

St Helena Police

An inspection of St Helena Police

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Summary

In 2019, His Excellency, The Governor of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha invited HMICFRS to inspect the St Helena Police Service. In March 2020, we carried out the fieldwork.

Our terms of reference for this inspection were to inspect the force's arrangements, policies and practice for armed policing; detention and custody; investigation and victim care/support; and neighbourhood and community policing, public engagement and communication.

Our report makes 14 recommendations and highlights 22 areas for improvement. Some of our findings require urgent action; otherwise, the force should use this report to inform its future development over the next few years.

Context

St Helena Police is a small force that operates in a unique environment, both geographically and politically. During our inspection, we were impressed by the force's senior leadership team and officers. They are keen to do their best with the limited capacity and capability they have.

We have written our inspection report in order to help the force improve its service to the public. By virtue of that fact, we have to focus on those areas where the force can improve. But this report, and our recommendations and areas for improvement, should be considered in context.

The force's officer cadre comprises local officers, as well as expatriate British officers on short-term technical cooperation (TC) contracts. Most uniformed police constables (PCs) who carry out frontline duties (including response, investigation and community policing duties) are local officers. TC officers fulfil roles needing skills that aren't found in the local workforce. They include criminal investigation department (CID) posts, training sergeant posts and some senior management roles. The force finds it difficult to retain local officers and attrition is high. As a result, it has a very inexperienced cadre of frontline constables.

St Helenian law is based on UK legislation, but it isn't keeping pace with the UK. This is an area for improvement.

Investigating crime, caring for victims and managing vulnerability

The quality of the force's incident and crime files is an area for improvement. Many incident and crime reports don't record all actions, or don't record when or where actions were done, or by whom. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should implement a robust crime and incident record management system.

Responding to calls for service

In 2019, the Police Directorate created a 24/7 emergency control room. This represented considerable progress. However, it remains relatively new and there is scope to increase its efficiency. The staffing rota is an area for improvement and the force should map call demand against resources, and staff the control room accordingly.

Control room operators aren't consistently recording comprehensive, accurate information about the calls they receive. There is potential for the force to work with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)'s British Overseas Territories police advisor to give operators access to pre-set lists of questions to ask callers. This could help improve the quality of information they record.

Operators don't risk assess incidents or deploy officers, because they lack the requisite knowledge. Instead, they contact the duty sergeant, who conducts these roles. This could delay the despatch of officers to incidents. Our recommendations are that the chief of St Helena Police should make sure that all control room operators receive the appropriate [THRIVE](#) training to enable them to risk assess the calls they receive, and that the FCO British Overseas Territories police advisor should amend the Overseas Territories Crime Intelligence System (OTCRIS) database to automatically identify vulnerable victims.

The force doesn't monitor how often officers attend incidents within target times. This is an area for improvement and the force should make sure that it forms part of its performance regime.

Investigating crime

Overall, St Helena Police gives a very good investigatory service to its community. It investigates all reported crimes, and conducts thorough crime investigations into most of them. Officers often pursue lines of investigation that wouldn't ordinarily be followed in the UK. However, there are still some areas for improvement.

Officers' initial investigatory actions are generally good. However, the force's initial response to crimes could still be improved. Because most of the force's uniformed officers are inexperienced, CID detectives should attend more complex incidents. The force should implement a policy describing the incidents that should receive an immediate CID response.

The force is trying to develop the skills and knowledge of uniformed PCs within its financial and operational limitations. This could be aided by improving the supervisory oversight of uniformed officers' investigations; making sure that CID helps

uniformed officers construct investigation plans, and then monitoring such plans; and developing a process for lessons learned, and good practice, to be communicated to all uniformed officers.

St Helena Police has few written policies and procedures. By developing a full range of these, the force would give officers invaluable guidance. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should develop the necessary policies and procedures (drawing on the College of Policing's authorised professional practice and UK police force policy, as appropriate), and apply for funding for a short-term technical assistance policy officer.

