police area after the abolition of police authorities; the PCC is required to secure the maintenance of the police force for that area and its efficiency and effectiveness; he or she holds the chief constable to account for the performance of the force, and appoints and may, after due process, remove the chief constable from office
POA	Police Objective Analysis: a method of collecting data from police forces, used by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in order to compile police workforce statistics
Police Professional Body	the body set up to increase professionalism in policing, now called the College of Policing
police regions	the nine police regions are: London, South East, South West, Wales, West Midlands, Eastern, East Midlands, North East, and North West
procurement	the acquisition of goods, services or works from an external supplier
PSU	police support unit is a formation of resources for public order policing; the composition of a PSU is standardised across all of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and consists of: one inspector; three sergeants; eighteen constables; and three drivers; all trained and equipped to national standards with three suitably equipped personnel carrier vehicles
RICCs	regional information coordination centres: units in each police region that work with the National Police Co-ordination Centre to facilitate the mobilisation of police resources on mutual aid
silver commander	the person who takes the strategic direction from a gold commander and creates tactics that are implemented by bronze commanders
SPR	Strategic Policing Requirement
STRA	strategic threat and risk assessment: a process by which police forces analyse information about threats and risks against which they are required to commit resources

Preface

The breadth of requirements that are set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)[1] are outside the scope of a single inspection. Therefore, it has been necessary to plan a series of inspections so that the police response to all of the national threats can be examined individually and in-depth over that period.

This report is one of three reports about how forces comply with the SPR which is being published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) this year. It examines how well the police service has met the requirements of the SPR in relation to the threat to public order.

A report examining how well police forces have established the arrangements that the SPR requires them to have in place to counter a number of specified threats to national security and public safety was published by HMIC on 10 April 2014.[2] This report contains recommendations about how forces can improve the way they comply with the SPR.

A further report examines how well the police service has met the requirements of the SPR in relation to the threat of a large-scale cyber incident[3].

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[1] *Strategic Policing Requirement,* HM Government, July 2012. Available from:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-policing-requirement
[2] *The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement,* HMIC, April 2014. Available from
www.hmic.gov.uk/publication/an-inspection-of-the-arrangements-that-police-forces-have-in-place-to-meet-the-strategic-policing-requirement/
[3] *The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats of a large-scale cyber incident (including criminal attack)*, HMIC, June 2014. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk

Summary

The introduction of police and crime commissioners[4] (PCCs) across England and Wales represented a significant reform of the way in which the police are accountable to the public. PCCs are democratically elected individuals who set the policing priorities which chief constables[5] must have regard to. These new arrangements are part of the Government's programme to improve local accountability. The Government recognised, however, that there were some aspects of policing that required a national response, and that there was a need for a balance between localism and meeting national requirements.

As a result the *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) was published in July 2012. This document sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The SPR respects the operational independence of the police service, advising what, in strategic terms, it needs to achieve, but not how it should achieve it.

The particular threats specified in Part A of the SPR, and referred to as the national threats in this report, are:

- terrorism;

- civil emergencies;

- organised crime;

- public order threats (the subject of this report); and

- large-scale cyber incidents.

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[4] The term "police and crime commissioners" is used as shorthand so as to make reference to police and crime commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in the Metropolitan Police District and the Common Council of the City of London.

[5] Reference in this document to a "chief constable" is intended to apply to every chief constable in England and Wales, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, and the Commissioner of the City of London Police.

Part B specifies the policing response that is required nationally, in conjunction with other national agencies, to counter these threats.[6] This policing response is described in the SPR as follows:

- *"the combined national **capacity** of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national government strategies. Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective **contributions** they will make to it;*

- *the **capabilities** that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes;*

- *the requirement for **consistency** among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated with, or work effectively alongside, each other. In some instances this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies; and*

- *the **connectivity** arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be co-ordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other agencies – such as the Security Service and, from 2013, the National Crime Agency. The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners."[7]*

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[6] *Strategic Policing Requirement,* HM Government, July 2012,SPR paragraph 1.6
[7] Op cit.

HMIC's role and purpose

The SPR specifically directs HMIC to "*provide assurance that the preparation and delivery [of SPR requirements] have been subject to a proportionate and risk-based testing and inspection regime*".[8]

HMIC has no authority to inspect PCCs. Therefore, this report is focused on the duty of the chief constable, which is set down in the SPR in the following terms: "*Chief constables must have regard to both the police and crime plan and the SPR when exercising their functions. Their police and crime commissioners will hold them to account for doing so.*"[9]

The meaning of 'have regard to' is explained in the SPR in the following terms: "*It is not uncommon for legislation to require public bodies to 'have regard to' guidance, codes of practice or other material. The effect is that the police and crime commissioner and chief constable should follow the Strategic Policing Requirement unless they are satisfied that, in the particular circumstances, there are good reasons not to. It does not mean that either the police and crime commissioner or the chief constable has to follow the requirement blindly, but they should not depart from it without good reason (and should be prepared to be able to justify any departure from it on a case by case basis).*"[10]

Methodology

In order to give proper consideration to the expectations set out in the SPR, HMIC is undertaking a series of inspections over the next three years to provide appropriate, in-depth, evidence-based review and analysis. This report is one of a series of reports as to forces' responses to the SPR.

This report is based on data and documentary evidence provided by all 43 police forces in England and Wales in July 2013. It includes supporting fieldwork, conducted in 18 forces, between September and November 2013. It looks in-depth

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[8] SPR paragraph 1.15
[9] SPR paragraph 1.11
[10] SPR paragraph 1.9

at how police forces, individually and collectively, have responded to the SPR in relation to the threat to public order to date.

A further report also published by HMIC this year will provide a detailed examination of police forces' responses to the threat from a large-scale cyber incident. HMIC will give more detailed consideration to the other national threats in the next three years.

The methodology used in this inspection is explained in more detail in the introduction to this report.

Findings

Capacity and contribution

We found that chief constables understood their role to provide sufficient trained officers to respond to the national threat to public order. HMIC confirmed that they were meeting the national requirement of 297 Police Support Units (PSUs). However the *National Policing Requirement*[11] (NPR) does not take into account the need, on occasions, for police forces in England and Wales to support Police Scotland or the Police Service of Northern Ireland. We believe that this could cause a problem at times of high demand across the whole of the UK. Representatives from UK police forces, supported by the Home Office, were working through this problem during this inspection with a view to finding a solution. HMIC examined how well female and black and minority ethnic (BME) officers were represented in the number of officers trained to the national standard. We found that the proportion of BME officers in public order roles was the same as their proportion in non-public order related front-line roles; the proportion of women was less than half of their proportion in non-public order front-line roles.

We also examined the level of capacity that forces had assessed as necessary to respond to a local threat. For each force, HMIC compared the number of PSUs they declared they had with the number of PSUs that they told us they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder. We found that in five forces, while they complied with the national requirement, they did not have enough PSUs to meet their assessments

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[11] *National Policing Requirement*, ACPO, 2012

of the local threat. On the other hand, we found that 14 forces had numbers of trained PSUs at a level at least twice the number that they had assessed as necessary to meet their local threat.

