



NPIA
National Policing
Improvement Agency

Practice Improvement Unit Guide



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Foreword

The police service is facing increasing demands at a time of falling resources, and as a result forces and authorities are increasingly required to collaborate to deliver core functions such as protective services. This emphasis on collaboration requires essential standards to be articulated for a range of high risk policing functions, that are based on a sound evidence base, and are consistent and coherent.

It is the role of the NPIA, and the Practice Improvement Unit in particular, to work with tripartite partners to research, develop and disseminate this practice to the service, and to support forces and authorities to manage the implications.

In so doing we work closely with the Policing Portfolio Group as the tripartite structure to oversee the policing portfolio and determine priorities, recognising the need to manage the impact of change on the service.

We are committed to working with sponsors in a collaborative and transparent way, and to ensuring that we deliver products and services that are proportionate, appropriate, and support the delivery of frontline policing. This guide provides an overview of how we go about this.

I hope you will find this useful and look forward to receiving feedback.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Giles Herdale'.

Giles Herdale
Head of Practice
Improvement Unit



Introduction

This guide provides information on the role and functions of the Practice Improvement Unit of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). The content will assist business leads, who will usually be members of ACPO, with the process for commissioning national solutions such as professional practice or assisted implementation from the NPIA. It will also be of interest to police forces, police authorities, partner agencies and other stakeholders who want to understand how the unit operates in relation to improving policing.

The guide includes:

- An introduction to the NPIA
- A brief overview of the teams in the unit
- Information on how potential sponsors can commission the NPIA to undertake work
- A more detailed look at the main functions of the unit
 - professional practice
 - assisted implementation
 - managing change.

About the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA)

The NPIA was formed in April 2007 for the purposes of making a unique contribution to improving public safety.

The NPIA is a policing organisation which acts as a central resource to the police service, working for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and the Home Office to improve the delivery of policing.

As well as bringing improvements to the police service, the NPIA is responsible

for managing national infrastructure and supporting the introduction of good practice and ideas from outside policing.

The NPIA is a non-departmental public body which is sponsored and funded by the Home Office. It is police owned and police-led, with representation on the National Policing Board and an executive leadership drawn from the police service.

All work that the NPIA undertakes is aimed at improving public safety.

For more information on the role and functions of the NPIA, please visit our website www.npia.police.uk



Practice Improvement Unit

The Practice Improvement Unit supports police forces through:

- Provision of professional practice
- Assisting forces in their implementation of products and services
- Provision of guidance and advice on business change.

The Practice Improvement Unit works closely with partner agencies across the criminal justice sector and beyond to improve the delivery of policing and public safety.

The Practice Improvement Unit is made up of the following teams:

- **Investigative Practice** – develops and maintains products to provide guidance and advice on a range of investigative and covert skills, knowledge and techniques. The team also produces the Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation, as well as a wide range of briefing papers on investigative subjects.
- **Operational Policing Practice** – develops and maintains operational policing and intelligence products, for example, in roads policing, counter-terrorism, public order, firearms, civil contingencies, and information and intelligence management.
- **Product Authoring** – responsible for copy editing and proofreading Practice Improvement Unit products.
- **Publishing** – provides publishing support to the unit, from Word document to the distribution of professionally produced publications, both as printed copies and Portable Document Format (PDF).
- **Assisted Implementation** – supports the implementation of several NPIA products, programmes and projects in forces, for example, Protective Services, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and Mental Health.
- **Implementation Support** – responsible for rolling out the NPIA Assisted Implementation process across the organisation to ensure there is consistency in the way in which the NPIA delivers its programmes, projects, products and services to forces. The team also has responsibility for developing and advising on the NPIA Business Change Framework (BCF) for forces and maintaining a close relationship with designated Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) in forces.
- **Administration Support** – provides a first point of contact for queries relating to the unit.



Commissioning Process

The NPJA recognises that limited resources need to be focussed on issues that are of key importance to delivering improvements in policing. The NPJA is aware of the impact of change on forces and we want to work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that work is commissioned which reflects real priorities and clearly identifies how associated change is to be realised.