Given the relative inexperience of most uniformed officers, the force's allocation of domestic abuse cases is an area for improvement and it should implement a policy to allocate all high-risk domestic abuse cases to CID officers.

The force's CID has the capacity and skills to investigate sexual offences, and other complex and serious investigations. However, like many small police forces, St Helena Police occasionally needs to use outside experts to help with serious crimes, major incidents or complex investigations. Accessing such support is a time-consuming process. And the lack of formalised links between British Overseas Territories' police forces and designated UK forces or units is an area for improvement. The FCO should explore the potential for developing such links to improve British Overseas Territories' police forces' access to support.

The force lacks comprehensive criminal justice procedures. Its approach to disclosure is inconsistent and, therefore, an area for improvement. The force should produce criminal justice and disclosure policies and procedures.

Recently, the force created an intelligence function. This is a positive development. However, the force lacks an intelligence analysis capability and it would be impractical to employ a full-time analyst. To address this, the force should liaise with the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) to obtain analytical services.

Supporting victims

Officers can't refer victims to an organisation that supports victims of crime because St Helena doesn't have a victim support organisation. Our recommendation is that the St Helena Government should develop a victim support scheme.

The force lacks a victim care policy or procedure. Consequently, officers aren't consistently updating victims about progress with investigations or routinely offering victims the opportunity to make a victim personal statement (VPS). These are all areas for improvement, as is the force's limited understanding of victim satisfaction.

Protecting vulnerable people

Officers understand their responsibility to protect people from harm and to protect vulnerable victims. However, few know the range of factors that could cause a person to be vulnerable. This is an area for improvement and the force should give officers guidance to address this gap.

The force has adopted the UK [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment \(DASH\) risk assessment process](#). This helps frontline officers to identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and so-called 'honour-based violence'. This is a positive development, but the force should improve the efficiency of the DASH process and develop a vulnerability risk assessment for other, non-DASH cases.

Officers conduct good initial safeguarding for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. But given officers' limited knowledge about what constitutes vulnerability, this may not occur for all incidents involving vulnerable victims.

Unlike some other British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, St Helena has updated its legislation to enable the police to issue [domestic violence protection orders](#) (DVPOs). This is good practice.

The force always has an on-call rota for senior officers. This ensures that, when uniformed officers identify a case as being serious or high risk, senior officers quickly allocate those cases to CID. Allocation of other cases occurs at daily management meetings (DMMs). However, these meetings only occur on weekdays, which is an area for improvement: it could delay identification of threat, harm and risk associated with an incident, and allocation of cases to CID.

The force works constructively with partner organisations to protect vulnerable people and support victims. It refers vulnerable people to the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate, actively participates in [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) (MARAC) meetings and attends the safeguarding children board.

The force's multi-agency public protection arrangements work well. The offender management officer has been suitably trained and uniformed officers are made aware of the registered sex offenders (RSOs) through the force's daily briefings. There are intelligence requirements against the three high-risk RSOs, and PCs are submitting intelligence against these requirements. This is good practice.

Community policing and public engagement

The St Helena public wants police officers to be in its neighbourhoods, delivering community-based policing. The force acknowledges the importance of community policing and has structured its uniform section to facilitate community engagement, with each of its three teams assigned to one of three geographic policing districts. However, in October 2019, most uniformed officers were new and so inexperienced that senior managers stopped all community policing activity, in order to get officers trained and let them focus on their response and investigative roles.

While the force resumed community policing in January 2020, most uniformed officers still can't regularly fulfil their community policing duties. Officers have little time to conduct patrols outside Jamestown. This leads to limited knowledge of community problems in other districts, as well as few crime prevention opportunities.

Problem solving

Although the reduction in community policing has restricted the force's understanding of local communities, the force has tried to improve and increase problem-solving policing. It has given officers training in the [National Decision Model](#) and the [SARA](#) problem-solving policing model. It has also taken the initiative and started developing a multi-agency problem-solving group.