Most forces, 38 of the 43, considered public order in their STRAs, although only 33 STRAs were sufficiently robust to inform force decisions about capacity. It is disappointing to find that there are a number of police forces that are either still not using the threat assessment process to its full effect or are not using it at all. Even if forces do assess threats, risks and harm, they do not always use the information to decide on what resources are needed.

Capability

All officers who carry out public order policing require specialist training to standards defined in the College of Policing curriculum. We found that forces had 769 PSUs trained to this standard in July 2013, which is sufficient to meet the national requirement of 297 PSUs.

Public order commanders must also be trained to nationally agreed standards and accredited as operationally competent. There is not a national requirement for the number of public order trained commanders in the same way as there is for PSUs – forces decide the number and level of commanders that they require. Our analysis of the data returned by forces indicated that sufficient levels of accredited public order trained commanders to provide cover during widespread disorder were not always in place. For example, three forces had only one trained and accredited gold commander. These forces were at risk of not having the necessary command capability should a public order incident occur. Also there was not a formal agreement in place as to how forces should request assistance from other forces.

There is a sound understanding of national capabilities to respond to public order threats and what needs to be done to develop and maintain this capability. This understanding was assisted by work commissioned by the national policing lead for public order and delivered by the College of Policing. This work asked forces to complete a self-assessment of their public order capability levels.

In the 18 forces we visited, we checked the public order equipment used in their PSUs and found that in all cases they had the necessary equipment. However, we found that different specifications meant that the equipment was not always compatible for use with equipment from other forces.

The National Police Co-ordination Centre (NPoCC) was proving to be effective in co-ordinating national resources. It had sufficient information to understand what resources were available to deal with public order incidents and to mobilise resources to respond to threats. The NPoCC tests national mobilisation of resources through the co-ordination of regional mobilisation exercises against targets set in the Police National Public Order Mobilisation Plan. We found that the plan did not specify what the term 'mobilised' actually meant in practice and this led to forces interpreting what it meant differently. A revised plan clarifying the term 'mobilised' has been prepared but not yet issued to police forces. This raised doubt over how useful comparisons were between forces about how fast they are able to mobilise their resources. Our analysis of six national[12] mobilisation exercises co-ordinated by the NPoCC identified that in half of them, the National Public Order Mobilisation Plan target of ten percent of the national PSU requirement for mutual aid to be mobilised within one hour was not met. The reasons for not meeting the target were not provided in two of the three exercise debriefs completed by the forces.

Our unannounced visits to force control rooms to test in-force mobilisation showed significant failings. Only a third of the 18 forces visited could respond effectively to a test scenario that required them to identify and muster the required trained and equipped public order personnel. In the remainder, unacceptable delays were caused by the time it took to locate and contact the trained staff. This is not satisfactory – the police service must be able to respond swiftly to the requirement for national mobilisation.

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[12] The six mobilisation exercises were conducted in the following police regions: London, Wales, South East, East, North East and North West

Consistency

HMIC found public order professional practice was consistent and generally good; it was strongest in regions where PSUs from different forces trained together. Except in a small number of forces, we found that officers were trained in and used the same public order tactics. The ability of forces to work together is improving as a result of joint training, carrying out exercises together and joint deployments. We were told by some officers that minor differences in training and practice between forces cause problems for joint working.

HMIC looked at procurement and how consistently this was carried out in all forces. HMIC found that the Home Office's regulatory framework did not take into account the procurement requirements in the SPR specifically. We interviewed procurement managers who considered that a consistent approach could only be achieved if forces agree a common specification; this agreement has so far proved difficult to secure. We found that some forces were trying to address this by creating regional groups that could help deliver greater consistency in procurement.

Connectivity

The problems faced by forces as they responded to the August 2011 disorder, using the structures in place at the time, led to the creation of the NPoCC. HMIC found that all forces were working with the NPoCC through a network of co-ordinators in regional units known as Regional Information Co-ordination Centres (RICCs). Interviewees in various roles across six of the 18 forces provided information that described a co-operative relationship with the NPoCC that led to effective mobilisation of resources at times of need.

The NPoCC also co-ordinates a programme of mobilisation exercises undertaken by police forces and regions. These exercises enable the Centre to understand the availability of resources and how quickly they can be deployed to respond to incidents. Overall we found that chief constables are co-operating with the arrangements for mobilising resources across force boundaries.

Conclusions

Our inspection has led us to conclude that HMIC can provide assurance that chief constables are having regard to the SPR "*when exercising their functions*"[13] in relation to public order. We found that the level of resources dedicated to the police response to the national threat to public order met the national requirement of 297 PSUs. However, this requirement does not fully take into account the potential for requests for support from Scotland and Northern Ireland. We think the NPR should take this into account. The response to this national threat was the best developed of all the responses we found during our inspection.

Recommendations

All recommendations made as a result of the SPR inspection are contained in the report of HMIC's '*An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement*' which is available at www.hmic.gov.uk.

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[13] SPR paragraph 1.11

Introduction

This report sets out the findings of an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC),[14] which examined how well police forces have met the requirements that the *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) stipulates them to have in place so they can respond to threats to public order.

The introduction of police and crime commissioners[15] (PCCs) across England and Wales represented a significant reform of the way in which the police are accountable to the public. PCCs are democratically elected individuals who set the policing priorities which chief constables must have regard to. These new arrangements are part of the Government's programme to improve local accountability. The Government recognised, however, that there were some aspects of policing that required a national response, and that there was a need for a balance between localism and meeting national requirements.

As a result the *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) was published in July 2012.[16] This document sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The SPR respects the operational independence of the police service, advising what, in strategic terms, it needs to achieve, but not how it should achieve it.

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[14] Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is an independent inspectorate. It has a legal responsibility under section 54 of the Police Act 1996 to inspect forces in England and Wales, and to report on their efficiency and effectiveness.
[15] The term "police and crime commissioners" is used as shorthand so as to make reference to police and crime commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in the Metropolitan Police District and the Common Council of the City of London. Reference in this document to a "chief constable" is intended to apply to every chief constable in England and Wales, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, and the Commissioner of the City of London Police.
[16] Issued pursuant to section 37A Police Act 1996.

