



2000/2001 INSPECTION

Royal Ulster Constabulary



A REPORT BY HER MAJESTY'S
INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY

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2000/2001 INSPECTION REPORT

Executive Summary

1. The annual Inspection of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, GC, was conducted between 26 February and 9 March 2001, by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Mr Dan Crompton CBE, QPM, CI Mgt.

2. The 1999/2000 Inspection was a comprehensive examination of the Force intended to improve its efficiency and effectiveness following the publication of the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland ('A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland' - The Patten Report) and the 2000/2001 Inspection continued that process by focusing on the following themes:

- The progress made in the change management project to implement the wide range of recommendations from various bodies (but chiefly the Independent Commission) in respect of operational, cultural, organisational and structural changes to the Force.
- The progress made towards the introduction of the district command units (DCUs).
- The impact on the Force of downsizing, through severance, the introduction of the new recruitment system for regular officers, and non-recruitment and natural wastage in the full-time reserve.
- The introduction of efficiency measures across the Force, in particular, sickness management and civilianisation.
- The operational performance of the Force in 1999/2000.

3. Bullet point three above became a major area of interest in this Inspection. The downsizing of the Force through 'severance', reducing numbers in the full-time reserve, high levels of sickness, numbers on recuperative duties, medical retirements, and little movement on civilianisation have combined to present the Force with a potential serious resourcing gap in the next two years. It is accepted that there has been a healthy interest in joining the Force by potential recruits and this should result in maximum 'intakes' of recruits for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, recruits will not be members of the Force in any critical mass until at least April 2003 and, in the interim, the staffing trough could manifest itself in poor visibility of uniform policing and service delivery which does not meet reasonable public expectations. If this occurs, the new 'police service of Northern Ireland' will be seen as defective at the point of launch. More detail is given around these matters at paragraph 3.60 onwards but, suffice it to say for the purposes of the Executive Summary, the Force strength of 7,500 envisaged by the Patten Commission was modelled on a scenario of the security situation not deteriorating. It had certainly not improved, and some may say it has deteriorated. Reducing staff numbers because of the matters referred to above will invite operational and management difficulties when the security situation, action by paramilitaries, and historical marches, still impose a resourcing problem on the Force.

4. There is a fear, articulated by front line staff on this Inspection, that if the 'police line' is spread too thin, they will face the wrath of the public and the heralded new dawn will be replaced by storm clouds. Significantly on this Inspection (and referred to elsewhere in this Report) focus groups of sergeants and constables were most concerned about quality of service to the public, visibility, and

making community policing happen, rather than overtime or conditions of service issues. This is enormously refreshing and healthy, and officers are thinking about style and quality of policing for the future.

5. There is the opportunity to close the ‘resourcing gap’. All is not doom and gloom. Nevertheless, vigorous and focused action will need to be taken around overtime levels (increased financial provision), reducing sickness, implementing civilianisation and a reassessment of later phases of severance if a problem two years (referred to at paragraph 3) is to be avoided. Remedial action will be a combination of management proactivity and robustness, combined with some additional financial resources. Unless this ‘joined-up’ approach occurs Her Majesty’s Inspector has concerns about how the new police service of Northern Ireland will be received by the people who matter most – the public of Northern Ireland.

6. At the time of drafting this Report Her Majesty’s Inspector was aware of preparatory steps being taken to close the resourcing gap. If tangible evidence can be seen by the Force in this regard, it will provide a much needed ‘boost’ to those officers who, despite resource concerns, are policing with optimism, and a genuine care and concern for ‘their’ community. This particular aspect augurs well for the future.

7. Her Majesty’s Inspector identified the very extensive change management programme as probably the single largest change process ever attempted by any police force. This massive undertaking seeks to address no fewer than 934 recommendations consolidated down to 550, to be implemented through 8 programmes of work currently consisting of approximately 50 projects. Having previously criticised the Force for its slow progress towards modernisation and reform (in non-contentious areas), Her Majesty’s Inspector was impressed by the significant progress that had been made since the previous Inspection, and noted that many of the concerns expressed in the 1999/2000 Report relating to the change process are now being addressed. He was particularly pleased to hear that the perennial problem within any change programme, that of communication, is to be tackled with increasing vigour through a communication strategy, which should be strengthened by the intended appointment of a director of communications for the Force. The reconfiguration of the Force to 29 DCUs takes place from 1 April 2001, which will be followed by the restructuring of the headquarters departments. This raises the question of whether or not, culturally, the Force can now ‘move up a gear’ as it seeks to implement change.

8. Mr Tom Constantine, the Commissioner appointed to oversee the implementation of the Patten Report, has suggested that to achieve all the intended changes to the police in Northern Ireland will take seven to ten years, with the added proviso that everyone remains committed and that sufficient funding is made available. Her Majesty’s Inspector broadly supports this view. The understandable political imperatives for change need to take account of the pace of change that any organisation (public or private) can withstand. Structural, organisational and cultural change, of the order described in the paragraph above, can cause turbulence and dysfunction at all levels. The ideal therefore is a ‘marriage’ between the required political pace of change and what is achievable managerially.

9. Eight recommendations were made in the 1999/2000 Inspection Report, six of which were repeated, or repeated with revisions, from the 1998/1999 Report. Her Majesty’s Inspector pointed out that ‘to implement the recommendations was not dependent upon the results of the Independent Commission on Policing’, and that in his opinion ‘better progress could, and should, have been made by the Force’. The Force response to the recommendations is set out in Paragraph V.

10. Her Majesty’s Inspector recognises the difficulties facing the Force as it moves into an era of immense change and reshaping itself. Many previous recommendations are now incorporated within

the change management process and, mindful of this, Her Majesty's Inspector has made only a limited number of new recommendations that he considers as essential within this Report. These recommendations are intended to be actionable without imposing an unnecessary burden on the Force.

11. In the two previous Inspection Reports Her Majesty's Inspector has emphasised that, whatever steps the Force takes or is required to take in the future, success in policing does not rest with police officers alone. Responsibility also lies with political leaders and the community as a whole which, despite sectarian differences, must play a fundamental role in the peace process and the successful development of the police service in Northern Ireland. These comments are increasingly pertinent as the Force forges ahead with the implementation of the change management programme. The critical success factor will be political consensus, and if this is not achieved the ability of the Force to implement change will be greatly hindered.

12. The envisaged future police operational environment will comprise a lower level of staff, reducing financial resources (in real terms), and increasing public expectations for quality of service. The level of incidents and crimes reported to the Force is currently lower than that in England and Wales. However, these are likely to increase in proportion to the growing public confidence in local policing (i.e. a greater willingness to report crime and quality of life incidents). Consequently, the Force will face growing pressures for improved service delivery. This challenge will require effective resource management, and will undoubtedly require the grading of responses and a rationalisation of service provision.

13. There will undoubtedly be an increased focus upon operational performance with the introduction of the district command units (DCUs) in April 2001 and hopefully, in the not too distant future, the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs). Her Majesty's Inspector considers that the operational environment will become more challenging (e.g. in times of continuing peace an increased spotlight can be expected on crime performance, particularly crime reduction, and rising public expectations in terms of police visibility and the tackling of quality of life issues). In reality this means that as the progress towards 'normalisation' takes place, the Force will experience tighter accountability mechanisms around mainstream crime and public order issues. It will need to be seen to 'deliver' in terms of quality and timeliness of service.

14. This Report compares the 1999/2000 performance of the Force with previous years. Despite the fact that policing in Northern Ireland is very different to England and Wales, the only performance data available from which any comparisons can be made is with the 1999/2000 averages for forces in England and Wales, (excluding the Metropolis). However, Her Majesty's Inspector emphasises that unqualified judgements of the Force's performance should not be made on the basis of simplistic comparisons with England and Wales, and that great care is needed in drawing any firm conclusions from such direct comparisons. Her Majesty's Inspector also draws attention to the fact that due to the timing of his Inspection, falling as it did in the final quarter of the 2000/2001 fiscal year, the performance data quoted in the main tables relates to Force performance between 1 April 1999 and 31 March 2000. Because of this, additional data from the first three-quarters of the fiscal year 2000/2001 (i.e. to 31 December 2000) has been included to highlight trends at the time of the Inspection.

15. The Police Authority for Northern Ireland (PANI) policing plan for 1999/2000 contained 6 priority areas and 8 objectives, set by the Secretary of State and the Authority, against which Force performance would be measured. Of the 20 measurable numeric targets in the plan only 8 were achieved. The target for overall detection of crime was set at 27%, but the Force achieved 30.2% which compares favourably with an England and Wales average of 29.4%. This was achieved against an

overall rise in crime of 9.2% from 109,053 to 119,111, but the Authority, however, had set the Force a broad target to reduce crime. Her Majesty's Inspector raises the point that in England and Wales targets are, in the main, now set around crime reduction rather than detection. Better that effort should be focused to ensure that crimes are not committed in the first place, rather than expending effort and resources to detect them after the event. The third quarter figures from April to December 2000 show a slight reduction of 1% in overall crime over the corresponding period in 1999, however, the detection rate at December 2000 had fallen to 26.1%.

16. There was a slight fall, 0.8%, in the number of domestic burglaries recorded in 1999/2000, but the third quarter figures from April to December 2000 indicate an increase of 8.2%. The policing plan target for the detection of domestic burglaries was set at 20%. The percentage achieved was 16.8%, which was a further decline from the figure of 18.5% achieved in 1998/1999. That said, the figure of 16.8% still compares favourably with the England and Wales average of 16.5% detection for domestic burglary.

17. The Force achieved both its targets relating to tackling the problem of drug misuse: the target to increase the number of arrests for offences against the Misuse of Drugs Act was set at 3% - the percentage figure achieved was 17.1%. The target figure to increase the number of persons charged under the Act was also set at 3% and the Force achieved 15.5%. Drug seizure incidents also rose by 29.6% during 1999/2000. These figures are encouraging, but there is no room for complacency. Her Majesty's Inspector highlights the experience in England and Wales and points to the devastating effects of the drugs culture on society, and the dramatic rise in volume crime attributed to those who need to feed a voracious addictive drug habit. A painful side effect of the peace process may well be a rapidly spreading culture of dependency on addictive drugs such as heroin, and a proliferation of the organised crime gangs that profit from fuelling that addiction. The Force and other enforcement agencies will need to be well resourced and well funded to tackle the threat, which is predictably 'just around the corner'.

18. The number of 999 calls received by the Force increased 16.5% from 96,642 to 112,597, whilst the number of incidents recorded rose 19.9% from 444,417 to 532,641. Her Majesty's Inspector highlights these figures as a clear indication of the increasing demands for service from the public that the Force will need to resource. At present the Force does not grade its response to demands for service, but with falling resources in terms of the number of officers available for response, this feature of policing will almost certainly have to be imported from the English and Welsh policing environment. At present only the Belfast area control room has the facility to monitor the time taken to answer 999 calls and, of the 75,607 calls recorded there in 1999/2000, 74,237 (98.2%) were responded to within 10 seconds. This exceeds the RUC Charter Mark commitment to answer 98% of calls from the public within 10 seconds. Public satisfaction with the response to 999 calls declined from 90.0% to 83.1%. Her Majesty's Inspector advises that this may indicate an unrealistic level of public expectation measured against increasing demands for service.

19. In its efforts to reduce the number of fatal and serious road casualties in line with the 'Target 2000' figures set by the Government, the Force has suffered similar frustrations to those experienced in England and Wales. The target for 2000 was to reduce casualties below 1,575: having reduced that number to 1,612 in 1998/1999 it was disappointing to see the figure rise again to 1,723 in 1999/2000, an increase of 6.9%. With 150 people a year being killed on roads in the province, it is important that the Force does not lose its focus on roads policing during the reconfiguration to DCUs and the restructuring of the headquarters functions.