Priority setting

At the time of the inspection, the force lacked any formal, effective processes to consult the public about its priorities. Uniformed officers conduct local surgeries. One of the functions of the surgeries is to give the public the opportunity to tell the force about its concerns. But the surgeries are an area for improvement because:

- very few people, if any, attend them; and
- they are unstructured and officers don't always record any issues raised by members of the public.

Shortly after our inspection fieldwork, the force announced two new initiatives: a survey and a focus group. These are intended to help the force understand the public's policing priorities. They are very positive developments.

An alternative community policing model

Uniformed officers' investigative workload is the biggest barrier to their carrying out their community duties. They are also struggling to develop their investigation skills.

It may be possible for the force to develop omnicompetent uniformed officers at some point. But currently its expectations of its uniformed officers are too high.

The report sets out an alternative community policing model that the force should consider. This would involve removing uniformed officers' investigative duties in the short term, instead allocating those duties to CID or a new referred investigation unit. This change would require more TC officers. It would give uniformed officers time to learn about their communities, hone their community policing skills, patrol their districts, engage with communities, and carry out problem-solving policing in between responding to calls for assistance.

Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should develop a community policing strategy. The strategy needs to have policies, procedures, training and guidance that set the vision for what the force wants to achieve through community policing.

We note the force's impressive involvement in a range of campaigns that are intended to prevent youth offending, domestic violence and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Armed policing

St Helena Police can't be expected to adhere to all aspects of the College of Policing's [Code of Practice on Armed Policing and Police use of Less Lethal Weapons](#) or the [Armed Policing Authorised Professional Practice](#) (subsequently referred to as the 'armed policing APP').

Because of its remote location, the force needs to be more operationally self-sufficient than other forces that we usually inspect, which can obtain immediate armed support if needed. The force needs to have effective armed contingencies in place to manage the immediate response to emerging threats and risks.

Some of the force's armed policing structures and practices work well. Armed officers are professional, and they mostly make the best of the situation in which they operate. However, we did identify several areas for improvement. Our recommendations to improve these situations fit St Helena's operating environment. As such, they aren't all in line with the armed policing APP.

The force has developed an [armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment](#) (APSTRA) that follows the College of Policing's guidance. We agree with most of the APSTRA's analysis, but consider the availability of firearms, combined with instances of serious violence involving alcohol, to pose the most significant armed policing-related threat. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should revise its APSTRA, making a new assessment of the capacity and capability to counter the threat of high public ownership of firearms, and removing the requirement to develop tactics for aircraft entry.

The force doesn't have an effective armed policing command structure. It has limited tactical firearms command capability and no qualified operational firearms commander (OFC). Such a gap in command could have serious consequences. The force is aware that its current structure is untenable and that, due to its size, it can't comply with the command structure set out in the armed policing APP. Instead it is considering flattening the command structure, according to the likely availability of officers to attend any armed incident.

The force operates three weapon systems. This is surplus to requirements and an area for improvement. Disposing of its G36 stock would bring efficiencies through less maintenance and ammunition purchase, and fewer training costs.

The force also has very few trained authorised firearms officers (AFOs), although it plans to run an initial training course to maintain numbers of AFOs in late 2020. It needs to secure funding for firearms training beyond 2020. The force is aware that indemnity cover may not be in place to support AFOs and a firearms commander, should they become involved in an armed confrontation that results in the discharge of a police firearm, and that the level of life insurance coverage for AFOs is too low. Our recommendation is that the St Helena Government should resolve the issue of indemnity and life assurance for firearms officers.

The force has created a training facility for armed officers. The construction of the range is a good example of where the force has made best use of its staff, and the land available, to develop effective facilities.

The force's armoury is well maintained, although we identified a specific problem with its key security arrangements. The chief of St Helena Police should address this identified key security matter immediately.

Following an incident of alleged attempted murder of two officers, subsequently prosecuted as grievous bodily harm, St Helena's chief of police has given operational officers authority to routinely carry [conducted energy devices](#). This decision was unpopular with some councillors and members of the public, who felt it was disproportionate. To address these concerns, the Governor's Office reviewed the policy and required officers to assess risk before carrying the devices, and to store the devices in lock boxes in vehicles in certain situations. This contradicts the chief of police's operational policy decision and runs the risk that conducted energy devices won't be available when they are needed. Our recommendation is that officers comply with the chief of police's operational policy decision, outlined in his standing authority for the use of conducted energy devices. The force should also review the use of such devices and share data with interested parties.