Part A of the SPR specifies those threats to national security and safety that either affect multiple police force areas, or may require resources to be brought together from multiple police force areas. The SPR acknowledges that many of these threats overlap, but for the sake of clarity the SPR presents them separately as:

- *"terrorism, which the National Security Risk Assessment[17] identifies as a Tier One risk;*

- *other civil emergencies that are defined as a Tier One risk in the National Security Risk Assessment and require an aggregated response across police force boundaries;*

- *organised crime, which the National Security Risk Assessment identifies as a Tier Two risk. The UK threat assessment of organised crime identifies that offending is mostly motivated by financial profit, but there are exceptions, such as child sexual exploitation. Large scale cybercrime, border security, and economic crime may have an organised crime dimension;*

- *threats to public order or public safety that cannot be managed by a single police force acting alone;*

- *a large-scale cyber incident, which the National Security Risk Assessment identifies as a Tier One risk (together with the risk of a hostile attack upon cyberspace by other states). The crime threat at the national level may be a major incident, such as a criminal attack on a financial institution to gather data or money, or it may be an aggregated threat, where many people or businesses across the UK are targeted. It includes the response to a failure of technology on which communities depend and which may also be considered a civil emergency."[18]*

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[17] The *National Security Risk Assessment* is a classified document produced by the Cabinet Office. It is partly reproduced in the *National Security Strategy* (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/.../national-security-strategy.pdf) and the *National Risk Assessment* (https://www.gov.uk/risk-assessment-how-the-risk-of-emergencies-in-the-uk-is-assessed).

[18] SPR paragraph 2.2

For the purposes of this inspection, HMIC considers 'threat' to mean: the likelihood of an incident occurring that involves terrorism, organised crime, public disorder, civil emergency or large-scale cyber-crime. 'Risk' refers to how factors such as population density in relation to crime and terrorism, or houses on flood plains in relation to the likelihood of civil emergencies, would alter the threat. The SPR also refers to 'harm', which HMIC takes to mean the impact of a crime or event, for example, injury, damage or fear among the public.[19]

In this report we only consider the "*Threats to public order or public safety that cannot be managed by a single police force acting alone".[20]*

Part B specifies the policing response that is required nationally, in concert with other national agencies, to counter these threats.[21] This policing response is described in the SPR in the following terms:

- *"the combined national* **capacity** *of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national government strategies. Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective* **contributions** *they will make to it;*

- *the* **capabilities** *that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes;*

- *the requirement for* **consistency** *among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated with, or work effectively alongside, each other. In some instances this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies; and*

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[19] These are definitions created by HMIC solely for the purposes of this report. Different definitions exist elsewhere.
[20] SPR paragraph 2.2
[21] SPR paragraph 1.6

- *the **connectivity** arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be co-ordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other agencies – such as the Security Service and, from 2013, the National Crime Agency. The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners."*[22]

This report examines how well police forces have responded to these requirements in relation to public order since the SPR was published in July 2012. Our inspection responds directly to the expectation contained within the SPR that, "*Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will provide assurance that the preparation and delivery of those requirements set out within the Strategic Policing Requirement have been subject to a proportionate and risk-based testing and inspection regime.*"[23]

Although both PCCs and chief constables are required to 'have regard to' the SPR in the execution of their respective duties, HMIC has no authority to inspect PCCs. Therefore, this report is focused on the duty of the chief constable, which is set down in the SPR in the following terms: "*Chief constables must have regard to both the police and crime plan and the Strategic Policing Requirement when exercising their functions. Their police and crime commissioners will hold them to account for doing so.*"[24]

The meaning of 'have regard to' is explained in the SPR: "*It is not uncommon for legislation to require public bodies to 'have regard to' guidance, codes of practice or other material. The effect is that the police and crime commissioner and chief constable should follow the Strategic Policing Requirement unless they are satisfied that, in the particular circumstances, there are good reasons not to. It does not mean that either the police and crime commissioner or the chief constable has to follow the requirement blindly, but they should not depart from it without good reason (and should be prepared to be able to justify any departure from it on a case-by-case basis).*"[25]

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[22] SPR paragraph 1.6
[23] SPR paragraph 1.15
[24] SPR paragraph 1.11
[25] SPR paragraph 1.9

Methodology

The breadth of requirements made by the *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) are outside of the scope of a single inspection. It has therefore been necessary to plan a series of inspections over three years so that the police response to all of the national threats can be examined individually and in depth over that period.

This report is one of a series of reports on compliance with the SPR which will be published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). It examines how well the police service has met the requirements of the SPR in relation to the threat to public order.

In addition to assuring the SPR in relation to public order, this year's inspection includes an examination of the police response to a large-scale cyber incident (also published this year as part of this inspection programme) and an examination of how well police forces have established the arrangements that the SPR requires them to have in place in order to counter all of the national threats referred to in Part A of the SPR. This report was published by HMIC on 10 April 2014.[26] To undertake this inspection, we requested the 43 forces of England and Wales to provide us with information and data that would allow us to see how well they had responded to the requirements of the SPR. For example, we asked for data that would allow us to assess the capacity that each force had established to contribute to countering each of the national threats.

HMIC also conducted fieldwork in 18 forces in England and Wales between September and November 2013. We intend to conduct fieldwork in the remaining 25 forces over the next two years. The forces visited are listed in Annex A.

The fieldwork consisted of interviews with chief officers and those leading the responses to national threats; and a review of relevant policies, strategies and legislation. We verified the information contained in the documents sent to us by

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[26] *The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement*, HMIC, April 2014. Available from: www.hmic.gov.uk/publication/an-inspection-of-the-arrangements-that-police-forces-have-in-place-to-meet-the-strategic-policing-requirement/

forces, and what we were told during our visits to forces, by physically checking that the arrangements were actually in place.

HMIC also interviewed officers and staff in government departments, policing units with specialist national roles, and also senior police officers with national responsibilities that were relevant to the SPR.

The analysis and review of the data and evidence gathered during this inspection has been used by HMIC to inform the judgments contained within this report.

Roles and responsibilities

The Government's National Security Council (NSC) commissioned the *National Security Risk Assessment* (NSRA), which catalogues and prioritises the major threats faced by the country. These include those threats that affect the safety of people in England and Wales.

In response to those NSRA threats, government departments create and implement strategies within which they outline the nature of the threats that police forces are expected to work against, and what they want to be achieved. Senior police officers develop strategies that interpret national intentions and outline how the police service will contribute. Police forces are expected to support those strategies.

Chief constables are responsible for the 'direction and control' of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and must carry out their duties "*in such a way as is reasonable to assist the relevant police and crime commissioner to exercise the commissioner's functions.*"[27]

PCCs must "*secure the maintenance of the police force for their areas and ensure that their police forces are efficient and effective*".[28] They must hold chief constables to account for their functions and for the performance of the staff within their forces.

The College of Policing is the professional body for policing. Its core areas of responsibility include *"supporting police forces and other organisations to work together to protect the public and prevent crime".*[29] The College's Professional Committee now oversees national policy and practice for policing. Its terms of reference are to *"identify gaps, threats or opportunities across policing where capability may need to be built, (including the need to review or develop national standards, policy or practice)*".[30] Working with chief constables, the College of policing creates national standards for professional practice, which are published as Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

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[27] s2 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
[28] s1 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
[29] *Our Strategic Intent*, College of Policing, September 2013, paragraph 1.1.
[30] *Professional Committee Terms of Reference*, College of Policing, 11 July 2013, paragraph 1.2

The Chief Constables' Council is the senior operational decision-making body for national policing. It comprises chief constables of police forces in the United Kingdom and it is responsible for coordinating operational policing needs and leading the implementation of national standards set by the College of Policing and/or the Government.

