



# THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF NORTH YORKSHIRE

## Open Investigations and Crimes

FINAL

Internal audit report: 15.18/19

30 April 2019

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Background

As part of the 2018 / 2019 approved internal audit plan, we have undertaken a review of open investigations and crimes on the Crime Management Software to review the process for recording and managing crimes.

All incidents received by the Force Control Room (FCR) are recorded on the Incident Management System. Incidents are then transferred into the Crime Management Software. The Crime Recording Unit (CRU) which is part of the Crime Recording and Occurrence Management Unit (CROMU) record and validate crimes within the Crime Management Software. Incidents received by the FCR are prioritised using four priorities, 'immediate' for which officers must submit a crime report for CRU to record a crime, and 'priority', 'scheduled' and 'other' which are crimed by CRU based on the Incident Management System log.

The Crime Management Unit (CMU) which is also part of CROMU is responsible for ensuring compliance with HOCR, NCRS and internal policies and procedures for crime reporting. Due to a lack of direct supervision as well as several previously unfilled vacancies, a backlog of tasks has built up within CMU with circa 37,000 crimes assigned to CMU. The crimes assigned to CMU vary in nature from investigations that are currently on going but not been updated by officers / supervisors; crimes that have already been finalised but reopened; and crimes awaiting finalisation.

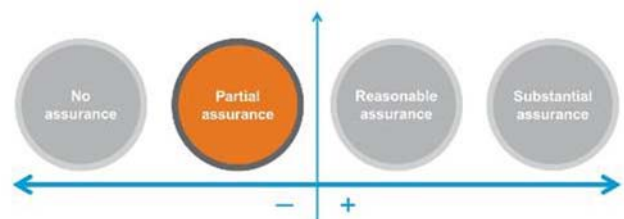
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out a Crime Data Integrity (CDI) inspection in November 2017, the results were published on 15 February 2018 with an overall judgement of inadequate. This judgement was due to failures to make correct crime-recording decisions at the first opportunity, which was caused by officers and staff not understanding their responsibility for crime-recording and limited supervision of crime-recording decisions made by officers and staff.

## 1.2 Conclusion

We identified a number of weaknesses in the process. The underlying cause of this being a lack of resource meaning that CROMU are unable to provide full and effective oversight of the crime management process.

### Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire can take **partial assurance** that the controls to manage this area are suitably designed and consistently applied. Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified area.



## 1.3 Key findings

We identified the following where controls are well designed and operating effectively.

- A guidance booklet has been developed and issued to all supervisors outlining their roles and responsibilities for crime recording and occurrence management. This booklet also summarises the NCRS.

- An internal review has been undertaken by the Operational Development team to ascertain the degree to which the guidance document has been read, understood and communicated by supervisors. This is still currently in progress, however demonstrates that there is an intent to ensure that the guidance material is understood.
- From our sample of 20 open crimes, we confirmed that an initial 'screening in' process had been undertaken whereby an initial compliance check was carried out by CMU to determine whether the correct crime had been recorded and whether there were any additional crimes.
- The Force Crime and Incident Registrar undertakes audits periodically based on an annual plan of work yearly which focuses on areas of high risk. The results of which are reported to the Crime Data Integrity Board and actions raised to address any weaknesses. We reviewed two of the reports issued in 2018/19 which included domestic incidents reported between 1 May 2018 and 31 October 2018 and sexual offences recorded in December 2018.

In addition to this, the Registrar also undertakes training in relation to crime recording requirements. We confirmed that this had taken place in 2018 for sergeants and student officers.

- We took a sample of 10 finalised crimes since September 2018 and confirmed that in all cases an outcome code had been applied following supervisor review.

We have however identified the following areas of weakness.