At the time of our inspection, the force's armed policing policies and procedures hadn't been signed off. The force should develop these in line with its structure and practice. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should amend policies and procedures to reflect the changes the force makes to structures and practices recommended in this report. The chief of police should document any deviation from APP. And the St Helena Government should acknowledge the associated risks.

Custody

The physical condition of St Helena Police Service's custody facilities is unacceptable and a cause of serious concern.

St Helena lacks a dedicated custody suite and police custody facilities are located within the prison on the island, Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Jamestown. This is in contravention of the Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which stipulate that detained persons should not be held in prison.

The physical conditions within HMP Jamestown are unacceptable. It was first condemned in 1850 and has since been repeatedly condemned. The Police Directorate's senior management team and the prison service are acutely aware that the prison isn't fit for purpose. They have worked hard to make improvements to the facility, and to secure funding for a new prison and a separate custody facility from the St Helena planning board. The new custody facility is due to be operational in early 2021.

The force doesn't have an overarching policy for the whole custody process. As a result, there were many inconsistent practices. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police should publish an overarching policy for the whole custody process, so that consistency of practice and improvements in safety and treatment can be achieved.

The force has a strong focus on diverting children away from both custody and entering the criminal justice system. Officers regularly use alternatives to arrest, such as voluntary interviews, community resolutions and restorative justice options.

The force has developed suitable procedures for booking in detainees. These include booking in pregnant women, people with disabilities and elderly detainees at the police station rather than at the custody office, which is in the prison basement. Officers also deal with detainees promptly. However, custody records are an area for improvement. The force should improve the monitoring of records to make sure that all relevant information is recorded, including details pertaining to the use of force. Officers don't routinely give detainees copies of their rights and entitlements, although they do explain these rights.

The force is poor at recording custody reviews of detention. Many custody reviews aren't compliant with the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance, or its codes of practice. Our recommendation is that the force must make sure that its custody officers act in compliance with all aspects of the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance and its codes of practice.

Officers' approach to identifying risk is good, but they don't always take appropriate action to address these risks.

The force pays good attention to detainee care. Detainees who need to see an appropriate adult get to see one. This is good practice, as is the way the force expedites cases quickly so that detainees don't spend much time in custody. However, HMP Jamestown doesn't provide a safe or clean environment for detainees. For example, cells have numerous ligature points, convicted prisoners can talk to detainees, the custody cells have open grill bars that are wide enough for prisoners to pass items to detainees, and the steps down to the custody office are very steep. Our recommendation is that the chief of St Helena Police must make sure that existing practices to keep detainees safe are constantly monitored and revised in light of adverse incidents and accidents until the new custody facility is operational.

Officers we spoke to understand their obligations to keep detainees (particularly vulnerable children and adults) safe. They use constant observations when necessary. The force should constantly monitor and revise existing practices to keep detainees safe.

There is no specific checklist for staff to complete when they release a detainee. However, many custody officers note how the detainee is feeling upon their release. The community psychiatric nurse (CPN) or appropriate organisations follow up on their safety and wellbeing. This is good practice.

Introduction

Our commission

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is an independent inspectorate. We conduct statutory inspections of police forces and other law enforcement agencies in England and Wales. We also inspect law enforcement arrangements in British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies on invitation from the relevant government.

In 2019, His Excellency, The Governor of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha invited us to inspect the St Helena Police Service. We agreed terms of reference and a methodology before conducting the fieldwork between 2 and 6 March 2020.

Our terms of reference were to examine critical areas of policing including:

- armed policing;
- detention and custody;
- investigation and victim care/support; and
- neighbourhood and community policing, public engagement and communication.