There are 11 national policing business areas that provide the direction and development of policing policy and practice in specific areas. The chief constables who lead these business areas are members of both the College's Professional Committee and the Chief Constables' Council. For the SPR, the most relevant business areas are uniformed operations, crime, and terrorism and allied matters. Within each business area, there are a number of portfolios and working groups led by chief police officers who act as national policing leads for specific issues. For example, within the crime business area, there are national policing leads for serious and organised crime and e-crime (another term for cyber-crime); within uniformed operations, there are national policing leads for public order and civil emergencies. The role of national policing business areas is subject to change in the light of the independent ACPO review.[31]

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[31] *Independent review of ACPO*, General Sir Nick Parker KCB, CBE, 14 November 2013

Findings

Capacity and contribution

This section sets out HMIC's findings on how well forces have established the necessary capacity to make a contribution to countering the threat to public order.

The SPR states that:

- *"...chief constables must consider the areas set out in this Strategic Policing Requirement... [and] must satisfy themselves that they:*

- *understand their respective roles in preparing for and tackling shared threats, risks and harm;*

- *agree, where appropriate, in agreement and collaboration with other forces or partners, the contribution that is expected of them; and*

- *have the capacity and capability[32] to meet that expectation, taking properly into account the remit and contribution of other bodies (particularly national agencies) with responsibilities in the areas set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement."[33]*

It also states that chief constables "*are advised to consider other professional assessments made by the police, including national planning assumptions, when considering the appropriate policing capacity to respond to the threats…*"[34]

HMIC analysed data[35] to establish how many full-time equivalent (FTE) posts in police forces were dedicated to public order roles and whether this number had changed over time, particularly since the SPR's publication.

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[32] Capability is covered separately in its own section of this report
[33] SPR paragraph 3.1
[34] SPR paragraph 3.3
[35] Police Objective Analysis (POA) data 2013. For the purposes of this exercise, HMIC considered the 'dedicated public order resource to be those in POA level 2 category: 5f - Level 1 Advanced Public Order. Due to limitations in the way the data is collected, HMIC's findings from this exercise must be considered as indicative rather than definitive.

Our data analysis indicated that dedicated public order resource levels have not changed appreciably following the SPR's publication. The total number of dedicated public order posts in England and Wales in 2013/14 was 2,057. It should be noted that the vast majority of staff trained to national standards for public order are not included in the definition of dedicated public order resource.

The SPR states that:

- *"Chief constables must demonstrate that they have taken into account the need for appropriate capacity to respond adequately to a spontaneous or planned event, or other incident, that requires a mobilised response in order to keep the peace, protect people and property, and uphold the law…and chief constables need to ensure they can keep the peace by preventing and managing public disorder and both facilitate peaceful protest and protect the rights and safety of wider communities when responding to large-scale public protests."* [36]

However to determine the capacity required at both national and local level, it is necessary to first understand the threat being faced.

The National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence Unit (NDEDIU) produce a bi-annual national public order strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA) on behalf of the national policing lead for public order. This assessment is the product of analysis by all 43 police forces of information relating to the threats and risks against which they are required to contribute resources. It examines those individuals or groups where there is intelligence that they might cause disorder in England and Wales; it assesses their levels of capability and intent. As part of this assessment, the NDEDIU also examines information from a wide range of sources through its All Source Hub. [37]

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[36] SPR paragraph 3.2
[37] This unit was formed in response to a recommendation in HMIC's report, The *rules of engagement: A review of August 2011 disorders, and* was in place for the 2012 Olympic Games. It uses information gathered from forces to produce reports on the likelihood of disorder. These reports are used by policing, wider law enforcement, government and industry.

In response to HMIC's request that police forces supply documents that were relevant to the inspection, 38 of the 43 forces provided their public order STRA to HMIC. Of these, 33 were considered to be of sufficient quality and detailed enough to inform forces' decisions about allocating resources. The public order STRAs of the City of London Police, Derbyshire, Dyfed-Powys, North Wales, North Yorkshire and Northamptonshire were considered by HMIC to be particularly good examples. The others were either incomplete, out-of-date or did not have sufficient detail to inform decisions about the capacity that is required to respond to a national threat. This represents a significant weakness.

Following the 2011 disturbances, chief constables in England and Wales agreed that, together, they needed to have 297 police support units (PSUs) to respond adequately to the threat of public disorder in the future. They considered this sufficient to deal with three separate areas of significant disorder happening simultaneously in England and Wales for a period of seven days. Each of the nine police regions is required to contribute a proportion of the 297 PSUs. Regions' contributions are calculated using a formula agreed by chief constables based on the size of each force within the region.

HMIC asked all police forces in England and Wales to provide the following data:

- the number of PSUs that they were required to provide towards the national requirement;

- the number of PSUs that they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder in their force area (referred to hereinafter as the force's local threat);

- the number of PSUs they had trained and equipped currently to national public order standards; and

- details of each officer they had trained to the national public order standard for operating in a PSU.

The reason we asked for details of both the number of PSUs needed to meet the national requirement and the local one was because the police service is expected to be prepared for both.

All 43 forces provided the number of PSUs that they had in July 2013 which, once aggregated, made a total of 769 PSUs. This confirms that, together, forces have enough capacity to meet the national requirement of 297 PSUs.

Next we examined the level of capacity that forces had assessed as necessary to respond to a local threat. When added together, the total number of PSUs that forces had assessed they required was 587.

We also aggregated the total number of trained public order officers police forces had. The total trained was 26,611, which is significantly more than the total number of officers required to form the 769 PSUs that forces collectively say they have.