20. Public satisfaction with quality of service remains high in most categories, and compares very favourably particularly in areas of police activity where traditionally satisfaction levels are low, e.g. the

level of satisfaction with foot patrol was 38.9% compared with an average of 16.3% in England and Wales, and levels of satisfaction with mobile patrol were 52% as against an average of 37.8% in England and Wales.

21. Her Majesty's Inspector was impressed by activity in a number of areas:

- The determination of the change management team facing the daunting task of the biggest change management programme in modern policing.
- The positive action, and sensible initiatives, around the management of finance and preparation for devolvement to the DCUs.
- The breadth of vision and calibre of the training staff responsible for progressing Patten related training issues.
- The continued commitment to develop community relations despite the negativity of certain sections of the populous.
- The optimism and commitment of the management teams at the two sub-divisions visited during the Inspection.
- The crime performance, particularly crime reduction, achieved at the two sub-divisions visited.
- The level of interest shown in recruitment into the new police service.

I Introduction

1.1 The annual Inspection of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, GC, was conducted between 26 February and 9 March 2001, by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Mr Dan Crompton CBE, QPM, CI Mgt. It was carried out under the statutory requirement of Section 41(2), Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, to inspect and report every year to the Secretary of State.

1.2 The 1999/2000 Inspection was a comprehensive examination of the Force intended to improve its efficiency and effectiveness following the publication of the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland in September 1999 (The Patten Report). The 2000/2001 Inspection continued that process by focusing on the following themes:

- The progress made in the change management project to implement the wide range of recommendations from various bodies (but chiefly the Independent Commission) in respect of operational, cultural, organisational and structural changes to the Force.
- The progress made towards the introduction of the DCUs.
- The impact on the Force of downsizing, through severance, the introduction of the new recruitment system for regular officers, and non-recruitment and natural wastage in the full-time reserve.
- The introduction of efficiency measures across the Force, in particular, sickness management and civilianisation.
- The operational performance of the Force in 1999/2000.

1.3 The Inspection examined Force documents and statistical data together with oral information gathered from meetings, presentations and interviews with staff, staff associations, members and officials of the PANI, officials of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and members of other agencies and community groups involved with the Force. It also involved correspondence with district and borough councils, external agencies, community groups and individuals within Northern Ireland. Her Majesty's Inspector visited various departments within headquarters and made formal visits to Lurgan and Strand Road sub-divisions, and north region traffic branch. He also met with the Chief of Staff to the Oversight Commissioner and the Police Ombudsman.

1.4 This Report compares the 1999/2000 performance of the Force with previous years, and with the 1999/2000 averages for all forces in England and Wales excluding the Metropolis. These are the only comparative statistics available to provide a guide and a level of understanding of the Force's performance. However, the policing environment in Northern Ireland is very different to England and Wales, and great care is needed in drawing firm conclusions from such direct comparisons. Her Majesty's Inspector emphasises that unqualified judgements of the Force's performance should not be made on the basis of too simplistic comparisons with England and Wales. Attention is also drawn to the fact that due to the timing of this Inspection, falling as it did in the final quarter of the 2000/2001 fiscal year, the performance data quoted in the main tables relates to Force performance between 1 April 1999 and 31 March 2000. Because of this, additional data from the first three-quarters of the fiscal year 2000/2001 (i.e. to 31 December 2000) has been included to highlight trends at the time of the Inspection. Due to significant changes in numbers of officers in the Force since the publication of the previous Inspection Report, data appertaining to Force strength contained within this Report will be as at 31 March 2001.

The Policing Context

1.5 As Her Majesty's Inspector has highlighted previously, The Royal Ulster Constabulary, GC, is a unique police force, seeking as it does to provide mainstream policing services whilst actively engaged in preventing sectarian violence, widespread civil disorder and unlawful action by various paramilitary groups. The creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the publication of the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (The Patten Report) clearly represent a turning point for policing. Contained within the opening chapter of the Report is a quote from the 'Good Friday Agreement' which states that it "provides the opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole". The Report, however, also highlights that there is no perfect model and no example of a country that has finalised the transformation from 'force' to 'service'.

1.6 That said, the Force has seized the opportunity, and has embraced the recommendations contained within the Report, drawing them together with recommendations made in numerous other documents, and has embarked upon what is believed to be the largest change programme ever attempted by any organisation, let alone a police force. In simple geographic terms, from 1 April 2001 the Force will reconfigure the delivery of operational policing to 29 district command units (DCUs), which will be coterminous with district council areas (Patten Recommendation 94). The whole layer of divisional administration and bureaucracy will be swept aside. This is to be followed by a major restructuring of the headquarters departments, including the amalgamation of crime and special branch (Patten Recommendation 98). These are the first visible structural changes behind which all the other 934 recommendations, that were considered in the review process, will start to fall into place. The major changes that were recommended relating to human rights, accountability, community policing, composition and recruitment, culture, ethos and symbols, and others are all now being tackled with drive and determination.

1.7 Despite some internal cynicism and equal amounts of external scepticism, the change process is underway. The Chief Constable, PANI and the NIO have started a process that is now gathering momentum and is irrevocably changing the structure, composition and culture of the police service in Northern Ireland. The introduction of the Northern Ireland Policing Board as set out in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (Patten Recommendation 8) and the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs), (Patten Recommendation 27), will be a major step to involving the community in the change process. The task of those responsible for implementing change is not, and has not been, made any easier by the shifting sands of the Northern Ireland political arena, and the fragile state of the peace process. The reporting of incidents and analytical comment in the media always fuels the policing debate, especially on those occasions when objectivity and sensible pragmatism might be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency or point scoring.

1.8 During the Inspection Her Majesty's Inspector was able to meet with community representatives at Craigavon and Strand Road to ascertain their views/opinions/aspirations (sampling was therefore limited). Nevertheless there was a remarkable consistency around expectations. Included in these was a belief that levels of neighbourhood policing would increase so that communities benefited from an enhanced local service. Representatives were robust in their views and, whilst most understood the position regarding the realities and pragmatic considerations in the foreseeable future, the majority were adamant that they had legitimate expectations of a better and more visible 'policing service'. These aspirations/expectations may be a little unrealistic, but they are firmly held and are a product of what was articulated in the Patten Report. There seems to be a commonality of view, irrespective of political persuasion, about policing style, visibility and local delivery of services. Whilst broadly supportive of efforts currently being made by local police commanders, community representatives expect more in

terms of policing style, visibility and accountability mechanisms. It represents their 'bottom line'. The fear was expressed that any gaps seen to open up in the delivery of policing by the new service would be "filled by local hoods". Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges the point raised by both community representatives and police officers, that the creation of a political environment in which policing can move more quickly to normalisation (as opposed to policing in large units in Landrovers – which is very labour intensive), would release more officers to community policing. Maybe not in huge numbers, but every 'little bit' helps.

1.9 A vitally important area of focus in this Inspection has been:

- The impact on the Force of downsizing, through severance, the introduction of the new recruitment system for regular officers, and non-recruitment and natural wastage in the full-time reserve.

1.10 In the previous Inspection Report Her Majesty's Inspector highlighted that: 'there needs to be critical and careful consideration given to the rate of downsizing the Force against a backdrop of political fragility, a peace process lacking firmness and the potential threat posed by dissident paramilitary groups'. He referred to the reduction in visible policing resulting from the falling numbers of full-time reserve constables, and the sizeable reduction in overtime available for regular officers. Her Majesty's Inspector expressed a concern that 'a downsizing programme implemented too quickly, is likely to provoke public reaction because of a reduced level of service and what they (the public) see as the need for local reassurance'.

1.11 Since the previous Inspection, agreement has been reached around the severance arrangements for police officers to leave as part of the plan to downsize the Force (Patten Recommendation 105), and some 487 officers will have left the Force under the first phase that is now nearing completion. Severance arrangements are structured around a formula based on length of service and age. Whilst the Patten Report suggested that 'management will be able to decline to allow an officer to take early retirement if his/her skills need to be retained', officers leaving in phases one and two are not taking early retirement (they have 'served their time'), neither will the vast majority leaving in phase three. The ability of management therefore to refuse retirement to those entitled to take it would no doubt meet very considerable legal challenge. The morale and commitment of officers required to remain within the Force, although eligible for severance, would also be questionable. The first part of phase two of severance will see a further 670 officers leave the service by September 2001, with a further 180 eligible to leave by March 2002.

1.12 The pattern of officers leaving under severance is not evenly spread across the Force, either geographically across the regions, or departmentally across headquarters. The region where most officers have taken severance so far is the urban (Belfast) region - 98 compared to 47 in south and 61 in north. The largest percentage of officers in the Force originate from the greater Belfast area, and those allocated posts west of the River Bann tend to migrate back to the eastern side of the province and the urban region later in service, thus the age profile of the urban region is higher than north or south regions. The department which has been most affected by severance is the crime department where 120 officers have left under phase one. Over the last two to three years, retirements have been at a minimum with the promise of severance on the horizon, but now there is a sudden drain of experienced officers in all ranks. At supervisory levels 258 officers have left the service, comprising 21 chief superintendents, 30 superintendents, 22 chief inspectors, 74 inspectors, and 114 sergeants. Not all the vacancies left by these officers will be filled, however, over a two to three year period a steady drip feed of replacements would have allowed for a well managed succession planning process built around staff development and training for replacements. Her Majesty's Inspector highlights the importance for

officers now being brought forward through promotion to receive adequate staff development and training for their new posts. In the meantime the Force will find itself severely stretched in a number of specialist areas from senior investigating officers to fingerprint officers.

1.13 The DCUs come into effect from 1 April, but in a number of districts key members of support staff have yet to be recruited. This will result in ‘backfilling’ by police officers - not in any great numbers, but a further drain on resources.

1.14 The role of the full-time reserve has never been clearly defined, whether they were to be engaged purely on static security posts, or deployed within mobile support units for public order duty, or working in support functions within police stations to release regular officers for response duties. As a result, over the past 20 or so years, they have been allowed to develop their own role and function at a personal level depending on their own preference and the discretion of the local commanders. Within the Patten Report it was recommended that the future police service should not include a full-time reserve (Patten recommendation 103). Since publication in September 1999 there has been no new recruitment to the full-time reserve and numbers have fallen from 2,900 to 2,485 at 31 March 2001. At the time of the Inspection officers from the full-time reserve were leaving the Force at the rate of 20 to 25 per month. The Force predicts that if contracts were not to be renewed, the number of full-time reserves will reduce to 1,260 by April 2003. Those who would wish to see the full-time reserve disbanded at a faster rate, perhaps do not appreciate that in many areas not only do they regularly respond to calls for service but, more importantly, they provide a community policing presence. The rapid withdrawal of the full-time reserve, even if justified by an assessment of the security situation, would still leave a resourcing gap for mainstream service delivery. Her Majesty’s Inspector believes this further consideration should be a fundamental part of any such assessment.

1.15 Her Majesty’s Inspector is aware of ad hoc comment that the policing problems of Northern Ireland have been ‘problems policed on overtime’ and, to some extent, this is founded on truth. The number of officers dedicated to patrol and response, particularly at times of tension and greater risk to security, could only be achieved by providing high levels of overtime. Since 1993 the allocation of overtime hours has been reduced by 74%, and the 2000/2001 allocation sees yet a further 38% reduction in hours from the 1999/2000 figures. There has been a continuous reduction in the Force overtime budget, and with a spending shortfall over the next three years as a result of the 2000 Spending Review, a further reduction may be necessary. This can only adversely affect the visibility and response problems that are facing the embryonic service.

1.16 A second and no less important area for this Inspection was:

- The introduction of efficiency measures across the Force, in particular for sickness management and civilianisation.