- There appears to be a lack of understanding regarding how fraud cases are dealt with resulting in instances of fraud not being crimed effectively. **(Medium)**
- We selected a sample of 10 occurrences (from 52) from the 24-hour list and found five instances where a crime should have been recorded but had not been. In addition, we reviewed a report which shows how many times an officer has had an email reminder to record a crime. This showed that in some cases officers were being reminded up to 60 times to address an item from the 24-hour list. We selected a further 10 occurrences from this report and identified six instances where a crime should have been recorded but had not been. **(Medium)**
- Once finalised by CMU, a crime can be reopened if additional information is added to the crime. In many instances this can be administrative tasks such as returning evidence to a victim whereby no further investigation is required. Where low level, low risk changes to a finalised crime occur, consideration should be given to allowing members of staff outside of CMU to re-finalise the crime to reduce the workload and number of tasks assigned to CMU. **(Medium)**
- We selected a sample of 20 open crimes and in all instances were unable to see evidence of sergeants carrying out reviews of the crime on a regular basis. In addition, we identified seven instances where the entries on the system log stop mid-investigation and it is therefore unclear what the status of the investigation is or even whether it is being picked up. We identified a further five which are awaiting finalisation by CMU having had a final supervisor review. **(High)**
- There is currently a backlog of crimes assigned to CMU with circa 37,000 crimes to be reviewed currently outstanding. A number of these may be low risk, for example where an exhibits requests re-opens a previously finalised crime; however, a decision needs to be taken as to how best to address this backlog and each option as well as the risk associated should be considered. **(High)**

## 1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made. The detailed findings section lists the specific actions agreed with management to implement.

Area	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed actions		
					Low	Medium	High
Crimes & Investigations	0	(8)	5	(8)	0	3	2
<b>Total</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

\* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

## 2 DETAILED FINDINGS

### Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible regulatory scrutiny/reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management
1	<p>All crimes should be recorded within 24 hours.</p> <p>A 24-hour list is in place for all occurrences which have not been crimed which is monitored and reviewed by CROMU.</p>	Yes	No	<p>Calls received are prioritised with 'immediate' being the responsibility of police officers to submit a crime report, record a crime and 'priority', 'scheduled' and 'other' the responsibility of CROMU to record a crime. The 24-hour list is a list of all occurrences that have not yet been crimed within 24 hours of being reported, which is available to all sergeants. We selected a sample of 10 occurrences from the 24-hour list (52 in total at the time of the audit) and noted that in four instances the victim had not confirmed a crime had taken place and therefore it could not yet be crimed on the system. A further occurrence related to a crime transferred from another force which did not have enough information to apply the correct crime code. However, we noted the following instances where there was sufficient information to crime the occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two occurrences were classified as fraud. Discussions with the CROMU Manager indicated there is generally a lack of understanding force-wide</li> </ul>	Medium	<p>Guidance will be developed in conjunction with the Head of Economic Crime relating to the recording of fraud occurrences.</p> <p><b>Implementation date</b></p> <p>31 May 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Owner</b></p> <p>CROMU Manager</p>

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management
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with how to record cases of fraud as they are also recorded by Action Fraud. Further guidance should be developed and issued to all relevant staff, without such there is a risk in delays to the criming of fraud cases.

- One occurrence had been reclassified from a non-crime to a crime following an audit by the Force Crime and Incidents Registrar and had subsequently not been crimed by the relevant officer.
- Of the remaining two instances, one had not been fully completed by CROMU and the other had not been crimed by the officer as the victim did not want to press charges, however this should still have been crimed.

At present the 24-hour list is not routinely sent out, however is available to all sergeants to review. It is the desire of the CROMU team to actively monitor the 24-hour list and challenge where appropriate however this is currently not possible given the resource available.

It should be noted that in all cases within our sample we saw evidence to suggest that all occurrences had been followed up as much as possible by the investigating officer and that all appropriate support had been given to the victim. Therefore, the issue appears to be with the administration as opposed to the force neglecting their duty of care towards victims.

Risk exposure *			Root cause		
Crimes are not being recorded in a timely manner potentially resulting in insufficient investigative work and non-compliance with NCRS.			Lack of officer understanding of NCRS, as well as lack of CROMU resource to provide oversight.		
Probability	Financial	Reputational	Operational	Legal	Rating
Probable	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	5:8

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management
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\* Relates to recommendation one and two.

