

Responsability



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National Policing  
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## Resilience in a modernised workforce





A guidance document to perform a strategic self  
assessment

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- Over the past 12-18 months WFM demonstration sites and associate forces have been implementing new workforce structures
- From within the project teams and externally (chief officers, police authorities, staff organisations and the NPIA) the impact that WFM has on **resilience** has been questioned
- The National WFM Programme are aware of this concern and this work is part of their ongoing efforts to assess the impact of WFM on resilience
- Avail were commissioned to
  - acknowledge the concerns raised against WFM
  - identify the risks posed by WFM
  - identify ways of managing these risks



# The purpose of this guidance document

-  This guidance document is one of our deliverables to the National WFM Programme
-  Our work has highlighted that there are a number of areas that forces need to consider when assessing their resilience
-  This guidance allows senior officers to critically self-assess their force's resilience by posing strategic questions
-  We acknowledge that many forces will be able to positively answer many of these questions, however we hope to be able to challenge certain assumptions and perceptions



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- This guidance has not been produced in isolation
- Accompanying it is:
  - An interim report that analyses resilience for pre-modernised forces, determines the impact on resilience of WFM and proposes methods by which the risks to resilience resulting from WFM can be managed
  - an indicator tool designed to support chief officers in determining their force's resilience by providing a guide as to how a workforce (modernised or not) can cope with a number of critical and major incidents of differing scale occurring simultaneously
    - the tool also includes the ability for forces to design their own scenarios which could be used as a starting point to determine day-to-day resilience
- These products, available from the WFM website, are companion pieces to this guidance



- Our work has highlighted a lack of consistency about what is meant by resilience. For the purpose of our work we have defined resilience in a policing context as:

Having the capacity and capability\* to provide an appropriate and sustainable response to a range of demands‡ within acceptable parameters of risk whilst optimising quality of service and efficiency

\* both internally and through collaboration with partner organisations

‡ including typical requirements, predictable events and unpredictable incidents



- The remainder of this document contains the self-assessment questions and identifies potential improvements
- The guidance is broken into the following themes:
  - An understanding of your skill base
  - The resilience of specialist skills
  - Frontline deployment
  - The use of continuity plans to support resilience
  - Agreements for regional support and national mutual aid commitments
  - Staff flexibility and trade union processes



# Understand your employee's skills

- Do you know what resource levels you have across the various skill sets and functions within your force? How quickly and easily could you obtain a skills snapshot?
- Do you maintain a register of staff skills? How is the information validated? How regularly do you update/validate the register and who is responsible for doing this?

Our research has shown that the level of understanding within forces of what skills staff and officers have is of variable accuracy and timeliness. PNICC's recent request for national skills audit returns highlighted this issue. Our interim report contains a case study **Understanding a force's skill base** that highlights West Yorkshire Police's approach to this problem.

For an accurate skills audit to be a valuable commodity for a force it must be maintained and updated on a regular basis, which requires a commitment of time and effort. As police workforces continue to modernise the need for accurate skills information will become increasingly important.

A skills audit is out of date as soon as it is completed. Officers and staff move on and accreditations lapse. Hence maintaining the information on a regular basis is important.

One important consideration for a skills audit is only to record current skills. It is important not to limit the skills audit to police officers but also include police staff in the assessment. As the workforce mix changes (either through WFM or other change programmes) police staff will form an increasingly important part of the skills base available for deployment and it is therefore key to capture all skills available to a force. Increasingly, the diversity that police staff bring to a force also provides opportunities, such as a range of language skills, that may be beneficial in certain situations.



# The resilience of specialist skills

- Do you know the level of double hatting in your force? How can the issue be more effectively managed to minimise any potential impact?
- Do you know the number of officers on restricted or recuperative duties or who would claim to be restricted if required to perform operational duties? What impact will this have on your ability to respond to a critical incident? Do you have a policy for deploying officers on restricted or recuperative duties? How often do you review deployment of such officers?

The extent to which a force is affected by double hatting can be highlighted by a skills audit, although it will not manage the problem. In some cases police officers have been found to have in excess of a dozen different skills. There are benefits to this, however the problem it raises is when commanders require X amount of skilled resource for an element of an operation (such as Search) and they believe they have this available only to find that Y% are being used elsewhere because they are skilled in another specialism (such as Firearms).

Similarly, the impact that police officers on restricted and recuperative duties can have on deployment levels must not be under estimated. A skills audit will highlight officers on restricted duties but the need to monitor the officers on recuperative duties (and an understanding that the skills they possess that may not be deployable) is a key requirement of a proactive HR department. One of the WFM demonstration sites discovered this issue during implementation.