1.17 Sickness levels for police officers, which were already high enough to attract adverse comment from Her Majesty’s Inspector in 1997/1998 and 1998/1999, have continued to rise sharply and for 1999/2000 reached an average of 20.5 days, an increase of a further 13.4%. This figure compares with an England and Wales average for 1999/2000 of 12.1 days, and it is estimated that the Force figure for 2000/2001 will be in the region of 21 to 22 days. At the time of this Inspection the rate equated to 1,230 officers per day, over 11% of the strength of the Force, and the level of sickness across the Force had reached a point where it was having a noticeable impact on the number of police officers available for response and patrol duties. Added to the sickness rate are a further 700 or more officers on recuperative and light duties.

1.18 The 1998/1999 Inspection Report referred to the drafting of a new sickness management policy and recommendation was made that a chief officer be designated to have responsibility for implementation and success. In his subsequent Inspection Her Majesty's Inspector was advised that during 1999 the writing of a new sickness management policy had commenced in December. Progress had therefore been slow. Her Majesty's Inspector highlighted the compelling need for corporate direction and support, and the requirement for concerted action. He recommends that the Force should implement its sickness management policy without delay to provide a clear corporate lead to reduce sickness levels across the organisation. Within the sub-divisions visited on this Inspection, Strand Road and Lurgan, neither of which could be said to be 'easy' areas to police, leadership at commander rank and commitment and dedication at all levels have showed what can be achieved. The sickness level at Lurgan has been reduced from 20.6 days in 1999/2000 to 13.3 days for the first three-quarters of 2000/2001, and at Strand Road the figure for constables is 10.6 days and 15.3 days for full-time reserve officers. Even taking into account the age profiles of these sub-divisions the results speak for themselves.

1.19 What is outlined in the above paragraphs, considered in the collective, amounts to a sizeable dip in operational resources, and this does not take account of the further 'tranche' of officers eligible to leave under phase three of severance from 1 April 2002. New recruits will not enter the Force in any critical mass until April 2003. Unless action is taken Her Majesty's Inspector does not believe the Force can face the collective impact of the above without a decline in service provision, and that opinion was persuasively reinforced by police focus groups on the Inspection, i.e. those with a direct responsibility for delivery. These younger officers represent the future, and it was refreshing to hear them passionately discussing adequate service provision to the public rather than overtime levels and conditions of service issues. They expressed a real concern about sufficient staffing levels to 'do the job'.

1.20 If carried through, the rapid scaling down of police resources will have a major impact on the level of policing services currently provided. The knock-on effect will dilute the operational capability of the new DCUs and impact on the ability of the service to tackle organised crime and the activities of paramilitary groups. A number of paramilitary groups remain actively engaged in terrorism, and security continues to be high priority. The issue of 'arms decommissioning' remains a significant factor, and the work of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning remains vital to the implementation of the 'Good Friday' Agreement of April 1998. Furthermore, paramilitary assaults are carried out on a regular basis regardless of the cease-fire situation, and those organisations, or their individual members, are becoming increasingly involved in criminal activities and the black economy in counterfeit and smuggled goods. Published just two years ago, Patten described the transformation from terrorism to organised criminal activity as speculative, and yet, the setting up of the organised crime task force clearly highlights how quickly the picture has changed, and the size and scope of the problems now facing the police and other enforcement agencies.

1.21 The annual marching season (from April to November with a concentration from June to August) imposes a considerable demand upon police resources and ensures that public order is a further high priority for the Force. The diversion of resources and effort to police contentious marches, and the cost to the community as a whole in terms of police presence, visibility, and effort, cannot be underestimated.

1.22 These latter paragraphs amplify the magnitude of the enormous task the Force has undertaken to transform itself and, in understanding that it deserves support and encouragement, points of constructive criticism in this Report are intended to assist the professionalism of the change programme – not hinder it!

1.23 The potential resourcing gap outlined here by Her Majesty's Inspector is not set against a backcloth of universal doom and gloom. In areas of the Force where one might have expected poor morale and a depressed team spirit, the very opposite was in evidence - mostly amongst the younger officers. Whilst these officers may have robust views about resource provision, they are policing with optimism (genuinely heart-warming to witness) and clearly see their role in 'local service provision' in the new police service for Northern Ireland. Some of the sergeants in charge of neighbourhood policing and sub-divisional crime teams (proactive units) were a revelation - keen, enthusiastic and dedicated, and most of all forward thinking. This augurs well for the future, but it was these same good officers who urged Her Majesty's Inspector to grasp the message that 'they' clearly see around the potential resourcing gap.

1.24 There are a number of possible solutions, or combination of solutions, which could be implemented to address the potential resourcing gap. (Note: Just before completion of this Report Her Majesty's Inspector was made aware of action being taken to address the points below.):

- An increase in overtime provision. (Not, perhaps, a palatable solution, but the easiest of regulators to assist police managers in increasing visibility and ensuring a reasonable response to incidents.)
- A robust management 'attack' on sickness levels. (If some areas of the Force can achieve levels well below the Force average it prompts questions as to why this is not being achieved elsewhere. Leadership at DCU level will be a powerful ingredient.)
- Adopting now a civilianisation (or optimisation) programme. (Whilst it is not suggested that this will have a massive impact, it is one of a basket of measures which would help the collective.)
- The morale of the full-time reserve is currently very poor, but they represent experienced staff and in many places also represent the day-to-day face of community policing. Any pragmatic consideration around plugging the potential resourcing gap must involve some retention for at least 3 years. It is essential that the Force effectively communicates its intentions to the full-time reserve.

1.25 If genuine peace descends on Northern Ireland in the near future, it would eliminate much of what is outlined here as a resourcing gap. On the other hand, if there is an increase in dissident activity and unforeseen problems occur in the 2001 marching season, this would exacerbate the problems to which Her Majesty's Inspector refers.

1.26 The criminal justice review that was being conducted at the time of the 1999/2000 Inspection has now been completed. This will have huge implications for the conduct of policing, the prosecution of offences and the change management programme.

1.27 This Report represents an informed assessment, based upon professional judgement, of the Force's performance and of its preparation for the changing demands of policing in an improving environment (given a gradual progression to lasting peace). The Report is not, and does not purport to be, a comprehensive account of the activities involved in the policing of Northern Ireland. That function is fulfilled by the annual report of the Chief Constable required by Section 48, Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, together with the annual report published by the PANI in accordance with Section 47 of the same Act.

1.28 In drafting this Report, Her Majesty's Inspector has been mindful of the enormity of the task facing senior management in the Force. This task is made more difficult because of the fragile state of

the peace process, the delay in the introduction of the new Policing Board and DPPs. The latter will impact on the work of the DCUs (put in place on 1 April 2001).

1.29 Despite the above this Report contains a frank consideration of the Force's present position in relation to the change management process, its preparation for the future and its operational performance. This should not be embraced as a fortuitous opportunity for local and national politicians, or the media to indulge in destructive criticism. The aim of Her Majesty's Inspector is to assist the Force through the enormity of the change process from which the new police service of Northern Ireland will develop. The inclusion of the whole community in the process would bring benefits for all: the exclusion of certain parts of the community will benefit none.

The Force

1.30 The Royal Ulster Constabulary, GC, is responsible for policing Northern Ireland, an area of 5,467 square miles with a population of 1,688,000. There are 4 airports, 69 miles of motorway and a 303 miles long international border with the Republic of Ireland.

1.31 The Force is led by a chief officer group headed by the Chief Constable, supported by a deputy chief constable (DCC), a number of assistant chief constables (ACCs), and senior members of the support staff. Previously there were eight ACCs, but this will reduce to five through the restructuring of headquarters, which will bring the Force more in line with the structure outlined in Recommendation 97 of the Patten Report. Under the present security and public order scenario the Force will retain its three-region structure: north, south and urban (Belfast), each under the direction of an assistant chief constable (ACC). Crime and special branch will be combined under a single ACC (Patten Recommendation 98). The post of ACC operations will be retained and an ACC has been designated with specific responsibility for change management as envisaged in Recommendation 75. The key members of support staff in the chief officer group are the director of finance, the chief administrative officer, the legal adviser, the director of communications and the chief medical adviser. They will soon be joined by a newly appointed senior director of human resources, a direct replacement for a post formerly held by an ACC.

1.32 Strategy and policy are formulated through two Force level meetings, which are held on alternate weeks focusing on 'operations' and 'management and policy', both are chaired by the Chief Constable. These processes for holding regular meetings at department and branch level are now under revision, and structures will need to be tied into the new headquarters configuration. The structure for meetings at regional level is also being revised to take account of the introduction of the DCUs and the removal of the divisional tier of management.

1.33 The territorial structure of the Force is to be radically changed from 1 April 2001 as part of the change management process. The 3 regions (each headed by an ACC) will remain, however, the 12 divisions comprising 39 sub-divisions are to be replaced by 29 DCUs, and the divisional tier of management and administration is to be removed. With the introduction of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, in April 1999 responsibility for civilian staff and support services (including finance) transferred to the Chief Constable (though the chief executive of the PANI remains the accounting officer). Many members of the support staff have retained their civil service status although there are a growing number of support staff who have been recruited directly into the Force. During the Inspection police officers, at all ranks, continued to refer to support staff as 'PANI staff' or 'civil service staff'. It is clear that there is a very long way yet to go to create the type of single employee culture which is now inherent in most forces in England and Wales.

1.34 In the absence of a Northern Ireland Policing Board, as laid down in statute by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and outlined in Patten Recommendation 8, it has been necessary that PANI retain its role and produce an annual policing plan with objectives and performance targets. It is hoped that, as and when the new Policing Board is created, the PANI plan can serve as an interim document until such time as the Board produces the first of its own policing plans as set out in Part IV, Section 26 of the Act.

1.35 The strength of the Force (at 31 March 2001) comprised 7,774 regular police officers (-720 regular police officers), 2,485 full-time reserve constables (-377 reserve constables), 1,072 part time reserve constables (-144 reserve constables) and 3,132 full-time equivalent civilian support staff (+215.5 employees). Figure 1 provides information about the distribution of staff across the new district command unit structure of the Force, which will come into effect on 1 April 2001. (Data contained within Figure 1 is therefore as at 1 April 2001.) The number of female officers in the Force remains low at 12.3% of the total as opposed to an England and Wales average of 16.8%. Addressing this issue may, however, become secondary to the prime objective of achieving 50% recruitment from the catholic community. The percentage of police officers employed in operational roles is currently 78.4% compared with an England and Wales average of 90.8%.

Figure 1: Staff Strength*					
	Regular Police Officers	Reserve Constables Full-time	Reserve Constables Part-Time	Civilian Staff FTE (inc. Traffic Wardens)	Total Staff FTE (exc. Reserve Cons. Part-Time)
Chief officers & miscellaneous	50	37	0	25.5	112.5
Planning & performance	88	0	0	50.75	118.75
Functional support	206	9	0	854.25	1,069.25
Indirect operational support	127	1	0	224.25	352.25
Direct operational support	418	35	0	231	684
Special Branch	665	0	0	110.25	775.25
C.I.D.	189	1	0	123.5	313.5
Traffic	7	0	0	25	32
Urban Region					
Urban Regional	544	67	0	94	705
Belfast North	396	133	104	93.5	622.5
Belfast South	367	159		113.5	639.5
Belfast East	248	151	87	53.25	452.25

Figure 1: Staff Strength* (continued)					
	Regular Police Officers	Reserve Constables Full-time	Reserve Constables Part-Time	Civilian Staff FTE (inc. Traffic Wardens)	Total Staff FTE (exc. Reserve Cons. Part-Time)
Belfast West	305	236	0	63.75	604.75
Castlereagh	132	76	57	32.75	240.75
North Down	158	106	58	29.5	293.5
Lisburn	198	100	88	54	352
Antrim	126	61	24	31.75	218.75
Carrickfergus	92	55	36	22	169
Newtownabbey	163	30	60	30.5	223.5
South Region					
South Regional	326	51	0	27.5	404.5
Ards	137	57	91	43.25	237.25
Down	170	72	30	49.25	291.25
Newry and Mourne	201	101	4	48.25	350.25
Armagh	159	76	21	60	295
Banbridge	84	35	32	26	145
Craigavon	207	85	44	82.5	374.5
Dungannon and South Tyrone	182	88	15	49.25	319.25
Cookstown	93	46	9	25.75	164.75
North Region					
North Regional	385	87	0	23.5	495.5
Fermanagh	219	97	37	79.75	395.75
Strabane	113	64	22	32	209
Coleraine	136	44	36	44.5	224.5

Figure 1: Staff Strength* (continued)					
	Regular Police Officers	Reserve Constables Full-time	Reserve Constables Part-Time	Civilian Staff FTE (inc. Traffic Wardens)	Total Staff FTE (exc. Reserve Cons. Part-Time)
Foyle	257	110	8	100.5	467.5
Limavady	69	31	7	20.25	120.25
Ballymoney	65	15	9	23	103
Moyle	25	12	2	3.75	40.75
Magherafelt	98	57	7	26	181
Larne	78	28	29	21.75	127.75
Ballymena	125	28	61	48	201
Omagh	139	46	33	33.5	218.5
Total	7,727	2,487	981	3,131.25	13,345.25

*As at 1 April 2001.