The unit can help business leads to understand issues that need to be addressed and identify possible solutions. Examples of questions that may be explored around proposed work include:

- What is the problem that needs solving?
- Is the problem a political, ministerial and/or legal imperative?
- Is there an existing product/service which addresses the problem?

- What are the options for solving the problem?
- What is the impact of the problem and any proposed solution (e.g., costs, benefits, risks) on the police service and partners?

At this early stage, the business lead/potential sponsor will be directed to the NPJA's Policing Portfolio Team, who will oversee potential commissions. The team supports the Policing Portfolio Group, which is chaired by the ACPO President. The team can be contacted by emailing ppt@npja.pnn.police.uk.

The commissioning process will consider each piece of work on its own merits, but also looks at the broader activities taking place across the policing change landscape to avoid duplication or wasted effort, and to enable better coordination of work.

If a commission is approved, the sponsor provides a strategic oversight of the project. They will be encouraged to chair a project board, provide direction and, when satisfied that all the project requirements have been met, sign off the developed products. The sponsor will also assist with marketing and communicating the key messages associated with commissioned products through, for example, media campaigns and conferences.

An approved commission may involve a number of NPJA products and services, such as professional practice, assisted implementation, learning and development programmes, research and analysis, operational support or IT solutions. The remainder of this guide, however, focuses on the areas of professional practice and assisted implementation.



Professional Practice

Professional Practice Products

The Investigative and Operational Policing Practice teams develop professional practice products. The commissioning process helps to identify which products are required depending on, for example, a subject matter's risk to the public and police service, its complexity and potential impact on organisational capability. For some projects, a combination of professional practice products may be required. The different types of professional practice products are outlined below:

Regulations – are created under a specific statutory basis drawn from primary legislation and, therefore, are legally binding. To date, the NPPIA has not been commissioned to produce any of these.

Codes of Practice – by revising the Police Act 1996 through the insertion of a new section 39(a), the Police Reform Act 2002 introduced, for the first time, a power for codes of practice to be issued to chief officers covering any aspect of their functions and responsibilities. Such codes are laid before Parliament by the Home Secretary and provide a framework which chief

officers are required to 'have regard to'. The NPPIA has been commissioned to produce such codes in areas where a nationally consistent framework is deemed necessary, e.g., Codes of Practice on the National Intelligence Model (NIM) and the Police National Computer (PNC).

Guidance – ACPO has had a long-standing responsibility to produce guidance on operational policing matters. Guidance focuses on key principles or decision-making frameworks and, while is not mandatory to follow, the content may be used by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to base their inspection criteria on. Guidance may also be used as a template to develop training.

Practice Advice – is also commissioned by ACPO, and is a relatively new concept. It is usually supplementary to guidance and focuses on specific areas where the police service would benefit from good practice. Adherence to the final product is discretionary on the part of chief officers.

Briefing Papers – allow the NPPIA and ACPO to promote new and good practice as it emerges. This enables the police service to respond quickly to the

challenges of modern policing. Briefing papers may be separate publications or may become part of a larger piece of work, such as practice advice or guidance, at a later date.

Debriefing – forces can approach the Practice Improvement Unit to conduct strategic debriefs of policing operations if they feel that there are potentially important learning points for the police service. They are conducted by the Investigative or Operational Policing Practice teams and focus on specific issues that are agreed in liaison with the chief constable of the force requesting the debrief. Each debrief typically consists of interviews with key people, followed by analysis to identify good practice and areas for potential improvement and learning. The force requesting the debrief owns the final product and will decide how widely it should be disseminated.

Journals – the Investigative Practice team currently produce the Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation on behalf of the ACPO Homicide Working Group. The purpose of this journal is to encourage practitioners and policy makers to share professional knowledge and practice.

Professional Practice Process

With the exception of debriefs and the journal, it can take between eight months and two years for an individual professional practice product to develop from commissioning to publication.

Figure 1 outlines the process for development of every professional practice product, regardless of length or complexity. Depending on the nature of the project, other products and services, such as assisted implementation or learning and development, can be developed in parallel with the professional practice process.