# Your frontline capability

- How do you assess that your frontline deployment is right on a day-to-day basis? What systems and processes do you have in place to measure and manage this? Do you have a minimum threshold for the number of officers/staff on duty? Do you have a movement of officers/staff or officer/staff retention policy?
- How well do your shift systems provide for the appropriate level of staffing to meet regular peaks and troughs of demand on a day to day basis?
- Do you ever have to cancel leave or rest days, extend shifts or recall officers or staff to duty to deal with day-to-day business? Do you have clear policies in place to implement such measure and do all officers have an understanding of when and why they are used?
- Can you predict when and why you will be stretched to the point of using the above policies? Do you measure on what frequency this occurs?
- Do you have an abstractions policy in place? Does this include those in non-operational roles as well as police staff? How do you predict your likely abstraction levels?

The focus of our interim report and the indicator tool has been on a force's ability to respond to critical incidents.

However, the need to manage day-to-day demands is a key element of resilience. Understanding what your typical levels of demand are, and co-ordinating resource levels and shift patterns accordingly, is the first step in ensuring you are resilient on a day-to-day basis. Analysing a selection of shifts to determine whether all jobs were being appropriately responded to in a timely fashion will help you to understand your day-to-day resilience. The challenge comes from understanding whether the period you reviewed is "typical" and, if professional judgement and/or data analysis suggests it is typical, whether the available resources were sufficient for that demand.

The next step is to take the level of resource that you deem makes you resilient and forecast future demand to determine how requirements are likely to change (that will include critical and major incidents, for which the indicator tool can offer insight). This will allow you to plan your resource needs.

# Your use of continuity plans

- 📶 You will have business continuity plans in place that are used at times of heightened demand to manage your response and to manage the level of service you will provide.
- 📶 Who knows how to enact these plans? How has this been communicated throughout the force? How will information be disseminated when being implemented?
- 📶 How recently have the effectiveness of these plans (both in terms of bolstering resilience as well as the practical application) been tested and reviewed?
- 📶 Do the plans indicate the time frame for reduced services?

Our research has shown that when forces are placed under heightened demand, especially for an extended period of time, decreasing the level of service in non-critical areas supports deployment to critical incidents. However, if this is not closely monitored and managed then there can be a severe detrimental impact on public perception both during the period of decreased service as well as subsequently whilst the inevitable back log of work is cleared.

Forces that have developed a co-ordinated approach to decreasing service levels are well placed in such situations. Identifying the functions where service can be diminished and to what extent ensures that staff are aware of how to respond when required and the plans can be communicated to the public to ensure that they are aware of the circumstances and reason for decreased service levels.

However, business continuity plans need to be current and reflect business under WFM principles.

The public's reaction to reduced service levels when the force is providing resource through mutual aid should also be closely observed. In the short-term the public understands that at times of emergency police officers from their force will be helping a neighbouring force and this will have an impact on the service they receive. However, this sympathy diminishes quickly whilst the operation, and the need for resource, may run for an extended period. This was the case for the 7/7 bombings, and Operations Overt and Sumac.



# Bolstering resource locally, regionally and nationally

- 📶 How quickly and effectively can you contact your officers or staff to request support at times of heightened demand? Are these procedures ever tested?
- 📶 Do you have agreements in place with neighbouring forces to support each other? Have agreements been reached with partner agencies? On what basis are these agreements in place?
- 📶 Do you understand the degree of compatibility between yourself and neighbouring forces? Are officers and staff similarly trained, skilled and equipped, and have matching operational orders? Will this form part of your management information when developing new roles in the future?
- 📶 Do you fully understand what your national mutual aid commitments are and why they are set at these levels?

The contact details of your officers and staff need to be regularly maintained to ensure they are accurate. Clear processes need to be in place to ensure that officers and staff can be contacted efficiently.

Neighbouring and regional support, either through short-term mutual aid or collaborative services, can be highly beneficial.

Our research has highlighted that a force's understanding about the level of commitment to national mutual aid requests is inconsistent and lacks clarity. Even within force the understanding about, for example, the level of PSU resource that should be on standby for national commitments is inconsistent. Beyond this there is a lack of clarity about why force A's national commitment is more than force B's.

Our research identified that there is a concern that forces are only considering their own requirements when training and resourcing specialist functions as opposed to their nationally agreed commitment.



# Staff flexibility and trade union processes

- What flexibilities do you have in place with your police staff? Do you have arrangements to compensate them built into contracts or via Special Priority Payments (SPP) or the Hertfordshire Agreement? Is this monitored to ensure that overall staff cost does not significantly affect the business case for modernising your workforce?
- Have the roles of police volunteers or special constables to support operational requirements been considered?
- You will have a clear contingency plan should industrial action take place. Are these reviewed as your force's workforce mix changes?

The increasing number of police staff in roles historically filled by police officers places restrictions on certain functions to deploy resource flexibly in order to meet demand. Certain roles have flexibility, and appropriate levels of compensation, built into their contracts and as an increasing number of police staff join forces it is important to understand what levels of flexibility these roles require. There needs to be a balance between increasing police staff flexibility and paying salaries that approach police officers.

The increasing number of police staff in police forces places an increasing number of functions at risk of facing industrial action, even if that risk is currently slight. Understanding the clear pathway that industrial action processes must follow ensures that you can design contingency plans that can be enacted during this period.