FTE – Full-time equivalent.

II Strategy and Planning

Strategy

2.1 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, requires the Chief Constable, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to issue a strategic policing plan setting out the proposed arrangements for policing over a three to five year period. The strategic plan published in 1998 was intended to be a rolling three-year programme. Following the publication of the Patten Report an addendum was published.

2.2 Any further update to the 1998-2001 Force strategy has been delayed in order to ensure co-ordination with the eight work programmes being carried out under the change management programme. It is the intention that the work programmes, the transformational, and the implementation strategies, will merge, with the collective document ultimately being submitted to a future Policing Board as the new Force strategy. Progressing the strategy as described will face the obvious difficulties presented by the fact that a Policing Board has yet to be established, and the PANI continue to operate in their role, pending the establishment of a Policing Board. Her Majesty's Inspector is, however, encouraged that despite such external political difficulties, the Force appears to have maintained its focus and will be well placed to present its strategic documents to a Policing Board when required to do so.

Change Management Programme

2.3 The change management programme was established to address not only the 175 recommendations contained within the Patten Report, but also other recommendations contained within many other reports including those of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. The change management team, which was established by the Force following the publication of the Patten Report, has considered a total of 934 recommendations, and is currently addressing 8 strategic programmes of work which consist of approximately 50 projects. The 8 work programmes are:

- Shared Values
- Style
- Staff
- Skills/Training
- Structure
- Systems/Finance
- Systems/Information Technology
- Communications, Marketing and Image.

2.4 The NIO has published an implementation plan, outlining the methods to be adopted and timescales for implementing the recommendations contained within the Patten Report - the change management team work programmes being closely aligned to this plan. In this respect Her Majesty's

Inspector acknowledges that many recommendations made in previous HMIC Inspection Reports, whilst accepted by the Force, have yet to be implemented as they are now contained within the NIO implementation plan. The plan will provide the baseline against which the Oversight Commissioner, as well as a recently established tripartite co-ordinating and monitoring group, which includes representatives from the Force, NIO, and Police Authority (in due course the Policing Board), can monitor progress.

2.5 In his 1999/2000 Inspection Report Her Majesty's Inspector described the change management programme as "one of the biggest challenges ever faced by any police organisation". That description is equally valid at the time of this Inspection. Her Majesty's Inspector was therefore impressed by the progress made by the change management team in addressing the daunting task of ensuring the Force is well placed to progress into implementation the enormous operational, cultural, organisational and structural changes required of it.

2.6 Her Majesty's Inspector points to further managerial challenges in the near future. As the policies arising from the work programme projects are consolidated into a Force strategy document, the new and no less daunting task of implementation will need to be addressed. During this Inspection staff of varying ranks expressed their concerns surrounding the change management programme, a common feeling being that the programmes were being addressed in silos and insufficiently 'joined-up'. A perceived lack of communication of the change process was also a frequently expressed concern. Whilst Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges that all such perceptions may not totally reflect the reality of the situation, he would stress that to effect the implementation of change, particularly cultural change, good internal communications mechanisms will be vital. In addition, the implementation of change on the scale previously described, will be a long-term process, and the Force is encouraged to ensure that a robust system of monitoring policy implementation is in place.

2.7 The Force will reorganise on the 1 April 2001 into a total of 29 DCUs, the DCUs being coterminous with 25 of the 26 council areas, with the area of Belfast being divided into four DCUs. Whilst there are obvious benefits in the provision of a local policing service, particularly once the DPPs are established, Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges that such a structure can, due to varying size of DCUs, reduce opportunities to make efficiency savings through economies of scale. He is, however, aware of a proposed local government boundary review, which may in the future result in the reduction in the number of council areas, and a subsequent reduction in the number of DCUs.

2.8 Despite the DCUs being established as of the 1 April 2001, Her Majesty's Inspector was made aware that this would in the early stages be 'in name only', with many of the 'pieces of jigsaw' included in the implementation plan of the DCU structure yet to be put in place. Such issues would include staffing both in terms of police officers and support staff posts, establishing a Policing Board and DPPs, in addition to issues appertaining to accommodation and equipment. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that the creation of the DCU structure is to be marketed to the public, and in doing so he would urge the Force to ensure that there is an awareness that implementation is not complete and that such a process will be staged over a period of time. Her Majesty's Inspector is also of the opinion that the creation of this local policing structure presents further opportunities for the Force to encourage the community and other agencies to address their responsibilities towards community safety issues within their areas - a concept which is still in its infancy within the province.

2.9 Her Majesty's Inspector was pleased to note that a head of communications and media is about to be appointed. The task of marketing the change will be challenging, not least in attempting to ensure

that the public expectations of the policing service in Northern Ireland are not too far removed from the Force's capacity to deliver.

2.10 Once again it should be emphasised this change management programme represents the biggest challenge faced by any police organisation. The Force is to be congratulated for the achievements within the change management programme thus far. Success, however, will ultimately be judged by quality of implementation and improved level of policing service provided to the public. Her Majesty's Inspector will monitor implementation of change with great interest.

Policing Plan

2.11 The annual policing plan for 2000/2001 was produced in accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998. The plan contains eight objectives, twenty five performance indicators and twenty one performance targets grouped into the following priorities:

- Crime
- Terrorism
- Public Order
- Serving the Community
- Traffic
- Police Service Effectiveness.

2.12 Her Majesty's Inspector notes that targets appertaining to crime contained within the plan are largely based upon levels of detection. Whilst crime detection will always be one of the Force priorities, he is of the opinion that the setting of targets in respect of crime reduction would further assist the Force in developing its community based, problem solving approach to policing.

2.13 Section 26 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Policing Board, at the beginning of each financial year, to publish a policing plan setting out the proposed arrangements for the policing of Northern Ireland. Despite the fact that the Policing Board is yet to be established, the provision of a policing service to the public of Northern Ireland must continue. The PANI have therefore agreed a policing plan with the Chief Constable, setting out the policing objectives and targets for 2001/2002. Her Majesty's Inspector is optimistic that once established, the Policing Board is likely to agree the policing priorities contained within this policing plan, and subsequently report upon performance against the objectives.

2.14 Section 22 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires each district commander to issue a local policing plan, setting out the proposed arrangements for the policing of the district. The Act also states that such local plans "shall be so framed as to be consistent with the policing plan". Despite the political difficulties leading to the delay in the establishment of a Policing Board, and subsequent publication of a policing plan, Her Majesty's Inspector was encouraged that local policing appeared to be focused upon identified priority areas. He was of the view that, once again, this would ensure the Force was well placed to maturely enter into its relationship with both the Policing Board and DPPs.

Monitoring of Performance

2.15 The 1999/2000 Inspection Report repeated a recommendation that sub-divisional commanders and branch heads should meet regularly with their respective chief officer for a formal and constructive performance review of their unit against targets set in their policing plan. Her Majesty's Inspector heard that some progress had been made towards addressing this recommendation. Regional ACCs hold performance review meetings with sub divisional commanders, although branch and departmental heads are not subject to the same level of performance review. A quarterly review based on Force priorities is produced, using a traffic light system to indicate areas of achievement. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the opinion that the Force restructure to DCUs, accompanied by increased levels of devolved authority and accountability, presents an opportunity for the introduction of a robust process of performance review both at district and branch level. He therefore repeats and amends his 1999/2000 recommendation that district commanders and appropriate branch heads are held to account for performance against the targets set in their policing plans, through the introduction of a rigorous process of performance review.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Her Majesty's Inspector further repeats his 1999/2000 recommendation that district commanders and appropriate branch heads are held to account for performance against the targets set in their policing plans, through the introduction of a rigorous process of performance review.

2.16 Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act provides a responsibility on the Policing Board to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the functions of the Force are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The Act also requires the Board to conduct reviews of various functions as a means of fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard. Her Majesty's Inspector was made aware that the preparatory work for the conducting of such reviews, anticipated to commence in April 2002, was well advanced, with a framework ready to be presented to the Policing Board for approval. A senior member of support staff is to take charge of this function once the proposed structure for a corporate development branch is implemented.

III Analysis of Performance

Policing Plan 1999/2000

3.1 The annual policing plan for 1999/2000 was structured on four objectives set by the Secretary of State and four by the PANI. The plan contained twenty measurable numeric targets of which only eight were achieved. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: 1999/2000 Policing Plan Targets			
Objective	Target	Achievement	Achieved (?)
Reduce crime (PANI)	Detection of 50% violent crime	62%	YES
	Detection of 20% domestic burglary	16.8%	NO
	Detection of thefts of vehicles and taking without consent of 13%	13.2%	YES
	Overall detection rate of 27%	30.2%	YES
	To reduce recorded crime	119,111 (9.2% increase)	NO
Target supply of drugs (S of S)	Increase arrests by 3%	1,480 (17.1% increase)	YES
	Increase number of persons charged for Misuse of Drugs Act offences by 3%	632 (15.5% increase)	YES
Maintain public order (S of S)	Increase confidence levels in policing of public disorder to more than 49%	44%	NO
Road traffic accidents (S of S)	Reduce fatal and serious casualties in line with target 2000	1,723 (6.9% increase)	NO
	Reduce number of fatal/serious casualties due to:		
	Drink driving	4.8% reduction	YES
	Excess speed	0.9% increase	NO
	Dangerous/careless driving	12.3% increase	NO
Organisational effectiveness PANI	Deliver equal opportunities and community race relations training to 70% of those officers targeted within 'policing in community programme'	55%	NO
Multi agency initiatives	To increase the number of initiatives	40	NO
	Reduce average level of sick leave for police to 14 days and 12 days for civilian staff	Police 20.5 days Civilian employees 14.4 days	NO NO
Raise public confidence in RUC (PANI)	Maintain 75% who think police do a good job	67%	NO
	Confidence levels in equality of treatment of 72%	76%	YES
	Reduction in the number of crimes which are threatening, intimidating, anti social		
	Criminal damage	28,815 (13.3% increase)	NO
	Common assault	11,990 (21% increase)	NO
	Satisfaction levels for patrolling greater than 48.5%	52%	YES

Call Management

3.2 An issue raised by Her Majesty's Inspector in his two previous Reports on the Force has been that of a lack of progress with regard to the civilianisation of posts within the control room. Whilst no progress has been made, Her Majesty's Inspector is encouraged by the fact that the recently completed optimisation plan includes proposals for the civilianisation of communications officer posts.

3.3 Similarly, no action has been taken in respect of graded response to calls for service. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that this is an issue which requires urgent attention. Demands made upon the Force continue to increase at a significant rate, with the number of officers available to meet such demands reducing at an even more significant rate. The Force will therefore not be able to continue to meet the existing high levels of public expectation of response to calls. Her Majesty's Inspector therefore recommends that the Force review its service delivery to the public, with a view to tailoring police response to the severity of incident, thereby ensuring that a quality policing service is maintained by the efficient deployment of valuable resources.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the Force review its service delivery to the public, with a view to tailoring police response to the severity of incident, thereby ensuring that a quality policing service is maintained by the efficient deployment of valuable resources.

