

Information Sharing

Driver – Technology

Related Drivers – Anti-Social Behaviour, Counter Terrorism, Collection and Storage of Personal Information, Mental Health, Neighbourhood Policing, Organised Crime, Violent Crime – Sexual Offence, Collaborative Working Between Forces, Procurement, Airwave, CCTV, Facial Recognition, ID Cards, Compatibility, Incident Management, Safeguarding Children, Human Trafficking, 2012 Olympics, Migration, Public Confidence in the Police, Jean Charles de Menzes Shooting

Background

Police forces across the UK **should** be able to pass electronic command and control incident data to each other efficiently, effectively and securely. In reality, the vast majority of forces are still passing incident-related data to other forces or agencies by email, fax or telephone.¹ With cross-border collaborative projects already under way, the need to share real-time, mission-critical incident data has never been greater.²

Although some progress has been made in regard to information sharing within the UK, globalisation is increasing the demand to share information, especially criminal information. Issues such as child exploitation, human trafficking, serious and organised crime, and terrorism are requiring a joined approach between international and UK agencies.

In the context of the sharing of criminality information:

Following an inquiry in 2007 into the handling of notifications by other European countries of criminal convictions of UK citizens, Sir Ian Magee examined and recommended improvements for recording and sharing information about criminality within the UK and between the UK and other countries. Magee found that all organisations involved in protecting the public should belong in a network and have a common understanding and approach to information sharing and an agenda for improvement. He found this was not the picture in the UK at the time of the inquiry and too many organisations were acting independently.

The Review found that there was a presumption not to share criminality information in some cases for fear of criminal penalties. In addition, there was a lack of understanding from those entering the data about its fundamental purpose. Decisions about when it is appropriate and proportionate to share personal information and highly sensitive information are often left by default to those at the front line. It was recommended that:

- leaders at all levels need to demonstrate awareness of the importance of information flow across the network and of managing them with their partners to ensure appropriate sharing
- the importance of information management should be explicitly included in leadership training and development programmes such as the Police Strategic Command Course before September 2009

- leaders should use straightforward communication to staff of the importance of accurate data capture and appropriate sharing of information
- necessary protocols and processes should be in place so that staff may capture, share and use criminality information appropriately
- where justified by the risk to the public, proffered identification should be checked against relevant databases, and relevant information sought at each decision point as offenders move through the criminal justice system
- clear frameworks should be developed for decision making on individual cases appropriate to the staff member taking the decision, and indicating clear escalation paths where required.³

In the Government response to the Magee Review, it is stated that work is under way to reduce the risk of offenders being released from prison into society when they are wanted by the police on other matters. According to the response, the police and the Prison Service have made significant progress on this with offender location information accessed and interpreted locally in a number of forces. In the response, the Government devised an Action Plan which included a target to ensure all police forces are making use of offender location and release information by December 2009.⁴

Potential Skills Needs

Change management skills – manage change at both an organisational and personal level effectively

Cross border partnership skills – facilitate information sharing outside the UK

Data collection and management skills – recording, collecting and sharing criminality information

Data handling and analysis skills – using criminality information effectively to aid public protection

Information sharing skills – to provide effective information to partner agencies

Inter-agency working skills – to work effectively with two or more governmental agencies

IT skills – use of systems and processes associated with criminality information

Strategic leadership skills - to provide a clear vision and sense of purpose

Strategic partnership working skills – work effectively with other agencies on a more structured and formalised footing

¹ [HMIC \(2007\) *Beyond the Call: Thematic inspection of police contact centres' contribution to incident management*. London: HMIC.](#)

² This intra-agency sharing is being addressed in the cross cutting theme 'Collaborative Working' and Economy Theme 'Procurement'.

³ [Magee, Sir Ian \(2008\) *The Review of Criminality Information*. London: Home Office.](#)

⁴ [HM Government \(2008\) *Government Response to the Magee Review of Criminality Information*. Cm 7511, London: Office of Public Sector Information.](#)