Our methodology and approach to this inspection

We conducted the fieldwork for this inspection in March 2020. We:

- interviewed staff at all levels of the force;
- attended management meetings and staff briefings;
- met HM Governor, the attorney general and government officials from partner agencies;
- spoke with members of the Legislative Council;
- attended a public engagement event arranged by the force; and
- visited the force's headquarters, and its custody and firearms facilities.

We also analysed data and documents, including a self-assessment that the force gave us. And we audited a series of its crime investigation files and custody records.

In reaching our judgments we have, where appropriate, made comparisons with police practices in other British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and in England and Wales. We have also drawn on the College of Policing's guidance to police forces, known as 'authorised professional practice' (APP), as well as referring to findings from other inspection reports.

However, St Helena Police is a very small force operating in a unique geographic, political and funding environment. As such, we can't expect it to adhere to all elements of the APPs, which were designed for far larger police forces working in vastly different policing environments. We have, therefore, inspected the force in its context. And we have been pragmatic when developing our recommendations and areas for improvement.

Our report makes 14 recommendations and highlights 22 areas for improvement. These are listed in Annex A and Annex B respectively.

The report

This report has five chapters. The first chapter describes St Helena and the force's operating environment. This context forms the background to, and has an impact on, all the specific areas of operation that we inspect.

The other chapters address the terms of reference, examining in turn how well the force:

- responds to calls for service, investigates crime, protects vulnerable people and cares for victims;
- engages with the community;
- plans its armed policing capability; and
- manages detained persons.

The St Helena policing context

In this chapter we cover:

- the geography of St Helena;
- St Helena's telecommunications infrastructure;
- the economy of the island;
- political governance;
- the legislation of St Helena;
- criminality on the island; and
- the structure, staffing and resources of the police.

Understanding this background is crucial, because it is the context in which the force operates. We have written our inspection report to help St Helena Police improve its service to the public. This requires us to focus on those areas where the force can improve. But the report, and our recommendations and areas for improvement, should be taken in the context of a very small force operating in a unique and challenging environment.

We were impressed by the senior leadership team and officers who wanted to do the best they could with the limited capacity and capability they had. All organisations have areas to improve. And, while a few of our findings require urgent action, the force should use the report to inform its future development over the next few years.

St Helena

Geography

The island of St Helena is located in the South Atlantic Ocean. It forms part of the British Overseas Territory of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. One of the most remote places in the world, it lies some 1,210 miles west of Angola and 2,500 miles east of Rio de Janeiro.



Until St Helena Airport opened for commercial flights in 2017, the island was only reachable by sea, with a cargo ship bringing supplies every three weeks. It remains one of the most isolated places on earth, with only one scheduled weekly flight to South Africa for most of the year. The UK is at least a 24-hour journey away.

Because of its isolation, St Helena Police can't rely on neighbouring jurisdictions to give any rapid help. It must be self-sufficient, and maintain the full range of skills and functions needed to meet the island's likely needs.

The island covers an area of 47 square miles (similar to Jersey). As of May 2020, it had a resident population of 4,509, made up of 4,119 locals (known as 'saints') and 390 non-saint residents. Non-saint residents include TC staff and their families, long-term residence holders, non-working residents, and a small number of other foreign workers in the private sector. (By comparison, Jersey has a population in excess of 100,000.)

About 40 percent of people live in St Helena's capital of Jamestown and its suburb, Half Tree Hollow. A further 35 percent live in the districts of Longwood and St Paul's. Most of the rest of the population live in remote locations across the island's four other rural districts. Policing the island requires a flexible approach, balancing the needs of the urban population with that of the rural community.



Telecommunications

St Helena's telecommunications infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped, compared with the UK and most British Overseas Territories. St Helena's isolation and reliance on satellite technology mean that internet services are slow and expensive compared with many countries (*State of the Island 2015*, St Helena Government, 2015, page 15). In 2015, the island's mobile phone network was launched. Although mobiles are widely used, smartphone usage is still low. As a result, there is little internet-related crime.