For each force, HMIC compared the number of PSUs they declared they had with the number of PSUs that they told us they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder. This is illustrated in the graph in Figure 1 where the red line represents the level required and the blue bars represent the level of PSUs (as a percentage of the requirement) that is present in each force. We found that in five forces, while they complied with the national requirement, they did not have enough PSUs to meet their assessments of the local threat. On the other hand, we found that 14 forces had at least twice the number of trained PSUs (represented by 200 percent in Figure 1) they had assessed as necessary to meet their local threat.
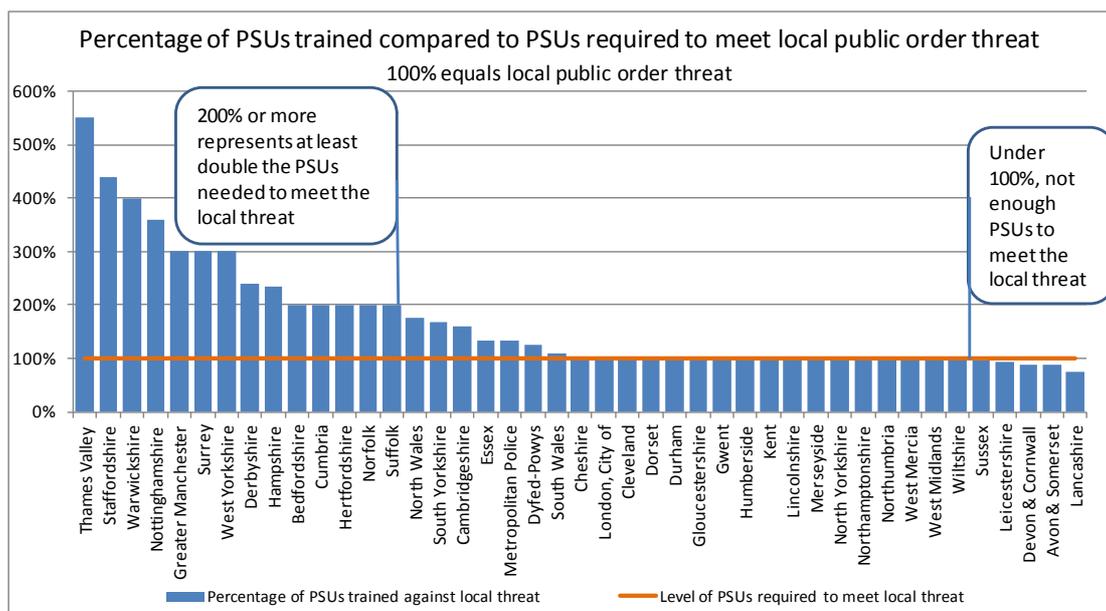
Figure 1: Percentage of PSUs trained compared with PSUs required to meet local public order threat.

This finding is corroborated by a self-assessment[38] carried out by all forces in October 2013, where approximately one-fifth of forces assessed that they did not, on their own, have sufficient levels of resources to meet their assessment of local threats.[39] This suggested they may be more reliant on mutual aid than other forces.

While the national requirement is clear, and every force and region is complying with the requirement, it is much less clear how forces should provide sufficient capacity to meet both the national and the local requirement. This lack of clarity has resulted in very different approaches being used by forces to assess the capacity needed to deal with the local threat.

HMIC explored why forces were training vastly different numbers of staff compared to those required by their local threat assessment. For four[40] out of the 14 forces highlighted it is because their national requirement for PSUs is greater than their local threat and they have resourced to their national requirement. This leaves 10 forces where it is not readily evident to HMIC why they had at least twice the number of trained PSUs they had assessed as necessary to meet their local threat. Evidence gained from HMIC interviews with the forces' leaders indicated that they used different methods to determine the number of police officers to be trained for public order duties. Where numbers exceeded those needed to meet local and national requirements, the extra staff were considered necessary to provide for absence through sickness, court appearances, secondment and training, as well as helping to deploy PSUs quickly.

West Midlands Police officers described how they had used a series of calculations to decide the numbers of public order-trained staff needed. These were based on maximum numbers of PSUs mobilised in the past, the effect of shift patterns, absentee levels and the degree of attrition through injury during prolonged public order deployment. Kent Police described its use of an 'industry standard' for the number of staff they needed, above the level required to respond to their local threat, to cover absences and deploy quickly.

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[38] *Public Order Capability Framework v1.2*, College of Policing, March 2013
[39] *Ibid*, capability APP/13/PO/02
[40] Thames Valley, Hampshire, Surrey and Norfolk

We understand that forces will need to take into account factors such as absentee levels and the effect of shift patterns on availability in assessing the capacity they need. However, we do not understand why 10 forces had decided to have at least twice their required level.

The use of mutual aid is another indicator of the extent to which police forces either have or do not have sufficient trained public order resources. As part of the inspection we asked all forces to provide us with details of the number of PSUs they had received from other forces during the period 2011/12 and 2012/13. HMIC was unable to verify the accuracy or completeness of this data supplied by forces and therefore considers our findings as indicative rather than conclusive. The data indicated that 12 forces were net recipients of mutual aid for public order policing and 31 forces were net providers.[41] This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.
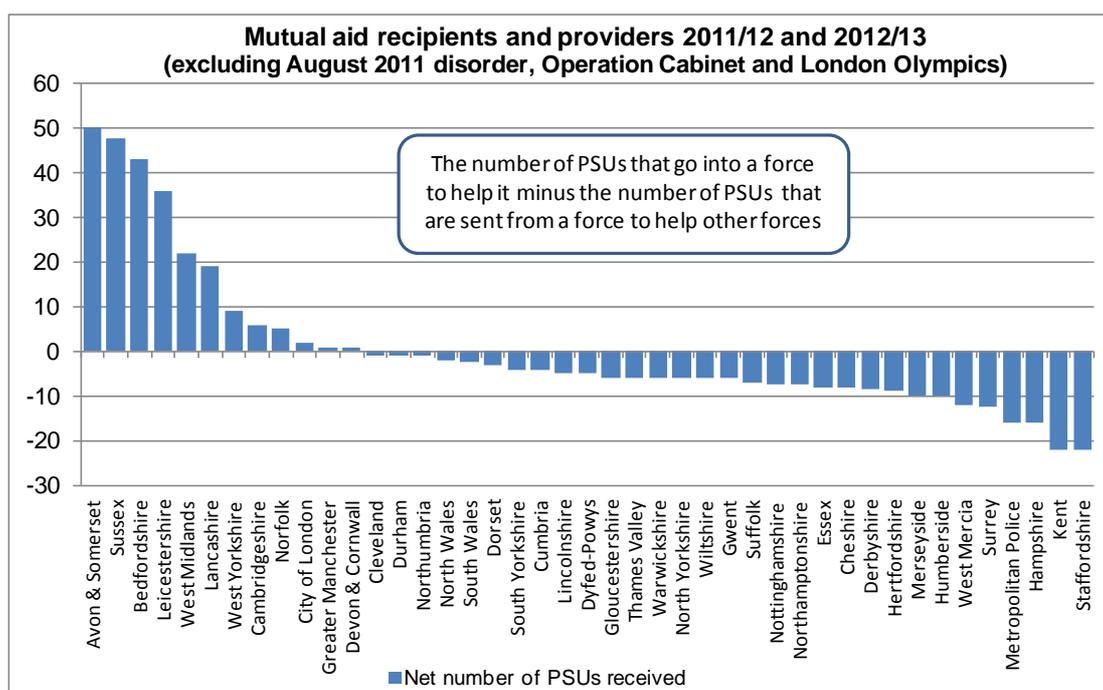
Figure 2: Mutual aid recipients and providers 2011/12 and 2012/13.

This indicates that forces do not always have sufficient public order-trained staff available to respond to outbreaks of disorder in their force area. Requirements for mutual aid should be expected, but the national requirement relies on every force

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[41] This analysis excluded three major policing operations - the 2011 widespread disorder experienced in England in August 2011, the London Olympics 2012 and the removal of the residents at Dale Farm, Essex in 2012 (Operation Cabinet) - as they were exceptional incidents that skewed the results.

playing their part; an excessive reliance on mutual aid could indicate that a force has insufficient capacity to do this.