2	Automatic chasers are sent out to officers who have not crimed an occurrence within 24 hours and a log of how many chasers were required is maintained.	Yes	No	<p>We reviewed the report which details how many times an uncrimed occurrence had been followed up by an automated email (daily). For the period 1st October 2018 to 31st March 2019 there were 2,160 cases where an officer required an email reminder to crime an occurrence. In this period the number of reminders ranged from a single reminder to 59 reminder emails required. At present, instances where there are persistent non-responses and occurrences remain uncrimed, these are manually chased up by the CROMU Inspector. We selected a sample of 10 occurrences off the list of instances which required chasing, of these four were eventually determined to be non-crime occurrences. However, we noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three instances were a result of the victim not wanting to pursue the matter further, however this would still require criming.</li> <li>• A further three instances where there was no clear reason for the non-criming. Discussions indicated that CROMU, when fully resourced, would routinely review and chase up occurrences which had not been crimed within 24 hours. Primarily this is the responsibility of the officers and their supervisors to ensure that occurrences are crimed in a timely manner with CROMU providing the second line of assurance that this is being done.</li> </ul>	Medium	<p>When fully resourced, weekly reviews of the 'chasers' report will be undertaken and those with multiple reminders will be escalated to their supervisor and subsequently their area inspector.</p> <p><b>Implementation date</b></p> <p>30 September 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Owner</b></p> <p>Service Improvement Manager</p>
3	Crimes are reviewed regularly by supervisors and this is recorded on the System Log. Officers record sufficient and regular detail.	Yes	No	<p>We reviewed a sample of 20 open crimes on the Crime Management Software and noted that eight of these were ongoing and being updated, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In seven instances the updates to the system log appear to stop mid-investigation and it is unclear what the current status of the crime is. It is unclear the exact reason why updates are no longer being provided. Anecdotally, one cause identified is where an officer either goes on long</li> </ul>	High	<p>Reports will be obtained from HR of all officers on long term sick or who have been redeployed or left the force in the last 18 months. Supervisors will be identified and requested to review and reallocate crimes</p>



Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management
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term sick; leaves the force or is redeployed, these crimes are at times not reallocated.

- In five of these instances, all lines of enquiry had been completed and a suspect arrested, and the crime was awaiting finalisation by CMU.

Furthermore, the Crime Recording and Occurrence Guide states that: *"It is best practice to review the occurrences of each of your team members during each set of shifts"* however in all 20 instances the system log did not reflect that a regular review had been undertaken by the supervisor. Our review showed that in all 20 instances reviews were taken place on less than a monthly basis with many appearing to be ad-hoc.

By not reviewing investigations on a regular basis there is risk that crimes are not appropriately investigated and given sufficient resource / attention. Furthermore, by not ensuring the system log is kept up to date this could cause difficulties if the investigation is to be reassigned. Previously, CMU had placed 20-day flags on each crime after which they would follow-up with officers and supervisors if no update had been provided to ensure that the crime was being given enough attention. However, our sample testing showed that this is not currently happening. Discussions with CMU staff indicated that this used to happen however due to resource restrictions this does not currently get followed up.

associated with that officer. When fully resources, it will be explored whether the reintroduction of the 20-day flag is feasible as this will ensure that all crimes which have not had an update in 20 days are still being monitored.

**Implementation date**

30 September 2019

**Responsible Owner**

Service Improvement Manager

Risk exposure			Root cause		
Crimes are not being investigated appropriately resulting in a large number of unsolved crimes.			Lack of supervisor review of outstanding crimes.		
Probability	Financial	Reputational	Operational	Legal	Rating
Probable	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	5:8