In 2022, high-speed internet is expected to become available on St Helena, via the new SAex transatlantic submarine fibre-optic cable. This development is likely to benefit the St Helenian population. But it will also have the potential to increase cyber-enabled criminality.

Economy

There are no major industries on St Helena. It has a trade deficit (£1.9m in 2018/19; *Time Series: Human Development Index*, St Helena Statistics, 2020). Its gross national income per capita is ranked 104th of the 193 countries and territories on the United Nations' Human Development Index (*Time Series: External trade*, St Helena Statistics, 2020). As a result, the economy is largely dependent on financial aid from the UK Department for International Development. In 2019/20, this totalled £31.8m (70 percent) of the St Helena Government's total revenue (*Estimates of recurrent revenue, expenditure and capital expenditure 2019/20 – 2021/22*, St Helena Government, 2019, page 10).

The average annual salary in 2018/19 was just £8,410. Many young saints seek better pay and employment prospects overseas, primarily on Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands and in the UK. Educational attainment is also relatively low: more than one-third of saints of working age have no formal qualifications. This, coupled with low unemployment and the demographic gap caused by short-term emigration, has resulted in a small pool of suitably qualified individuals. This poses problems for the police and other organisations that seek to recruit staff.

The UK helps to fill some of St Helena's skills needs through the Department for International Development's TC programme. This offers expert advice, training, scholarships and research. It also funds the employment of UK experts in short-term TC posts. They carry out roles that can't be filled by locals. Approximately 100 foreign workers are employed in TC posts across the St Helenian public sector, including health, education and the police.

Government

As the representative of Her Majesty the Queen, the Governor is effectively the head of state for St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The Government is led by the Governor, supported by the chief secretary, financial secretary and attorney general. It comprises eight directorates that give public services. The Police Directorate is unique among these in that it reports directly to the Governor, rather than the chief secretary. This relationship is enshrined in the Constitution.

The Legislative Council and the Governor, acting on behalf of Her Majesty, carry out legislative functions. The Legislative Council comprises 12 councillors (who are elected on a whole-island constituency basis), as well as a speaker, deputy speaker and three ex officio members. The Governor appoints the three ex officio members. The councillors elect five of their number who, along with the Governor and three ex officio members, form the Executive Council. This council advises the Governor on most areas of policy. A further five council committees give oversight of government directorates. The Police Directorate is subject to political scrutiny via the Social and Community Development Committee and the Legislative Council, whose members examine the Directorate's priorities and budget.

Legislation

St Helenian law is based on UK legislation. Many laws from England and Wales are adopted or adapted to suit the local context. However, as the Legislative Council has law-making powers, UK law isn't automatically adopted on St Helena. Local ordinances are enacted for specific issues. For example, St Helena has the highest drink-drive limit in the world and drivers don't have to wear seatbelts.

St Helenian law isn't keeping pace with the UK. By March 2020, St Helenian ordinances were broadly in line with 2006 UK legislation.

Area for improvement 1

St Helenian law does not reflect developments in UK legislation. This is an area for improvement. The St Helena Government should review St. Helenian criminal law and the police and criminal evidence ordinance to reflect developments in the UK.

Crime

St Helena is a low-crime jurisdiction. In 2019/20, only 198 offences were recorded. Because of its remote, isolated location, the island doesn't suffer from transnational organised crime or drug trafficking. The risk from terrorism is also very low.

There is a strong gun culture on St Helena, with associated high levels of gun ownership. There is, therefore, the potential for firearms incidents.

Domestic abuse and sexual offending are also relatively prevalent on the island. Much of the force's investigative activity focuses on such incidents.

Police Directorate

The chief of police is also director of the Police Directorate. The directorate includes St Helena Police and:

- HMP Jamestown;
- Immigration Office;
- Probation Team;
- Fire and Rescue Service;
- Sea Rescue Service;
- Emergency Control and Command Centre; and
- St Helena Resilience Forum.