In addition to examining whether or not forces had the required numbers of public order trained officers, we also examined how well female and black and minority ethnic (BME) officers were represented in the number of officers trained to the national standard. We found that the proportion of BME officers in public order roles was the same as their proportion in non-public order related front-line roles (5.2 percent in both);[42] and the proportion of female officers was less than half of their proportion in non-public order front-line roles (12 percent and 27 percent respectively).[43] We asked forces to explain the gender difference and found that forces, having considered and examined the problem, did not have a consensus about why this was the case. We think this should change and expect all chief constables to be proactively pursuing their equality duties.[44]

The NPR does not take into account the need, on occasions, for police forces in England and Wales to support Police Scotland or the Police Service of Northern Ireland and we believe that this could cause a problem at times of high demand across the whole of the UK. Representatives from UK police forces, supported by the Home Office, were working through this problem during our inspection with a view to finding a solution.

In conclusion, chief constables understand their role to provide PSUs to respond to public disorder across force boundaries and to make a contribution to the national requirement of 297 PSUs. Our inspection confirms that all forces have the capacity to make this contribution, but that current considerations do not fully take into account the need to respond to requests from Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is disappointing to find that there are a number of police forces that are either still not using the threat assessment process to its full effect or not using it at all. Even if forces do assess threats, risks and harm, they do not always use the information to decide on what resources are needed. HMIC does not understand the rationale for

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[42] Excludes data from Greater Manchester Police and Northamptonshire Police
[43] Excludes data from Greater Manchester Police
[44] Equality Act 2010, Part 5, Chapter 1, paragraph 42

10 forces to train double or greater levels of public order trained staff than they say are required to meet their local threat.

Capability

In this section, we set out our findings in relation to how well chief constables secure the knowledge, skills and supporting equipment required to ensure that each force's capability is effective.

PCCs must hold chief constables to account for the provision of the following capabilities identified as critical to the planning for, mitigation of, and efficient and effective and proportionate response to the national threats. The capabilities are those needed to:

- *"identify and understand threats, risks and harms and ensure a proportionate and effective response (including at times of elevated or exceptional demand);*

- *gather, assess and (where appropriate) report intelligence – including the capability to do so across force boundaries and with national agencies;*

- *conduct complex investigations (including proactive or cyber investigations) – including the capability to do so across force boundaries;*

- *respond to critical incidents, emergencies and other complex or high impact threats, including cyber, in the National Risk Assessment;*

- *provide trained and competent command and control of major operations, including the co-ordination of joint multi-agency responses to emergencies;*

- *protect covert tactics, witnesses and resources;*

- *provide armed support, where necessary, to an operation through the use of firearms and less lethal weapons; and*

- *provide police support to major events, such as the Olympic Games."* [45]

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[45] SPR paragraph 4.1

The SPR goes on to specify:"*Forces should have the knowledge, skills and supporting equipment to operate effectively at the specialist levels required in respect of the capabilities outlined in paragraph 4.1 above. The police service should maintain a clear understanding of the location and availability of specialist policing assets in order to maintain the capability at very short notice to mobilise and conduct mutual support across boundaries. Where mobilisation or co-ordination of assets is required, these capabilities should be tested.*" [46]

The College of Policing has developed a method of helping forces assess for themselves, by the use of a capability framework, how well their capabilities match what is needed to provide a particular operational response. They have been prepared for police responses to civil emergencies, serious and organised crime, public order and cyber-crime, but not yet for terrorism. Completing these helps forces to identify gaps in the arrangements they have in place to respond to the national threats and, if every force completed them, could provide a national overview of police force capability.

All officers in a PSU must be trained to a standard as defined in the College of Policing's curriculum for public order training. This includes tactics to advance to disperse crowds, make arrests and work in situations where attenuating energy projectiles (AEPs) are being used by specially trained police officers to quell very serious disorder. These tactics go beyond the containment of disorder and allow the police to take positive action to end incidents of disorder before they escalate. Together, the proactive actions are known as 'go-forward' tactics.

We found that the 43 forces had 769 PSUs trained to this standard in July 2013 which, as we say in the 'Capacity and contribution' section above, is sufficient to meet the national requirement of 297 PSUs.

To command PSUs to respond to public order incidents, PSU commanders must be trained to nationally agreed standards and accredited as operationally competent.[47] There are three levels of command for public order – gold, silver and bronze. A new

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[46] SPR paragraph 4.2
[47] APP on public order command, which can be found at http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/public-order/command/#accreditation-of-commanders

public order command course has been introduced, incorporating the new 'going-forward' tactics that were introduced after the 2011 disorder.

There is no national requirement for the number of public order trained commanders in the same way as there is for PSUs. Forces decide on this number. Current practice dictates, therefore, that commanders should be appointed to the incident from the force, based on the location of the incident. In forces that collaborate to provide PSUs, any commander from within the collaborating forces can be appointed. The theory is that, provided forces maintain sufficient levels of accredited commanders, the management of incidents can be allocated to suitably trained and experienced officers.

Our analysis of the data returned by forces indicated that sufficient levels of accredited public order trained commanders to provide cover during widespread disorder were not always in place. For example, three forces had only one trained and accredited gold commander each. These forces were at risk of not having the necessary command capability should a public order incident occur. This would require them to request assistance from other forces. There is not, at present, a formal agreement as to how this would work in practice. The issue is being considered by the national policing lead for public order; one option is to create a pool of public order commanders for forces to call on when necessary. This would also provide opportunities for forces to collaborate on providing public order commanders.

We found that the national policing lead for public order and the senior leaders across the service have a sound understanding of national capabilities to respond to public order threats and know what needs to be done to develop and maintain capability. This understanding was recently assisted by the completion, by all 43 forces, of a self-assessment of their public order capability – a worthwhile piece of work commissioned by the national policing lead and organised by the College of Policing. It found that, on average, 85 percent of the ten capabilities[48] required for public order policing were being met. This compares favourably with other specialist

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[48] *Public Order Framework Overview v1.2*, College of Policing, March 2013.

areas of policing that have been self-assessed, where the average is between 75 to 80 percent.[49]

In the 18 forces we visited, we checked the public order equipment they used in their PSUs. In all cases the equipment was present. However, we found that different specifications meant that the equipment was not always compatible for use with equipment from other forces. In the Consistency section below, we examine in more detail the issues concerning interoperability and procurement of public order equipment.

The SPR says "...*The police service should maintain a clear understanding of the location and availability of specialist policing assets in order to maintain the capability at very short notice to mobilise and conduct mutual support across boundaries...*"[50]

National mobilisation and maintaining an understanding of the location and availability of specialist public order assets is the role of the NPoCC. We interviewed the senior officers and operational staff of the NPoCC to assess the unit's capability, and we inspected the data held on its IT system (Mercury) to check it had sufficient information to carry out its role. We found that the unit had sufficient information for leaders to understand what resources were available to deal with public order problems and had in place a system to mobilise the resources.