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4	Crimes are finalised by CMU.	Yes	No	<p>We reviewed the CMU monitoring report which highlighted that there are currently circa 37,000 crimes which are currently open and assigned to CMU. Discussions with CROMU staff and a review of the previous internal review and business case indicate that at present CMU is staffed to review circa 110 crimes per day however at present circa 150 crimes are being assigned to CMU daily to initially screen in followed by circa 50-100 assigned to CMU for finalisations. Resource is currently being recruited to address this gap however this would not address the back log of occurrences assigned to CMU. A decision needs to be made to address the backlog of tasks assigned to CMU. This could be in the form of recruiting additional resource; recruiting temporary resource; doing a blanket closure of all crimes over a certain age. All options should be considered as well as the potential risks associated with each.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Risk exposure</th> <th colspan="3">Root cause</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3">A high number of outstanding tasks could result in vital investigative information being missed.</td> <td colspan="3">Historical lack of resource resulted in back log. Current resource model, once recruited, only allows CROMU to deal with the business as usual workload.</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Probability</th> <th>Financial</th> <th>Reputational</th> <th>Operational</th> <th>Legal</th> <th>Rating</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Probable</td> <td>Negligible</td> <td>Negligible</td> <td>Minor</td> <td>Negligible</td> <td>5:8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Risk exposure			Root cause			A high number of outstanding tasks could result in vital investigative information being missed.			Historical lack of resource resulted in back log. Current resource model, once recruited, only allows CROMU to deal with the business as usual workload.			Probability	Financial	Reputational	Operational	Legal	Rating	Probable	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	5:8	High	<p>Once the Business as usual workload is under control. A list of credible options for addressing the backlog will be developed and assessed by the crime data integrity group. With final approval being provided by the deputy chief constable.</p> <p><b>Implementation date</b></p> <p>30 September 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Owner</b></p> <p>Service Improvement Manager</p>
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5	Re-opened crimes require re-finalisation by CMU in all instances	Yes	No	<p>Crimes can be finalised by CMU however if further information is then attached to the crime it then re-opens the crime. This is to ensure that if new suspects are identified or new evidence becomes available then it is investigated accordingly. However, in many instances the additional documentation could be an exhibits request to dispose of evidence which does not require any further investigative work but re-opens the crime. In these instances, a second review by CMU is not required. There is a risk that</p>	Medium	<p>It will be explored whether the status of re-opened crimes can be changed to 'under investigation' on the Crime Management Software. This will then alert the OIC who will</p>																								

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management																								
				such crimes are increasing the backlog of tasks assigned to CMU, so consideration should be given to assigning ownership of these elsewhere.		then be able to re-finalise the crime.																								
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# APPENDIX A: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

## Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following area:

### Objectives of the area under review

To ensure the force has an appropriate framework in place to ensure crimes are classified and closed in a timely manner.

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### Areas for consideration:

At the request of the Chief Constable we will review those investigations and crimes recorded on the Crime Management Software but have not been closed for a significant period. Our review will consider the following areas:

- Guidance and support provided to Sergeants on the National Crime Recording Standards and the closing of crimes on the Crime Management Software.
- Review of a sample of occurrences that are recorded on the Crime Management Software as investigations and have not been crimed within the specified 24-hour period.
- Review of a sample of crimes that remain open on the Crime Management Software and confirm:
  - Supervisory reviews have been undertaken on a regular basis and recorded on the system log.
  - Sufficient and regular detail has been recorded on the system log by the Officer in Case (OIC).
- Review of the process to crime an occurrence on the Crime Management Software and this is supported by Sergeant approval. If this has been challenged by the Crime Management Unit (CMU) we will confirm this has been resolved in a timely manner.
- Review of occurrences under investigation and are due to be crimed by CMU.
- Review of the governance of unclosed crimes and investigations that have surpassed 24 hours at a strategic level is monitored and acted upon.
- Review of the responsibilities for closing of crimes on the Crime Management Software i.e. Sergeant or CMU.

### Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- We will not confirm the opening and closing of crimes is accurate in accordance with Home Office rules.
- Our review will not guarantee any future inspection results by the HMICFRS.
- We will not confirm the outcome code is accurate.

- We will not review the business case to provide additional resources to CMU or CROMU.
- We will not review the quality of the data recorded on the Crime Management Software by the Crime Recording and Occurrence Management Unit (CROMU).
- Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

## APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION

### **Persons interviewed during the audit:**

- Service Improvement Manager
- CROMU Manager
- Force Crime and Incidents Registrar
- CROM Officers

### **Documentation reviewed during the audit:**

- Crime Recording and Management for Supervisors Guide
- the Crime Management Software Crime Records
- CMU monitoring report
- FCIR assurance schedule
- FCIR audit report: sexual offences
- FCIR audit report: domestic incident
- Crime recording training: sergeants and student officers

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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