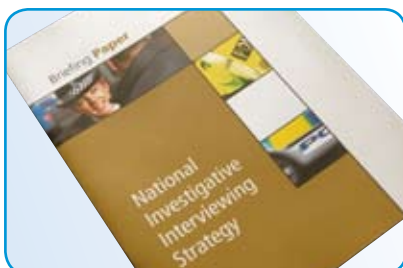


Figure 1 – Professional Practice Process

1. Commission Approved

See section on the Commissioning Process for more information. The project is assessed for impact against the wider business, e.g. identifying implementation and training requirements.

4. Develop Content

This process starts with identifying/developing an evidence base and content. This can be achieved in a number of ways depending on the nature of the project, for example, conducting a systematic literature review or holding workshops with subject matter experts. The process culminates in the production of a first draft.

7. Publication

The final Word document is recreated using design software from which soft proofs (PDFs) and colour proofs are produced, checked and approved. The title is then published and printed and/or electronic products are distributed to forces and other stakeholders.

2. Define Project Governance

A project board will be established (chaired by the project sponsor) and will normally consist of senior supplier and senior user representatives. The project team will also be appointed.

3. Develop Project Documentation

Examples of relevant documentation include the Project Initiation Document (PID), Product Description, Project Plan, and a Risk and Issues log. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be developed and will be reviewed as the project progresses.

5. Consultation

The draft will be disseminated for feedback from relevant subject matter experts and stakeholders. It may also be placed on the ACPO intranet as part of the consultation process. All feedback is recorded, actioned and then used to produce a mature draft. The consultation process may be repeated if extensive redrafting is required to produce a mature draft.

6. Quality Assurance

The mature draft goes through legal validation, diversity and human rights validation, and product authoring. This quality assurance process culminates in a final draft. The final draft is 'signed off' by the project sponsor and, if required, the relevant ACPO Business Area and ACPO Cabinet/Council.

8. Post Publication

The project is closed but there is ongoing liaison with the project sponsor regarding any future review requirements, for example, significant changes in legislation that impact on the product. The scope of any future review will range from no changes required through to the development of amended/additional content.

Assisted Implementation

Assisted Implementation Overview

The principal aim of assisted implementation is to enable policing bodies to achieve optimum benefit from NPJA improvement programmes and projects. Efforts are concentrated on delivering quality products that offer definition and understanding to key or difficult issues, and focus on the parts of the force that require greater support to deliver improvement change in a structured way.

Assisted implementation services are most often commissioned by ACPO when significant risks to the public or the organisation are highly probable, should implementation fail. The support is also provided when the subject is complex in nature or when implementation represents a high impact on the capability of the organisation.

Assisted implementation is often supported by learning and development products to enhance the skills of staff as necessary and information technology solutions to aid data collection and other process driven activity.

Not all NPJA programmes, projects and products require support in order to be implemented successfully. Whether or not they receive assistance is determined at the commissioning stage in consultation with the business lead/potential sponsor who will take into account political, legal and organisational imperatives.

The assisted implementation team provides a supportive role and has worked with forces on a wide range of projects, programmes and products including Safer Detention, Protective Services, the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) and Mental Health.

Assisted Implementation Strategy

The Assisted Implementation Strategy is an ACPO approved approach to help forces implement NPJA improvement programmes and projects. The strategy provides:

- A consistent and coordinated approach to implementation
- A standard method of delivery

- Standard terminology and procedures
- A single understanding of codes of practice, guidance and practice advice or other products, e.g., the ACPO Protective Service minimum standards
- A framework to enable the capture, validation and dissemination of good practice
- A framework to determine and address interdependencies and common improvement activities.

Assisted Implementation Products and Services

Assisted implementation offers a range of core and optional products and services that can be tailored to meet the requirements of individual projects. This menu of options includes:

- Implementation Support Plan (core)*
- Action Plan (core)*



- Key Statements Document (optional)
- Capability Assessment (optional)
- Implementation Progress Review (optional)
- Detailed People Assets (optional).

*Core products should be used for all implementation projects.

Implementation Support Plan (ISP) – provides the baseline against which forces can assess their current position and direct their progress towards successful implementation. It outlines a standard method of delivery, promotes standard terminology and procedures, provides a single interpretation of the professional practice, highlights links to associated projects and interdependencies (including Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary where appropriate) and includes references to associated literature.