All forces must be able to mobilise PSUs at very short notice to respond to outbreaks of disorder in their force area or, if requested, to assist in another force's area. As part of the fieldwork in the 18 forces, HMIC tested arrangements in place to respond to outbreaks of public disorder. We did this by sitting with control room supervisors as they responded to a theoretical scenario, set by HMIC, of escalating disorder. Forces were not told in advance of our plans to conduct this test. In six of the 18 forces,[51] control room staff demonstrated effective processes to respond to the scenario given in the test. In the other 12 forces, there were problems in one or more of the following areas: a lack of access to the information the control room supervisors needed to provide an effective response, such as who was public order-

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[49] College of Policing analysis presented to HMIC, 15 November 2013.
[50] SPR paragraph 4.2.
[51] Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, West Midlands and Wiltshire.

trained and to what level; unacceptable delays due to the time taken to identify who was available with the right skills to mobilise; and over-reliance on operations planning departments that were only open during office hours, Monday to Friday, to contact staff.

In each case, the control room supervisors were asked about the training they had undertaken. None had received specific public order mobilisation training. Some had taken part in mobilisation exercises and most had learnt from working with experienced colleagues.

We found that the successful mobilisation of public order-trained officers was reliant on the control room supervisors understanding their roles and having immediate access to the information they need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The *Police National Public Order Mobilisation Plan* (PNPOMP)[52] stipulates how quickly PSUs should be mobilised[53] and this plan is regularly tested by the NPoCC. However, we found that the plan did not specify what the term 'mobilised' actually meant in practice and this led to forces interpreting what it meant differently. A revised plan clarifying the term 'mobilised' has been prepared but not yet issued to police forces. These different interpretations raise doubts about the usefulness of comparisons that have been made between forces about how fast they were able to mobilise.

HMIC analysed the results of the six[54] national mobilisation exercises co-ordinated by the NPoCC between December 2012 and November 2013. In half of them, the PNPOMP target of 10 percent of the national PSU requirement for mutual aid to be mobilised within 1 hour was not met. In one region, the target of 10 percent took 1 hour 25 minutes and in another region took 2 hours for the forces to mobilise the necessary PSUs. In the third region, two of the contributing forces were unable to provide any PSUs due to a live operation and the impact of deployment over the previous weekend.

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[52] The *Police National Public Order Mobilisation Plan,* ACPO, November 2012, paragraph 4.2.
[53] *Police National Public Order Mobilisation Plan* paragraph 4.2: 10% of national requirement within 1 hour, 40 percent of national requirement within 4 hours and 60 percent of national requirement within eight hours.
[54] The six mobilisation exercises were conducted in the following police regions: London, Wales. South East, East, North East and North West.

Some of the people we interviewed proposed that a reason for the failure to meet mobilisation targets was that they were not allowed to use their sirens to travel to the designated locations. It is our view that, given the distances involved in travelling to the designated locations, the use of sirens would not make up the more than 20 minutes that was required. The learning from each exercise was written onto standard templates and when we examined these, we found that they did not always explain why the target was not being met. We would have expected a report to have been made on the performance of each part of the process.

In conclusion, it is clear that police forces understand the capabilities they are required to have in relation to public order and this was assisted by the fact that all forces had completed the College of Policing capability framework.

Our checks of public order equipment had mixed results. Although we found that all the forces we inspected had the necessary equipment to police disorder, it was not always compatible with equipment in other forces.

Training to the curriculum standard for PSUs, and improved command training for gold, silver and bronze commanders in the use of 'go-forward' tactics, has brought about an improved public order command capability compared with that which was in place at the time of the disorder in August 2011. The NPoCC has the capability necessary to manage national mobilisation and maintains an accurate understanding of each force's PSUs. However, concerns remain that mobilisation targets are not being met by forces.

Consistency

The SPR describes consistency as:

- *"...the requirement for certain key specialist policing capabilities to be delivered in a consistent way across all police forces or, in some cases, with other partners such as other 'blue light' emergency services or national agencies."*[55]

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[55] SPR introduction to section 5

The SPR states that:

- *"Chief constables and police and crime commissioners must have regard to the need for consistency in the way that their forces specify, procure, implement and operate in respect of the following policing functions [later referred to as the 'key functions']:*

    - *Public order;*

    - *Police use of firearms;*

    - *Surveillance;*

    - *Technical surveillance; and*

    - *Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) incidents."*[56]

The SPR adds that:

- *"These are the areas of policing in which the need for consistency (or as a basis for 'interoperability') has been adjudged to be the most critical, at this time, by the Association of Chief Police Officers. Consideration should also be given to developing functions such as cyber. This consistency should be reflected in common standards of operating and leadership disciplines, acknowledged by the Police Professional Body from 2013."*[57]

As we describe in the 'Roles and responsibilities' section, the College of Policing is the police professional body. The College of Policing helps the police bring about consistency by: creating APP; accrediting training providers; developing learning outcomes within a standardised national framework; and identifying and promoting good practice based on evidence of what is effective.

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[56] SPR paragraph 5.1
[57] SPR paragraph 5.2

The SPR states that:

- *"Consistency requires police forces to be able to operate effectively together, for example, in ensuring officers can operate to acknowledged standards to 'go forward' and restore peace using a graduated range of tactics."*[58]

Standards for policing tactics in response to large-scale disorder were originally published in the ACPO *Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace*. This has recently been superseded by the APP on public order.

HMIC found consistency of professional practice was generally good in relation to public order and was strongest in regions where PSUs from the various forces trained together. This was the case within the South West region, where ground commanders trained, exercised and were deployed with PSUs from other forces. We found similar evidence in the West Midlands region and in the collaborative arrangements between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.

Apart from in a small number of forces, we found that the same public order tactics were being trained and used. The ability of forces to work together is improving as a result of joint training, exercising and deployment. However, interviewees in one force suggested that apparently minor differences in training and practice between forces can create uncertainty among officers on the ground; for example, where the oral commands used by commanders from one force differed from those used by other forces in the region.

To maintain consistent equipment between forces, ministers have made regulations to specify framework arrangements through which certain types of equipment must be procured.[59] This means that police forces must use nationally established frameworks with contractors to buy certain types of equipment. Currently, national frameworks exist for body armour, police vehicles and IT (commoditised hardware and off-the-shelf software). HMIC found that the national frameworks did not specifically take into account the requirements made about procurement in the SPR.

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[58] SPR paragraph 5.3.
[59] Section 53(1A) of the Police Act 1996 allows the Home Secretary to make regulations requiring equipment provided or used for police purposes to satisfy such requirements as to design and performance as may be prescribed in the regulations. The Police Act 1996 (Equipment) Regulations 2011, regulation 2 (SI 2011/300) specifies the framework arrangements.

A 2013 National Audit Office report found that police forces procured protective shields (used in disorder situations) to 16 different specifications.[60]

Procurement managers emphasised to HMIC that, even if SPR requirements were brought within the scope of the regulations, a significant challenge remains. It was their view that consistency could only be achieved if forces agreed a common specification; in their experience, agreement between forces had proved difficult to secure. HMIC found that forces were trying to address this through the creation of regional forums to help deliver greater consistency in procurement. For example, the Eastern region hosts a regional public order working group where joint equipment purchases are agreed within the relevant procurement framework. In addition, the South West region has developed a regional procurement unit that purchases public order and other equipment for forces in the region.