3.4 The Barracuda Radio Project aimed at the introduction of a secure digital radio network commenced in 1998, with final acceptance and implementation due in June 2003. The Force will own, manage, and maintain the infrastructure - with the Ministry of Defence, Fire and Ambulance services, also subscribing to the network. Her Majesty's Inspector congratulates the Force on the development of this innovative partnership with other emergency services.

3.5 The number of 999 calls increased by 16.5% in 1999/2000. The total number of incidents increased by 19.9% over the previous year, representing an increase of 21.5% in the number of incidents per 100 officers. This is a statistic which will continue to increase as reductions in the number of officers continue. Despite continuing to achieve a 98% rate of 999 calls answered within the ten-second target time, public satisfaction with response to 999 calls fell by 7% to 83%. (See Figure 3). Public expectations of policing will be a prominent issue during this transitional period for the Force, and one which will require constant and careful management. This is an issue referred to elsewhere within this Report.

Figure 3: Call Management

Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
Total 999 calls	91,771.0	96,642.0	112,597.0	16.5	168,146.3
Local target time for 999 calls	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	11.5
% 999 calls answered within target Belfast region only	98.0	98.6	98.2	-	88.1

Figure 3: Call Management (continued)

Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
Total No. of incidents	222,543.0	444,417.0	532,641.0	19.9	377,419.7
No. of incidents per 100 officers *	5,227.0	5,232.1	6,356.9	21.5	16,197.5
Local Target Time					
- Force	No target time	No target time	No target time	-	14.4
- Urban				-	10.7
- Rural				-	19.3
- Other				-	12.5
% of immediate response incidents within target	nd	nd	nd	-	87.2
% public satisfied with response to 999 calls	85.4	90.0	83.1	-	83.3
% public satisfied with service at enquiry counters	87.0	86.3	90.4	-	87.2

* Based on regular officers only.

nd – No data available.

Crime Management

3.6 Recommendation 98 of the Patten Report "Special Branch and Crime Branch should be brought together under the command of a single Assistant Chief Constable" is soon to be implemented. The Force intends to conduct a functional analysis of the two branches, aimed at identifying areas where economies of scale could be made, in addition to addressing training needs of staff. Her Majesty's Inspector considers that this approach will not only address the recommendation referred to above, but may also present the Force with additional opportunities to revise the structure of crime management force-wide.

3.7 Progress in the transition of the crime strategy towards implementation has been slow: issues such as where operational responsibility for CID units at DCU level should lie are yet to be resolved. Her Majesty's Inspector has previously expressed a view that if DCU commanders are to be held accountable for crime performance, then operational responsibility for such units should be locally based.

3.8 Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that crime branch has been particularly affected by a high number of key senior detectives retiring during the first phase of the severance process. Phase two and three will see additional CID personnel retiring. The loss of expertise on such a scale will no doubt, in the short term, adversely affect Force crime performance. The branch will also be faced with the requirement to address major training needs of staff occupying some of the vacated posts. The reduced capacity within crime branch will result in a requirement for the provision of training to uniform patrol officers in the investigation of the less serious volume crime.

3.9 A strategic overview of crime within the province is currently being prepared, and an organised crime task force has been established within the NIO with the intention of examining the issue of organised crime, including the involvement of members of paramilitary organisations in such criminal activity. This has resulted in an additional objective being included within the 2001/2002 policing plan,

i.e. to tackle organised crime and racketeering. Whilst Her Majesty's Inspector welcomes such a 'joined-up' approach to tackling the issue of organised serious crime, he would highlight the need to ensure that a gap in enforcement does not develop between the level of criminality addressed at Force/regional level, and that which is addressed within the DCUs.

3.10 Recorded crime increased by 9.2% during 1999/2000, a trend which currently looks set to continue. Such increases in demand, accompanied by reducing resources, will add to the pressures faced by the Force. Her Majesty's Inspector suggests that it will only be a matter of time before the Force will need to review its current practices in investigating crime - including the issue of routine crime scene attendance, in order to ensure that it continues to be in a position to investigate crime in an effective and efficient manner.

3.11 Her Majesty's Inspector was encouraged that the emphasis on crime reduction within the Force appears to be rising. (Reducing crime being an objective contained both within the annual policing plan and the Force crime strategy.) It is essential that reducing crime be seen as an issue not only for the police to address, but an objective which can be embraced by the community. Her Majesty's Inspector was pleased to note increased community participation in community safety activities traditionally considered policing issues. He is aware that the Government has recently set five year reduction targets in respect of certain categories of volume crime in Northern Ireland. He would therefore encourage the Force to ensure that DCU commanders are focused towards crime reduction, and invites the consideration of numerical target setting at both Force and DCU levels.

3.12 Her Majesty's Inspector is pleased to report progress since his last Inspection with regard to developing intelligence/information led policing within the Force. Such progress includes:

- One day conference held for all senior managers.
- Force order published outlining Force policy on 'information led policing'.
- Each officer has received an information brochure on information led policing.
- Crime recording and crime pattern analysis elements of the integrated criminal information computer system (ICIS) becomes operational in April 2001.
- 5,000 officers have received information led policing training.
- 90 officers have received training in informant handling and the training programme is continuing.
- Establishment of an 'analysis centre' with recruitment and training of analysts continuing, with the eventual intention that each DCU will be provided with the services of a trained analyst.

3.13 Whilst the delivery of mainstreamed information led policing is still viewed as aspirational, progress is being made. Her Majesty's Inspector believes that successful implementation will depend upon all managers applying this approach to deployment of resources in all aspects of policing. Time must, however, be allowed for the tangible benefits of this proactive style of policing to become apparent.

3.14 A total of 119,111 crimes were recorded in 1999/2000 which represents an increase of 9.2%. This compares with an overall rise of 3.8% in England and Wales. The number of crimes per 1,000

population increased by 9.1% to 70.5, a figure which remains significantly lower than the England and Wales average of 94.8. (See Figure 4.) Her Majesty’s Inspector predicted this rise in crime in his previous Inspection Report of the Force, and would anticipate that such a trend will continue as terrorist activities are substituted by criminal conduct. As the Force moves towards a community style of policing, and public confidence increases, so will the willingness to report crime. Her Majesty’s Inspector is therefore of the opinion that it may be some time before the true picture of criminality within the province is known. Again, the resourcing gap, previously referred to in this Report, will only add to the pressure faced by the Force by such an increase in demand upon its services. (Note: Her Majesty’s Inspector acknowledges this ‘resource gap’ is now being addressed.)

Figure 4: All Notifiable Crime					
Performance Indicator	1997/98 *	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of notifiable crimes recorded	59,922.0	109,053.0	119,111.0	9.2	103,447.9
No. of notifiable crimes per 1000 population	36.0	64.6	70.5	9.1	94.8
No. of notifiable crimes detected	19,174.0	31,639.0	36,004.0	13.8	28,615.3
Detection rate %	32.0	29.0	30.2	-	29.4

* 1997/1998 Old Counting Rules.

3.15 Despite the increase in recorded crime the detection rate increased slightly from 29% in 1998/1999 to 30.2% in 1999/2000. This rate compares very favourably with the England and Wales average of 27.7%. Her Majesty’s Inspector is aware that recent available crime data, up to 31 December 2001, indicates a significant reduction in the detection rate. This may be a symptom of the pressures associated with the loss of experienced CID and other staff, previously referred to in this Report.

Figure 5: Burglary Dwelling					
Performance Indicator	1997/98 *	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of burglaries dwelling recorded	7,155.0	7,725.0	7,665.0	-0.8	8,855.5
No. of burglaries dwelling per 1000 dwellings	13.5	14.6	14.5	-0.7	19.8
No. of burglaries dwelling detected	1,211.0	1,431.0	1,290.0	-9.9	1,463.0
No. of burglaries dwelling detected per 100 officers	10.5	12.6	11.6	-7.9	62.8
Detection rate % burglaries dwelling	16.9	18.5	16.8	-	16.5

* 1997/1998 Old Counting Rules.

3.16 Domestic burglary decreased slightly by 0.8% in 1999/2000 while the detection rate decreased from 18.5% to 16.8%. (See Figure 5.) Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households remain well below those in England and Wales. Once again third quarter data available in respect of 2000/2001 shows a worrying trend of increased domestic burglaries recorded, accompanied by a reduction in the number detected.

3.17 Crimes of violence increased by 12.6% in 1999/2000, while the detection rate increased from 55.7% to 62%. Violent crime per 1,000 head of population remains above the England and Wales average and, despite the detection rate increasing, it continues to be significantly lower than the England and Wales average. (See Figure 6.) Third quarter data for 2000/2001 suggests that the increase in recorded crimes of violence may be stabilising, but detection rates show a significant reduction.

3.18 The number of domestic violence incidents increased by 2.6% during 1999/2000, while the number of persons arrested increased by 16.7%. The Force addresses the problems of domestic violence in a positive manner, each DCU having a post of domestic violence officer. During the Inspection Her Majesty's Inspector met with community representatives who praised the sensitive and empathetic approach of staff towards victims of domestic violence. This approach has no doubt contributed to the continued increase in the number of recorded incidents of domestic violence, since it reflects the increased public confidence in the Force to address incidents of this type. Her Majesty's Inspector views such increases in a positive manner bearing in mind the true picture of domestic violence is 'the hidden part of the iceberg'.

Figure 6: Violent Crime

Performance Indicator	1997/98 *	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of violent crimes recorded	7,837.0	21,452.0	24,163.0	12.6	12,198.1
Violent crimes per 1000 population	4.7	12.7	14.3	12.6	11.2
No. of violent crimes detected	4,522.0	11,950.0	14,972.0	25.3	8,743.9
No. of violent crimes detected per 100 officers	39.4	105.2	135.3	28.6	375.3
Violent crime % detected	57.7	55.7	62.0	-	71.7

* 1997/1998 Old Counting Rules.

3.19 The number of racial incidents recorded increased dramatically from 94 to 245 during 1999/2000, representing an increase of 160%. (See Figure 7.) Third quarter data for 2000/2001 suggests that whilst the trend continues to increase, it is at a significantly lower rate. Of the 245 reported incidents, a total of 73 (29.7%) were incidents of verbal abuse as opposed to any physical attacks on persons or property. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that the Force has been proactive in building relationships with members of ethnic minority communities, in addition to ensuring that police officers have a full understanding of what constitutes a racial incident, in an effort to ensure accurate recording of such incidents. This increased level of awareness, both amongst police officers and the public, will no doubt have contributed to increased levels of reporting of racist incidents, which Her Majesty's Inspector would emphasise should be viewed as progress towards identifying the true extent of the problem.

Figure 7: Racial Incidents					
Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of racial incidents recorded	67.0	94.0	245.0	160.6	595.4
% subject to further investigations	nd	nd	nd	-	93.5

nd – No data available.

3.20 The number of drug seizures increased by a significant 29.6% during 1999/2000. This level of activity was accompanied by a 17.1% increase in the number of persons arrested for offences against the Misuse of Drugs Act, with the number of persons charged with such offences increasing by 15.5%. Despite such increases the number of persons arrested for drugs offences per 1,000 head of population at 0.87 remains significantly lower than the England and Wales average of 2. Her Majesty's Inspector is fully aware that the true extent of illegal use of drugs is difficult to measure, as increased police activity often appears to highlight increasing problems of drug abuse. Nevertheless, he encourages the Force to ensure that those who trade in illegal drugs at all levels are appropriately targeted, thereby reducing the risk of a gap developing between the response of drug squad officers at a Force level, and local proactive response to street level drugs dealers. (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8: Drugs Offences					
Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of drugs seizure incidents	1,335.0	1,588.0	2,058.0	29.6	nd
No. of persons arrested/1000 population	0.63	0.75	0.87	16.0	2.0
No. of disposals/1000 population	0.38	nd	nd	-	nd

nd – No data available.