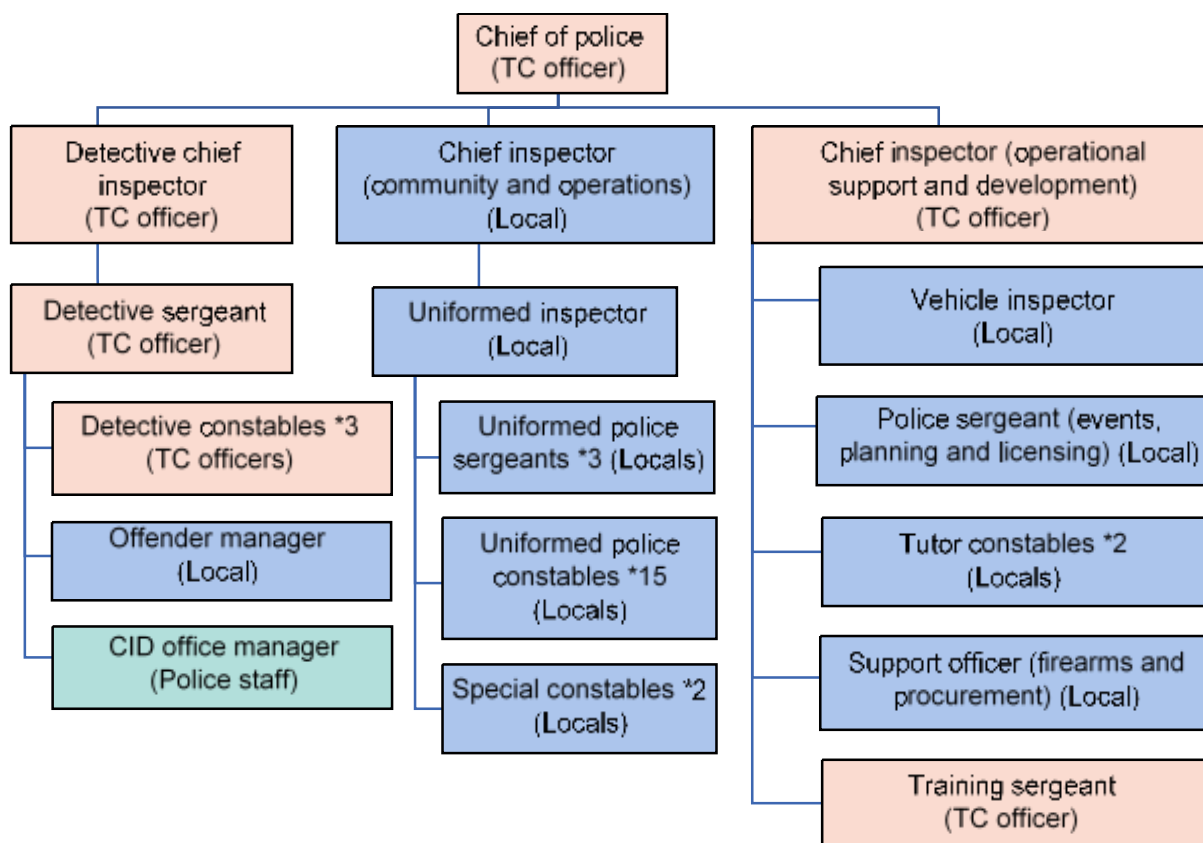
Staffing

St Helena Police is a small force of 33 officers. A senior leadership team (SLT) leads the force. The SLT comprises the chief of police, three chief inspectors and one inspector.

The force has a diverse staffing mix. It includes officers on permanent local contracts, as well as expatriate officers on short-term TC contracts. A police force comprised solely of UK officers wouldn't be financially viable. It would also be politically unacceptable. Therefore, TC posts are limited to roles needing skills that aren't found in the local workforce – namely, criminal investigation department (CID) posts, training sergeant posts and some senior management roles. The majority of uniformed PCs in the force's community and operations section – who carry out response, investigation and community policing duties – are local officers.

Senior police officers and government officials aspire to develop the local officers so that they can do more of the jobs currently done by TCs. But there is a recognition that this won't be possible for every job, given limited opportunities for officers to develop skills in St Helena's low-crime environment.