Action Plan – is used to support local delivery of ISPs. It assists forces in the implementation of projects where ISPs are adopted, enabling them to track progress towards full implementation. It assists effective implementation of NPJA products and services,

supports risk management processes, enables effective benchmarking, assists in the Implementation Progress Review process and provides a national template rather than disparate individual force action plans.

Key Statements Document – is a lexicon of agreed ACPO key statements which may be relevant to assisted implementation projects. It is particularly useful when a portfolio approach is adopted by ACPO, for example, Protective Services. The document is closely linked to the ISP by recording the definition of each key statement.

Capability Assessment – is a self-assessment process used to assess local and national risk to the implementation of a project and determine the financial impact of that project on forces prior to the start of implementation. It enables effective benchmarking, assists forces in risk management prior to implementation, focuses on key business areas, enables the ACPO sponsor to take action on key risks, and reflects the principles of the ACPO Impact Assessment to determine financial impact of the project.

Implementation Progress

Review – is an opportunity to assess implementation progress at key end of stage points as identified in the specific project management documentation. It allows independent assessment against the Action Plan, provides reassurance to the local Business Change team, assists in creating and managing the force development plan and identifies development issues. It also enables the ACPO sponsor to better manage implementation risks and direct implementation.

Detailed People Assets – are descriptions, competencies and occupational standards for key roles or functions identified in the ISP, which are developed in consultation with the ACPO sponsor, the police service and Skills for Justice. They present a standard method of assessment, assist with the creation and use of job descriptions, enable effective benchmarking and assist effective implementation of NPJA products and services.

Assisted Implementation Process

The key stages of the implementation process are described in **Figure 2**.



Figure 2 – Assisted Implementation Process

1. Implementation Requirement/Commission

Assisted Implementation requirements are assessed with the ACPO Project Sponsor in line with the NPiA Commissioning Process and should consider the options available for implementation.

4. Product Development

Appropriate products and implementation criteria are developed by a team of subject matter experts, practitioners, stakeholders and other relevant staff. This can take between two and six months.

7. Launch

Approved products and any required services, such as the Capability Assessment, are published and circulated.

2. Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Key business drivers are identified through consultation with key stakeholders and other NPIA business units.

3. Project Management

Key project management documents, communications plan and benefits realisation plan are prepared. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be developed and reviewed as the project progresses.

5. Consultation

Formal consultation is held with identified subject matter experts and other relevant stakeholders. Following consultation, the product(s) undergo legal, diversity, human rights and quality assurance checks.

6. Approval

The developed products are sent to the ACPO sponsor for approval and sign-off.

8. Force Engagement

The NPIA Assisted Implementation team will maintain regular contact with forces and project managers to report on implementation progress, including checkpoint reporting and reviews of action plans.

9. Project Closure

Project closure and benefits realisation occurs at an agreed point.

Managing Change

Experience has shown that the most successful local implementation of business change occurs in forces that adopt a formal implementation strategy for large-scale national projects. This involves creating a steering group, chaired by a nominated local senior manager (usually at ACPO level) acting as project champion, and providing dedicated resources as necessary.

Local business change teams play a pivotal role in ensuring that NPJA projects benefit operational policing, public safety and security. The NPJA assisted implementation team works closely with these teams to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation.

Business Change Framework

The Business Change Framework (BCF) is not formal guidance but provides advice to help forces set up and maintain local implementation capability, structure and processes that are recognised as effective. The BCF defines the key elements of a business change process which will ensure effective implementation of both local and NPJA improvement programmes, projects, products and services.

It is designed to complement, but not to replace, force programme and project management processes, and may be used as a benchmark against which business change processes and capabilities can be assessed.

The framework has been created from good practice identified by the NPJA and tailored to policing needs. It is reviewed on a regular basis by the NPJA with force support to ensure it remains current and beneficial.