3.21 The third quarter data available for 2000/2001 indicates that the achievements of 1999/2000 will not be repeated since both the numbers of seizures, and persons arrested, appear to have significantly reduced. The disruption of the supply of illegal drugs remains a Secretary of State objective within the recently published 2001/2002 policing plan, and the Force will need to retain a clear focus on its activity in this regard.

3.22 The workload of the scientific support branch decreased slightly during 1999/2000, with the number of crime scenes visited reducing by 4.5%. The number of fingerprint identifications per scenes of crime officer increased by 8% and the number of crime scenes where DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) samples were taken increased by 9.8%. (See Figure 9.)

3.23 Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that many experienced scenes of crime officers are about to retire through severance. Due to the training requirements of such a specialist role, the loss of

expertise and knowledge on such a scale will not be replaced within the short term. He therefore suggests that the Force may need to establish a system of screening and grading in relation to attendance of SOCO at crime scenes since the demands made upon their services are unlikely to decrease.

3.24 The Force has yet to replace the existing automatic fingerprint retrieval system. A new system has now been approved with a target date for operational use being 1 June 2001.

3.25 The Forensic Science Agency for Northern Ireland operates a DNA database for Northern Ireland on behalf of the RUC. This year it is contracted to process 8,000 samples for which finance was made available. The Force acknowledges that it is unlikely to meet this target. Whilst Her Majesty's Inspector encourages the Force to maximise the use of DNA in the detection of crime, he is sympathetic to the view that the cost benefits do not equate to those of forces in England and Wales, as the RUC currently sits outside the funding arrangements appertaining to the mainland forces. The reason for such separatist treatment is not known and will be pursued (outside the Report) by Her Majesty's Inspector.

Figure 9: Scientific Support

Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of crime scenes visited	19,188.0	22,327.0	21,329.0	-4.5	nd
No. of crime scenes attended per SOCO	330.8	392.0	374.0	-4.6	nd
No. of crime scenes where DNA samples taken	2,127.0	1,383.0	1,519.0	9.8	nd
No. of identifications per SOCO	18.8	25.0	27.0	8.0	nd
No. of crime scenes examined for fingerprints	16,330.0	19,478.0	19,199.0	-1.4	nd
No. of crime scenes yielding fingerprints	nd	nd	6,330.0	-	nd
% of identifications per crime scene examined for fingerprints	5.8	4.9	5.9	-	nd

nd – No data available.

SOCO – Scenes of crime officer.

Road Safety Management

3.26 The traffic branch continues to be managed on a regional basis with the road policing development branch having central responsibility for formulation of Force policy, administration of the fixed penalty process, and the procurement of equipment. The traffic branch has, for the third occasion, been successful in being awarded the Charter Mark.

3.27 The main effort of the road policing development branch since the last Inspection has been the progression of a new road policing strategy, aimed at replacing the previous strategy 'Roadsafe 2000' which was originally published in 1995. The new strategy will be linked to the Road Safety Plan for Northern Ireland to 2010, soon to be published by the Department of Environment for Northern Ireland.

3.28 The draft road policing strategy identifies the head of the road policing development branch as being charged with responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that some difficulties have been experienced in the past in ensuring that a corporate approach is adopted to road policing throughout the Force area, with regions adopting policies and practices of their own. He encourages the Force to seize this opportunity of achieving an effective balance between authority and influence, maintaining corporacy, whilst allowing regional activities to effectively meet identified local needs.

3.29 Her Majesty's Inspector visited north region traffic branch. The branch is the largest of the 3 regions with responsibility for 6,936 miles of road. As of the 1 April it will have geographic responsibility for 11 of the 29 newly formed DCUs. Her Majesty's Inspector was impressed by the manner in which limited resources were being deployed to maximum impact, using the analysis of accident data to classify roads requiring specific attention.

3.30 Total road casualties increased by 4.5% in 1999/2000, with the number of fatal and serious casualties increasing by 6.9%. The annual policing plan to reduce fatal and serious casualties by 2% and the target for Roadsafes 2000 were not therefore achieved. (See Figure 10.) Whilst not underestimating the impact the Force can have on casualty reduction, Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges that a sustainable reduction in serious injuries on the roads cannot be achieved by the Force alone.

Figure 10: Road Traffic Accident Injuries – Project 2000 *

	Base 1981-85	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	Target 2000
Fatal	2,362	143.0	150.0	150.0	1,575
Serious		1,526.0	1,462.0	1,573.0	
Other	-	10,912.0	11,682.0	12,170.0	-
Total	-	12,581.0	13,294.0	13,893.0	-

* Financial year figures.

3.31 The number of traffic offences dealt with by the Force fell by 4.6% to 319,566 in 1999/2000. Breath tests administered increased by 14.8% while the proportion positive/refused fell from 16.2% to 15.1%. This is now the fourth successive annual fall, but the proportion remains significantly above the England and Wales average of 11.7%. (See Figure 11.) Third quarter data available for 2000/2001 tends to indicate that the number of breath tests administered continue to increase, while the proportion of positive/refused continues to fall.

3.32 The capacity to process fixed penalty tickets (in volume) remains extremely limited, placing severe restrictions upon regional officers in enforcement of excess speed - in particular. Her Majesty's Inspector was informed that the Force inspectorate is to review the fixed penalty procedures across the Force in an effort to address the issue. This matter was raised in the previous Inspection Report, and Her Majesty's Inspector considers that an early solution to the problem is required.

Figure 11: Other Traffic Management					
Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
Total traffic offences	353,287.0	334,913.0	319,566.0	-4.6	117,358.3
% of traffic offences prosecuted	9.7	8.8	10.8	-	36.5
% of traffic offences dealt with by EFPN	33.2	35.6	37.1	-	57.1
% traffic offences diverted to VDRS	0.3	0.2	0.3	-	4.2
% traffic offences dealt with by written warning	57.1	55.6	53.5	-	2.1
No. of breath tests given	11,921.0	13,006.0	14,925.0	14.8	-
% of breath tests positive/refused	17.2	16.2	15.1	-	11.7
% victims of RTAs satisfied	84.2	86.9	92.6	-	90.4

EFPN - Extended fixed penalty notice.

VDRS - Vehicle defect rectification scheme.

RTA - Road traffic accident.

Public Order Management/Keeping the Peace

3.33 Her Majesty's Inspector was greatly encouraged with the progress made by the Force in its efforts towards transforming itself from a 'force' to a 'service'. Such efforts were evident, not only via the operational and structural changes introduced to address recommendations contained within the Patten Report, but also by the optimism and enthusiasm displayed by many officers during this Inspection towards the delivery of a community based policing service.

3.34 Despite the progress made towards policing a peaceful society, Her Majesty's Inspector considers that as political uncertainties continue, the Force will soon reach a position where it can progress no further until a position of greater stability and consensus is achieved. Key politicians, the Church and local communities have to help create an environment where officers feel safer to be unarmed and free to patrol singularly rather than in numbers. Only then can the public expect to receive a truly community based style of policing envisaged within the Patten Report.

3.35 The resourcing difficulties facing the Force as a result of officers retiring under severance have been well documented within this Report. Additional pressure will undoubtedly be felt, as the annual marching season from April to November looks set to continue to make major demands upon the limited resources of the Force. The total number of parades in 2000 fell by 81 to 3,309. Of these 24 were illegal, and disorder occurred in only 6 parades. (See Figure 12.)

3.36 Provision of security in respect of individuals, escort and court duties, remains a considerable drain upon the reducing resources of the Force. In total such duties can account for 220 regular officers, in addition to 230 full-time reserve officers. Her Majesty's Inspector therefore repeats the suggestion made in his previous Inspection Report that the Force reviews the extent of the provision of officers to such duties.

Figure 12: Parades

	1998	1999	2000	% Change 1999 to 2000
Loyalist	2,659	2,661	2,565	-3.6
Nationalist	229	204	200	-2.0
Other	542	525	544	+3.6
TOTAL	3,430	3,390	3,309	-2.4
Illegal	88	50	24	-52
Disorder	22	12	6	-50

Quality of Service Delivery

3.37 The target set within the 1999/2000 policing plan of maintaining a 75% public satisfaction rate (that the Force was doing a very or fairly good job overall) was not reached, with only 67% of those surveyed expressing such levels of satisfaction.

3.38 Public satisfaction with levels of foot patrol in 1999/2000 was 38.9% and 52% with mobile patrol. Such levels of satisfaction in both categories compare favourably with England and Wales averages of 16.3% and 37.8%. Victim satisfaction surveys conducted by the Force during 1999/2000 show that 92% of burglary victims, 78% of violent crime victims, and 93% of road collision victims were satisfied with service provision. (See Figure 13.)

Figure 13: Overall Quality of Service

Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
% of public satisfied with response to 999 calls	85.4	90.0	83.1	-	83.3
% of public satisfied with service at enquiry counters	87.0	86.3	90.4	-	87.2
% of violent crime victims satisfied	nd	77.6	77.6	-	78.6
% of burglary dwelling victims satisfied	96.0	91.2	91.6	-	90.9
% of victims of RTA's satisfied	84.2	86.9	92.6	-	90.4
% of public satisfied with levels of foot patrol	nd	35.3	38.9	-	16.3
% of public satisfied with levels of mobile patrol	nd	52.6	52.0	-	37.8

nd – No data available.

RTA – Road traffic accident.

3.39 Despite increasing financial and staffing pressures placed upon the Force, high levels of public satisfaction have in the main been maintained. Her Majesty's Inspector congratulates the Force on this achievement. Public expectations of locally based neighbourhood policing have been raised by the Patten Report, and Her Majesty's Inspector is of the opinion that maintaining such high levels of satisfaction, with a reducing number of officers, will be challenging.

Police and Community Relations

3.40 The 1999/2000 Inspection Report contained a repeat recommendation to put into effect an implementation plan for the 'Policing in Partnership' strategy - Her Majesty's Inspector having described progress as having been relatively slow in this regard. At the time of this Inspection two projects carried out within the change management programme were nearing completion, and will result in the publication of two Force policies namely 'Policing with the Community' and 'Working in Partnership'.

3.41 The policies clearly define the framework and systems required for delivery of the community policing style envisaged in both the Independent Commission Report and in the recent Criminal Justice Review.

3.42 The implementation of both policies is to be subject of a separate implementation plan, and whilst Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges that success in this regard will be heavily dependent upon the willingness of communities and other agencies to engage in community safety activity, he is encouraged that the Force would appear to be well placed to address its responsibilities in this regard.

3.43 The Force continues to use the SECAPRA (security, ethics, community, acquire and analyse, partnerships, response and assess) model to deliver its problem solving approach to policing. Staff spoken to during the Inspection appeared to be generally aware of the problem-solving concept, but expressed concerns that the analysis function was severely hampered by the lack of IT equipment. Her Majesty's Inspector saw evidence of crime management units at sub divisional level effectively applying information led policing to identifying local problem areas and deploying resources accordingly. The Force restructure to 29 DCUs, coterminous with council boundaries, each having local accountability, should facilitate the continued application of this community based policing style.

3.44 Despite the many obstacles faced by staff in their attempts to deliver a community policing service, Her Majesty's Inspector was impressed by meeting officers working with energy, commitment and real optimism. Members of community groups met during the Inspection were also complimentary of local policing services and, as previously referred to in this Report, have high expectations of an ever improving community policing service. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that full-time reserve officers carry out much of the community policing activity throughout the Force. The Force predicts that if the contracts of full-time reserve officers are not renewed during 2002 (but the picture could change), the number of full-time reserve constables remaining by April 2003 will be 1,260 representing a reduction of 49.5% of the April 2001 establishment. Whilst he fully understands and recognises the underlying reasons (articulated in the Patten Report) for the phasing-out of the full-time reserve, he emphasises that reductions in establishment on such a scale, at a time of dramatic reductions in the numbers of regular officers previously referred to in this Report, would not be without a significant reduction in the quality and timeliness of service provision to the public.