In summary, we found consistency was strongest in police regions where PSUs from constituent forces train and exercise together. Joint training and exercising, where the same tactics are used, and the experience of recent joint deployments are improving the ability of forces to work together in public order policing. In relation to procurement, there needs to be better alignment between the regulatory framework for procurement and the procurement requirement in the SPR.

Connectivity

This section sets out HMIC's findings in relation to how well forces connect locally, regionally, nationally and with national agencies to deliver an integrated and comprehensive policing response to the threat to public order.

The SPR states that:

- *"In response to incidents of public disorder, large-scale public protests and civil emergencies chief constables must cooperate with arrangements that enable the effective cross-boundary mobilisation of force resources."*[61]

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[60] *Police Procurement*, National Audit Office, March 2013, HC 1046, page 24.
[61] SPR paragraph 6.4

In August 2011, England and Wales experienced significant disorder across a number of towns and cities. The problems encountered by the mobilisation of the police response at that time led to the creation of the NPoCC, which was launched in April 2013. The NPoCC has various roles, which are to: support forces in responding to large-scale events; mobilise force resources effectively in emergencies; and co-ordinate and prioritise resources for police forces, while supporting senior officers and government crisis management structures.[62]

The cross-border mobilisation of PSUs is initiated by requests from forces for mutual aid. These requests are banded within tiers:[63]

- Tier 1 - any pre-planned or spontaneous public order incident/event that requires the mobilisation of public order resources, but can be managed by the affected force, and the actions and risks are limited to that force area;

- Tier 2 - any pre-planned or spontaneous public order incident/event that, following assessment, will require regional resources to be coordinated to manage effectively that event from across the relevant region, but that has limited potential for actions and risks to spread beyond that region; and

- Tier 3 - any pre-planned or spontaneous public order incident/event that, following assessment, is likely to require resources to be coordinated from more than one region.

Incidents that require a Tier 1 response do not fall within the remit of the SPR as they do not require forces to work together to produce a combined response.

Tier 2 responses are either agreed directly between forces or, in more serious cases, through Regional Information Coordination Centres (RICCs). RICCs are responsible for the coordination of mutual aid requests within a region and for the coordination of the region's response to a national situation requiring a Tier 3 response (see below). Their staff will normally have other full-time roles and fulfil this co-ordination role only when required.

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[62] See http://www.acpo.police.uk/NationalPolicing/NPoCC/home.aspx
[63] Police National Public Order Mobilisation Plan. ACPO, November 2012.

Of the nine police regions, six have functioning RICCs.[64] The North East RICC is still in development. Wales does not have a RICC. That said, North Wales, for geographic reasons, falls under the North West RICC for mutual aid purposes. Where RICCs are not yet in place, police forces deal directly with the NPoCC to request resources beyond regional capacity. Forces routinely transfer information and communicate with the NPoCC, using a bespoke computer system called Mercury.

Tier 3 responses are coordinated by the NPoCC. When considering the resources required for a Tier 3 response, the NPoCC requests resources from the RICCs (or forces in the absence of a RICC) on a pro-rata basis. For example, more PSUs are requested from those regions that have the greatest number of PSUs – as specified by the National Mobilisation Formula. The RICC then co-ordinates the contribution made by the region's forces.

London is the other region that does not have a RICC in place. This is because all of the PSUs, bar three, that make up the region's contribution come from the Metropolitan Police Service. It therefore makes sense for the force to take the lead in coordinating the regions' response on behalf of the City of London Police and the British Transport Police.

The RICC in the East Midlands region (EMRICC) is considered by the NPoCC to be the preferred model for other regions to adopt. EMRICC is funded by all forces in the region, managed by one force, and the lead assistant chief constable from that force has the authority to direct resources from any of the other forces to meet mutual aid requests at Tier 2 level. HMIC believes this to be a most effective approach.

Interviewees in various roles described a co-operative relationship with the NPoCC, which resulted in effective mobilisation of resources at times of need. Our interviews revealed that requests for mobilisation were usually successfully met through negotiation between the NPoCC and the forces supplying resources, facilitated through the RICCs.

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[64] Exceptions are London, Wales and the North East regions.

As we described in the 'Capability' section, the NPoCC also co-ordinates a programme of mobilisation exercises undertaken by police forces and regions. These exercises enable the centre to understand the availability of resources and how quickly they can be deployed to respond to incidents.

Taken together, our findings lead us to conclude that chief constables are co-operating with the arrangements for cross-boundary mobilisation.

Conclusion

Capacity and contribution

Chief constables understand their role to provide PSUs to respond to public disorder across force boundaries and to make a contribution to the national requirement of 297 PSUs. Our inspection confirms that all forces have the capacity to make this contribution, but that current considerations do not fully take into account the need to respond to requests from Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is disappointing to find that there are a number of police forces that are either still not using the threat assessment process to its full effect or not using it at all. Even if forces do assess threats, risks and harm, they do not always use the information to decide on what resources are needed. HMIC does not understand the rationale for 10 forces to train double or greater levels of public-order trained staff than they say are required to meet their local threat.

Capability

It is clear that police forces understand the capabilities they are required to have in relation to public order and this was assisted by the fact that all forces had completed the College of Policing capability framework.

Our checks of public order equipment had mixed results. Although we found that all the forces we inspected had the necessary equipment to police disorder, it was not always compatible with equipment in other forces.

Training to the curriculum standard for PSUs, and improved command training for gold, silver and bronze commanders in the use of 'go-forward' tactics, has brought about an improved public order command capability compared with that which was in place at the time of the disorder in August 2011. The NPoCC has the capability necessary to manage national mobilisation and maintains an accurate understanding of each force's PSUs. However, concerns remain that mobilisation targets are not being met by forces.

Consistency

We found consistency was strongest in police regions where PSUs from constituent forces train and exercise together. Joint training and exercising, where the same tactics are used, and the experience of recent joint deployments are improving the ability of forces to work together in public order policing. In relation to procurement, there needs to be better alignment between the regulatory framework for procurement and the procurement requirement in the SPR.

Connectivity

Taken together, our findings lead us to conclude that chief constables are co-operating with the arrangements for cross-boundary mobilisation. However, we agree with the NPoCC that the national response would be more effective and efficient if all regions, except for London where there is a good case for remaining as it is, were to adopt the East Midlands model of a Regional Information Coordination Centre.

Annex A – Police forces visited during fieldwork for inspection

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Bedfordshire Police

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Cheshire Constabulary

City of London Police

Greater Manchester Police

Gwent Police

Hertfordshire Constabulary

Humberside Police

Kent Police

Leicestershire Constabulary

Metropolitan Police

Northumbria Police

Nottinghamshire Police

South Wales Police

Sussex Police

West Midlands Police

Wiltshire Police