Single Point of Contact (SPoC)

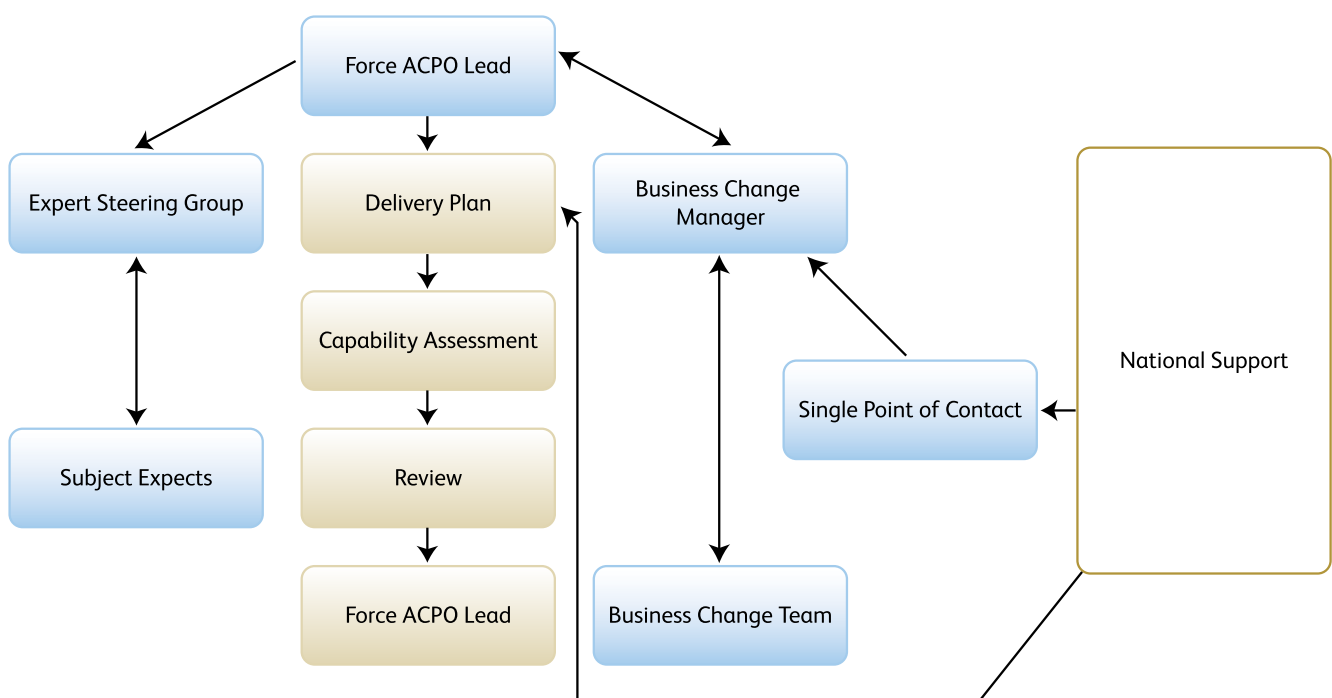
The Practice Improvement Unit has an established network of contacts throughout police forces. Nominated local leads and single points of contact (SPoCs) ensure that key staff responsible for implementation are kept aware of the most up-to-date national and local information. Guidance notes are available for new SPoCs to provide information about the functions and core work areas.

Figure 3 shows how the SPoC and force business change manager contributes to the local delivery of assisted implementation projects.

Forces also have specialist contacts for specific programmes and projects, for example, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or Protective Services.

It is recommended that the SPoC liaises with their specialist contacts in force to ensure a coordinated approach to business change. Products marked as ‘Confidential’ under the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) are disseminated directly to pre-identified individuals in relevant roles. It is still advisable, however, that the SPoC liaises with these individuals to ensure that the products are received and to monitor any actions taken.

Figure 3 – Recommended Local Delivery



Further Information

- For general information on the NPIA please email **enquiries@npia.pnn.police.uk** or telephone **0800 496 3322**
- For information on any aspect of this guide or the Practice Improvement Unit please email **practiceimprovement.supportoffice@npia.pnn.police.uk**
- For further information on specific Practice Improvement projects or products contact the **Specialist Operations Centre (SOC)** (**soc@npia.pnn.police.uk** or telephone **0845 000 5463**). The SOC can also provide advice and support in relation to covert techniques, major crime, witness intermediaries, critical incidents and uniform operations.

www.npia.police.uk

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