3.45 A force-wide restorative justice scheme was launched on 1 February 2001. The scheme introduces a consistency of approach in ensuring that juvenile offenders are given an opportunity to

undertake a structured programme of addressing the consequences of their offending actions, as opposed to entering the court system. Despite efforts made at regulating other community schemes, Her Majesty's Inspector was made aware that unregulated sectarian based schemes continue to operate. Her Majesty's Inspector is optimistic that as the Force scheme continues to develop, as envisaged in the recent Criminal Justice Review, the tangible benefits of crime reduction and increased community involvement will become apparent.

3.46 Her Majesty's Inspector was pleased to note that all juvenile liaison officers are to attend an accredited Police Education Programme, developed in conjunction with the University of Ulster, which aims to ensure a consistency and professionalism of approach to police input within schools throughout the Force. He was, however, made aware that a province wide delivery of input to schools continues to be hampered by political disapproval since police officers are not welcome in some schools. In an effort to overcome such difficulties, information is placed on the Force website, providing teaching staff with the opportunity of delivering the input to pupils.

Complaints Against Police

3.47 The number of complaints recorded against police officers in 1999/2000 fell by 9.7% to a total of 3,812. This equates to 31.2 complaints per 100 officers, and compares with an average of 26.3 in England and Wales. This is the third successive annual reduction in the number of complaints recorded.

3.48 The proportion of complaints substantiated was 1.3%, which compares with an average of 2.3% in England and Wales. The number of assault complaints completed fell by 17.6%, representing 13.5 per 100 officers, significantly higher than the England and Wales average of 6.7. Her Majesty's Inspector has previously highlighted that when making comparisons with forces in England and Wales, the differing policing environments must also be considered.

3.49 The use of informal resolution as a method of dealing with complaints remains low, with only 18.8% of complaints being informally resolved. This compares with the England and Wales average of 37.4. (See Figure 14.)

3.50 On 6 November 2000, the Office of the Police Ombudsman took over responsibility from the Force for the investigation of complaints against the police in Northern Ireland. Her Majesty's Inspector was informed that the Force is continuing to investigate a number of complaints made prior to the establishment of the Police Ombudsman. Working relationships and practices between the Ombudsman and the Force are in their infancy. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that if such a system of investigating police complaints is to succeed, co-operation of all parties will be an essential ingredient. He therefore recommends that the Force review its role with regards to internal police misconduct, integrity and professional standards, and in doing so agree working protocols with the Office of the Police Ombudsman.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the Force review its role with regards to internal police misconduct, integrity and professional standards, and in doing so agree working protocols with the Office of the Police Ombudsman.

Figure 14: Complaints					
Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
No. of complaints recorded	5,545.0	4,222.0	3,812.0	-9.7	614.1
No. of complaints recorded per 100 officers	43.4	33.6	31.2	-7.1	26.3
No. of complaints completed	5,781.0	5,293.0	4,159.0	-21.4	582.6
% of complaints substantiated	1.2	1.2	1.3	-	2.3
% of complaints informally resolved	17.1	19.0	18.8	-	37.4
Average investigation time (days)	nd	nd	nd	-	92.8
No. of assault complaints completed	2,101.0	1,997.0	1,646.0	-17.6	155.6
Total assault complaints completed/100 officers	16.4	15.9	13.5	-15.1	6.7
% assault complaints substantiated	0.5	0.3	0.5	-	1.1
% assault complaints informally resolved	2.5	2.5	3.2	-	21.9

nd – No data available.

3.51 The number of civil claims cases settled in 2000 was 365, a 4% reduction on 1999. The amount of compensation also fell slightly from £1.28m to £1.13m. (See Figure 15.) Legal costs to the Force associated with such claims amounted to £1.96m.

Figure 15: Civil Claims				
	1997	1998	1999	2000
Settlements	407	471	381	365
Compensation	£641,570	£730,917	£1,281,082	£1,130,000

Management of Financial Resources

3.52 Total funding for 2001/2002 is £656.8m. Funding arrangements for the implementation of retirements through severance require that any savings, less the cost of new recruits, are used to partially fund the severance process. The Force estimates that in meeting this requirement actual funding available will be £622.8m: this represents a £20.4m shortfall against projected expenditure of £643.2m. Her Majesty's Inspector was informed that the financial situation will deteriorate since the proposed reductions in revenue funding for 2002/2003 represents a shortfall against projected expenditure of £29.5m - rising to a shortfall of £67.3m in 2003/2004. In addition the Force estimates (admittedly this

is speculative) that the £90m allocation for the funding of the change management programme (i.e. implementing the recommendations of the Patten Commission Report) is some £60m less than the estimated costs of implementing the programme. In an effort to address the funding shortfalls the Force is currently considering 'worst case' options for cuts in planned expenditure. These include:

- Reduction in police overtime. (Her Majesty's Inspector considers that this would have an adverse effect upon Force performance and service delivery because of the resource difficulties previously referred to in this Report.)
- Reducing the number of civilian staff. (This would jeopardise the implementation of the optimisation strategy, which Her Majesty's Inspector encourages the Force to implement.)
- Reduction in recruitment. (Her Majesty's Inspector has expressed his concerns with regards to a developing 'resource gap'. A reduction in proposed recruitment would cause the gap to widen.)
Note: He is aware of steps being taken to address this issue.
- Exploring termination of full-time reserve officer contracts. (Her Majesty's Inspector is of the view that the current security threat, together with the additional expectation that the Force moves towards community policing, makes this option difficult to implement.)

3.53 Her Majesty's Inspector is fully aware that to achieve the financial savings required of the Force, without there being a reduction in the quality of service to the public, represents a major challenge. The programmes of work contained within the change management programme are aimed at ultimately providing an efficient policing service to the public of Northern Ireland. There are political imperatives to generate change quickly, an ingredient in the change management programme which adds further pressure upon the Force. Her Majesty's Inspector is of the opinion that to reduce revenue and staffing levels at too fast a rate will lead to a reduced and unsatisfactory level of service to the public which, from the outset, may irrevocably damage the public perception of the 'new policing service for Northern Ireland'.

3.54 The 1999/2000 Inspection Report contained a repeat recommendation for the Force to develop its financial planning integrated with its overall business planning and operational strategies. This issue is being progressed as part of a finance and resource management (FARM) project. Her Majesty's Inspector acknowledges that full integration of financial and operational planning will be a long term objective requiring a staged approach to implementation. He continues to encourage the Force to strive towards this position, and will monitor progress with interest.

3.55 Uncommitted financial reserves were £1.59m in April 2000. Despite a significant increase from April 1999, the level of reserves remains low at 0.24% of the 2000/2001 budget.

Management of Human Resources

3.56 The 1999/2000 Inspection Report indicated that the Force human resource strategy 'Enabling Excellence' would require some adjustment in order to make it compatible with the ongoing change management programme. This strategy has now been updated to include the 'staff' strategic work programme, which defines the people management aspects included within the change programme. This three-year strategy describes the human resource vision for the Force and details, through a number of work programme projects, how it intends to achieve its vision. The document also identifies critical success measures, which are to be used to evaluate the outcomes of the work programmes. Whilst Her

Majesty's Inspector is encouraged by the intentions of the Force as outlined in the strategy, the enormity of the task in achieving major cultural changes within a three year time frame, in an organisation which has for many years not been subject to such a level of change, should not be underestimated. Successful implementation of the staff work programme will be dependent upon the efforts of all managers throughout the Force.

3.57 The re-structuring of the personnel department has progressed with the recent appointment of a civilian head of personnel, at chief officer level. Her Majesty's Inspector believes that as severance, civilianisation, recruitment, and devolution to DCU progresses, it will become essential that a force-wide view of personnel be maintained. This will be necessary to ensure an equitable distribution of staff throughout districts and departments, in terms of numbers, skills and expertise, is maintained throughout this period of unprecedented change.

3.58 Since the previous Inspection the number of senior officer posts within the personnel department has been reduced. Her Majesty's Inspector foresees that as DCUs will have identified posts with responsibility for personnel management, opportunities will arise to further reduce the number of senior police officers in the personnel department.

3.59 The implementation of a performance development review (PDR) appraisal system for regular police officers has been problematic for some time, often appearing to be overly bureaucratic and ineffectual. An internal survey of officers revealed a very low satisfaction rate with the appraisal system. The Force is now actively seeking to identify an alternative competency based scheme by April 2002; the current system appears to have been discontinued in many parts of the Force. Whilst acknowledging the deficiencies of the previous system, Her Majesty's Inspector is uncomfortable that at a time when performance of staff is crucial to the success of the change process, the Force is to operate for a lengthy period without an embedded performance review/appraisal system. He therefore urges the Force to progress the design and implementation of an appraisal system with the minimum of delay. He repeats the suggestion made within the 1999/2000 Report that a revised PDR system should encompass all staff to improve overall personal development and promote a 'one culture' organisation.

3.60 The overall number of regular officers (as at 31 March 2001) was 7,774 and this compares with a total of 8,494 on 31 March 1999, representing a reduction of 8.4%. The number of full-time reserve constables fell by 377 (13%) over the same period, and continues to fall at a rate of approximately 20 to 25 officers per month. Part-time reserve constables also reduced by 144 (11.8%). In addition to the reductions outlined above, Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that further pressures are being placed upon the Force by a combination of the following:

- A further 640 officers are destined to retire by the end of September 2001, with the figure rising to 800 by the end of March 2002.
- Continued reductions in the numbers of full-time reserve officers.
- A 12% reduction in the Force overtime budget.
- Sickness absence running at a level which equates to an absence rate of 1,230 police officers per day.
- 700 officers are performing limited functions whilst on recuperative duties.
- The disproportionate number of experienced senior detectives retired through severance.

- Lack of progress in implementation of the optimisation strategy, resulting in police officers continuing to carry out functions identified as suitable for civilian staff.
- Public expectation of increased levels of neighbourhood policing and an enhanced local service, as envisaged in the Patten Report.

3.61 Her Majesty’s Inspector is strongly of the view that resourcing pressures in this transitional period will be ‘live’ for two years, by which time fully trained recruits will be emerging in sufficient numbers to ease the staffing deficiencies on DCUs. Assuming a recruitment rate of 480 officers per year, accompanied by a 60% take up rate of severance (currently 64%), the projected number of officers in the Force by April 2003 will be 6,955. The Patten Report suggested a ‘peacetime’ establishment of 7,500 officers. Managing the effects of this resourcing gap will therefore present many difficulties, and a transparent and open approach as to what levels of service the public can realistically expect during this period will be an essential element of this process. There are issues which could be addressed in order to minimise the effects of this resourcing gap, some of which are highlighted in other areas of this Report. Her Majesty’s Inspector recommends that the Force takes an holistic view of the impact a resourcing gap will have on the provision of policing services over the next two years, thereby ensuring that it is well placed to take the appropriate steps to minimise any negative effects upon service provision.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Her Majesty’s Inspector recommends that the Force takes an holistic view of the impact a resourcing gap will have on the provision of policing services over the next two years, thereby ensuring that it is well placed to take the appropriate steps to minimise any negative effects upon service provision.

Figure 16: Staffing Diversity	
Performance Indicator	2000/2001
Regular police officers – total	7,774.0
Regular police officers - female - % of total	957.0 12.3
Regular police officers - perceived Roman Catholic - % of total	661.0 8.4
Regular police officers - ethnic minority groups - % of total	nd -
Regular police % operational	78.4%
Supervisory ratios - PC/Sgt - PC/Insp	4.5 13.5

Figure 16: Staffing Diversity (continued)	
Performance Indicator	2000/2001
Reserve constables full-time – total	2,485.0
Reserve constables full-time - females - % of total	221.0 8.9
Reserve constables full-time - perceived Roman Catholic - % of total	175.0 7.0
Reserve constables full-time - ethnic minority groups - % of total	nd -
Reserve constables part-time – total	1,072.0
Reserve constables part-time - females - % of total	382.0 35.6
Reserve constables part-time - perceived Roman Catholic - % of total	53.0 4.9
Reserve constables part-time - ethnic minority groups - % of total	nd -
Civilian support staff – total FTE	3,132.0
Civilian support staff FTE - females - % of total	2,025.0 64.7
Civilian support staff FTE - ethnic minority groups - % of total	nd -

nd – No data available.

FTE – Full time equivalent.

The total strength figures do not incorporate secondments, staff on career breaks, maternity leave or suspended.

3.62 Recommendation 117 of the report by the Independent Commission proposed that the Force should contract out the recruitment of both police officers and civilians into the police service. Recommendation 121 stated that an equal number of Protestants and Roman Catholics should then be drawn from a pool of suitably qualified applicants. A recruitment agency has now been appointed to run the recruitment competition for police recruits in April 2001, with a view to applicants being appointed to the Force in September 2001. Early indications from the response to the advertising campaign are very encouraging, with large numbers expressing an interest in a career within the police service. How much of that interest is from Roman Catholics is not known at this stage - such information will only become available once applicants have undertaken the selection process.

3.63 The Force has, in the past, been criticised for its slow progress in respect of the formulation and implementation of a civilianisation programme. The percentage of police officers currently employed in operational roles being 78.4%, which compares with an England and Wales average of 90.8%. The

recent lack of movement of staff, both in or out of the Force, has severely restricted opportunities to implement such changes. Her Majesty's Inspector was therefore encouraged by the completion, in November 2000, of a strategic optimisation plan - one of its objectives being, over a three year period, to identify and prioritise posts suitable for optimisation. The number of officers leaving under the severance programme presents an ideal opportunity for the implementation of such an optimisation strategy. The strategy also contains detailed costs associated with the proposed schedule of recruitment of support staff posts identified within the plan. Her Majesty's Inspector encourages the Force to progress towards implementation of the optimisation strategy, and stresses that without the necessary budget allocation the plan will most certainly fail.

Figure 17: Sickness

Performance Indicator	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	% Change 1998/99 to 1999/00	England & Wales Average 1999/00
Police officers Total days lost sick	133,545.0	145,942.0	163,372.0	11.9	28,664.1
Police officers Average days sick per officer	15.3	17.2	20.5	13.4	12.1
Civilian staff Total days lost sick	38,904.0	43,459.5	45,650.0	5.0	14,420.9
Civilian staff Average days sick per civilian staff	15.0	14.6	14.4	-1.4	12.5
Assault on police - total	453.0	579.0	341.0	-41.1	278.8
- fatal	2.0	1.0	0.0	-100.0	0.0
- serious	11.0	6.0	4.0	-33.3	7.6
- other	439.0	572.0	337.0	-41.1	271.2
Assaults leading to sick leave	158.0	176.0	191.0	8.5	34.5
Average days sickness from assault	31.1	32.3	29.1	-9.9	14.2

3.64 Sickness amongst regular officers and full-time reserve constables continues to rise at an alarming rate. Average days lost through sickness per police officer during 1999/2000 were 20.5, which compares with an average of 12.1 days in England and Wales. Whilst one can anticipate higher levels of sickness in any organisation witnessing sizeable structural and organisational change – these figures are still very high. Civilian staff sickness averages 14.4 days, as compared to 12.5 days in England and Wales. Indications are that the trend continues to increase, and at the time of this Inspection a total of 1,230 officers and 204 civilian employees were absent from work through sickness, with an additional 700 officers performing limited recuperative duties. (See Figure 17.) Such a reduction in the number of staff available for duty not only has an effect upon Force performance, but also results in additional pressure being placed upon those officers in the workplace. During the Inspection Her Majesty's Inspector visited two sub-divisions with sickness rates significantly lower than the Force average, which serves as an illustration of what can be achieved through a mixture of management intervention, interest and welfare concern. The Force has recently established a sickness management group, chaired by the head of personnel, in order to examine methods of tackling this problem. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, Her Majesty's Inspector was disappointed to note that the new attendance management policy, which has been the subject of comment both in the 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 Inspection

Reports, had yet to be implemented. Her Majesty's Inspector repeats his previous recommendation that the Force should implement its sickness management policy without delay to provide a clear corporate lead to reduce sickness levels across the organisation. Such positive action would also help to reduce the 'resourcing gap' referred to previously in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Her Majesty's Inspector repeats his previous recommendation that the Force should implement its sickness management policy without delay to provide a clear corporate lead to reduce sickness levels across the organisation.

3.65 The number of medical retirements is increasing, with 241 officers retiring for medical reasons during 2000: this compares with 145 such retirements during 1999, and represents 71.9% of total retirements. Whilst the age profile of officers retiring from the RUC is higher than that of officers in England and Wales, it is worthy of note that forces in England and Wales strive to achieve a target of no more than 33% of total retirements being on medical grounds. Her Majesty's Inspector urges the Force to examine this issue in an effort to ensure that both the organisational and individual needs are being adequately addressed at an early stage.

3.66 In May 1999 work began on the development of a Force training strategy aimed at supporting the objectives contained within the human resource strategy 'Enabling Excellence'. Following the publication of the Report of the Independent Commission, which contained twenty one recommendations relating to training, education and development, it became apparent that a wider scope was required in developing a training strategy for the police service of Northern Ireland. In November 2000 the training education and development (TED) project commenced as part of the Force change management programme. At the time of this Inspection the project was about to begin the implementation stage, with the creation of three training faculties that will address all identified training needs. The foundation faculty will be in a position to receive the first intake of recruits in September 2001, and will be operating at a full capacity of around forty eight recruits per five weeks. Whilst there may be a possibility of catering for a slight increase in the number of recruits in each intake in an effort to alleviate the effects of the resource gap previously referred to in this Report, Her Majesty's Inspector was made aware that a significant increase in numbers could not be catered for within existing levels of training staff and accommodation. Recruitment should not therefore be viewed as a solution (in the short term) to the 'resourcing gap', as the effects will not significantly impact upon front line service provision for some time.

3.67 The remainder of the TED enterprise will become fully effective by June 2002. Whilst the implementation of the TED strategy will be dependent upon approval being granted by the Policing Board, and also by the availability of adequate funding, Her Majesty's Inspector was encouraged by the progress made towards addressing recommendations contained both within the Report of the Independent Commission and previous HMIC reports. The commitment of staff was a very positive feature arising from Her Majesty's Inspector's examination of preparedness for change.

IV Information Technology

4.1 At the time of this Inspection a Force information systems strategy for 2001 to 2004/2005 was nearing completion. The broad vision of the strategy is:

‘By March 2005, all personnel will have ready access to whatever accurate and up to date information they need to achieve their job objectives, irrespective of their location.’

4.2 This is an ambitious strategy, the successful implementation of which will require significant capital and revenue funding, in addition to the provision of an extensive programme of IT training to support the introduction of new systems. Successful implementation will significantly change the manner in which the Force conducts its business, and will enable DCU commanders to deploy resources in a more effective and efficient manner.

4.3 Her Majesty’s Inspector was encouraged by the extent of the planning and preparation in place, but remains concerned to hear from staff both at headquarters and in sub-divisions that the provision of IT products and services were of poor quality, and did not generally meet user requirements. It is probably the case that staff would be less critical if they were fully aware of the intended programme of work contained within the information systems strategy. Her Majesty’s Inspector therefore suggests that the heads of information and communications service devote a greater proportion of time to communicating and marketing their intentions throughout the Force.

V Additional Issues

Progress on the Recommendations in the 1999/2000 Inspection Report

5.1 Sub-divisional commanders and branch heads should meet regularly with their respective chief officer for a formal and constructive performance review of their unit against the targets set in their policing plans. (Repeat recommendation.)

Response: This issue is discussed in paragraph 2.15. Her Majesty's Inspector repeats the recommendation, in a slightly revised form, acknowledging some progress has been made.

5.2 The Force should implement its intention towards intelligence led policing by providing a clear corporate lead, revising the intelligence structure and ensuring effective management commitment at all levels. (Revised recommendation.)

Response: This issue is discussed in paragraph 3.12. Some progress has been made, and a revised intelligence management structure is being developed, it is anticipated that progress will continue towards full implementation of intelligence led policing.

5.3 The Force should adopt the crime management model and audit process introduced in the north region for corporate implementation across all three regions.

Response: Crime management has been the subject of a review from which a new crime management system, building upon the north region model, will be implemented within the DCU structure.

5.4 File preparation and paperwork processes should be reviewed to improve efficiency, eliminate unnecessary forms and duplication, and reduce the paperwork abstraction of front line officers.

Response: These issues have been reviewed as part of the proposed DCU structure, and will be addressed by criminal justice units within each DCU.

5.5 An implementation plan should be put into effect for the 'Policing in Partnership' strategy to provide corporate direction, monitoring and evaluation. (Repeat recommendation with revisions.)

Response: This issue is discussed at paragraph 3.40. Progress continues as part of the change management programme, community participation will be an essential ingredient before 'Policing in Partnership' can be truly implemented.

5.6 The Force should develop a system of medium term (three to five year) financial planning, integral with its overall business planning and operational strategies, to ensure efficient and effective organisational management and deployment of resources. (Repeat recommendation.)

Response: This is discussed in paragraph 3.54. This issue is being addressed through the FARM project, as part of the change management programme. The Force fully accepts the recommendation, but acknowledge that to achieve full integration of financial and operational planning will be a challenging and long term objective.

5.7 The Force should formulate and implement an extensive civilianisation programme. (Repeat recommendation.)

Response: This issue is discussed in paragraph 3.63. Although a three year optimisation strategy, containing an extensive civilianisation programme has been prepared, minimal progress has been made towards implementation. Her Majesty's Inspector is aware that many other issues affect implementation of the strategy, not least of which is finance. The recommendation will continue to progress towards implementation.

5.8 The Force should finalise its sickness management policy without delay and implement it immediately to provide a clear corporate lead to reduce sickness levels across the organisation. (Revised recommendation.)

Response: This issue is discussed in paragraph 3.64. Progress has been slow and the recommendation is therefore repeated.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that:

1. District commanders and branch heads are held to account for performance against the targets set in their policing plans, through the introduction of a rigorous process of performance review. (Repeat recommendation.)
[Paragraph 2.15 refers]
2. The Force review its service delivery to the public, with a view to tailoring police response to the severity of incident, thereby ensuring that a quality policing service is maintained by the efficient deployment of valuable resources.
[Paragraph 3.3 refers]
3. The Force review its role with regards to internal police misconduct, integrity and professional standards, and in doing so agree working protocols with the Office of the Police Ombudsman.
[Paragraph 3.50 refers]
4. The Force takes an holistic view of the impact a resourcing gap will have on the provision of policing services over the next two years, thereby ensuring that it is well placed to take the appropriate steps to minimise any negative effects upon service provision.
[Paragraph 3.61 refers]
5. The Force should implement its sickness management policy without delay to provide a clear corporate lead to reduce sickness levels across the organisation. (Repeat recommendation.)
[Paragraph 3.64 refers]

6.2 Her Majesty's Inspector repeats an important observation made in both the 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 Inspection Reports, as he considers it to be particularly relevant at the time of this Inspection:

“Whatever steps the Force takes, or is required to take in the future, success in policing does not rest with the Force or its staff alone. Responsibility also lies with political leaders and the community which, as a whole and despite sectarian differences, have a fundamental role in the peace process and must help to develop a community environment in which the police service can flourish.”

6.3 Section 42, Police (Northern Ireland) Act, 1998, requires the PANI to invite the Chief Constable to submit comments on this Report to it which, together with its own and any responses it may make to the Chief Constable's submission, should be published and a copy sent to the Secretary of State.