Figure 1: St Helena Police organisational chart



Staff retention

The force finds it difficult to retain local officers and attrition is high.

Senior police officers told us that officers leave for many reasons. These include the pressures of policing a small tight-knit community where they are known by everyone, and financial considerations. Constables' starting salary is relatively low (approximately £10,000). As a result, officers have left to earn higher wages in other sectors on St Helena and overseas, or for regular hours and a similar salary working for other government departments. Officers have also left St Helena Police after their probationary period, attracted by higher salaries (approximately £30,000) from the Royal Falkland Islands Police Service.

The high attrition rate has profound consequences for the force.

Because of the high turnover of uniformed officers, the force has had to carry out recruitment exercises and run probationer training three times in the past two years.

The high turnover has also caused the force to have a very inexperienced cadre of frontline constables. Of the force's 12 PCs:

- two have been in the police for two years or more;
- three are permitted to conduct solo patrols, but have fewer than two years' service; and
- the other seven are being tutored and are in their two-year probationary period.

The force faces difficulties in developing the skills of local officers. While it can give probationer and some other training in-house, external training is very expensive.

It takes a long time for officers to gain experience in St Helena's low-crime environment. This affects local officers of all ranks. And it has led to a situation in communities and operations whereby relatively inexperienced people with long service lead inexperienced people with short service. The force is seeking to address this problem by sending the inspector on a three-month secondment to the UK, where she is expected to gain the equivalent of many years' experience working on St Helena.

While TC officers bring invaluable skills and experience to the force, they are employed on two- to three-year contracts. Many officers and stakeholders told us that this isn't long enough to provide continuity, and leads to 'chopping and changing' of direction and operational practices.

Investigating crime, caring for victims and managing vulnerability

In this chapter, we cover:

- the quality of crime files;
- how well officers respond to calls for service;
- the initial response to incidents;
- the investigation of crime;
- the force's intelligence and forensics capabilities;
- victim care; and
- safeguarding vulnerable people.

When a crime occurs, members of the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take seriously their concerns as victims and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised. They must be based on approved practice. They must also be carried out by appropriately trained staff.

The police must protect victims, witnesses and other members of the public, particularly those who are most vulnerable. People can be vulnerable for many reasons, and the extent of their vulnerability can change during the time they are in contact with the police.

St Helena Police gives a very good investigatory service to its community. It investigates all reported crimes, and it conducts thorough crime investigations into most of them. However, there are areas for improvement. The force can do more to increase the effectiveness of its investigatory processes, and to give even better care to victims and vulnerable people.

This chapter will assess the quality of the force's crime files, its ability to respond to calls for service, as well as its ability to investigate crime, protect vulnerable people and care for victims.

Quality of crime files

We reviewed 19 crime and incident files as part of our evidence collection. Reviews of this kind are important. They give us a way to understand how police forces investigate crime, from the time they are notified about an incident through to its conclusion. Such reviews depend on the accuracy of the documents contained within the files. Incident and crime reports – which should give a chronology of the actions that officers and staff take – should be comprehensive and accurate. Unfortunately, many of the incident and crime reports we examined didn't have a record of all actions, or didn't have a record of when or where actions were done, or by whom. Examples include crime reports that omitted the following details:

- when officers were despatched to, and arrived at, incident scenes;
- how the force was informed about an incident;
- any reference to arrests or voluntary interviews in cases where suspects were charged; and
- officers' contact with victims.

Poor record keeping limited our ability to robustly analyse the effectiveness of the force's investigations and victim care. It also limits the force's ability to:

- audit its records;
- monitor its performance;
- identify good and poor practice; and
- enable continuous improvement.

Recommendation 1

By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should implement a robust crime and incident record management system.

Responding to calls for service

The initial investigative response is critical for an effective investigation. The investigative process should start from the moment victims or witnesses contact the police, so that the police force can gather accurate information and evidence.

In July 2019, the Police Directorate created an emergency service control room at the police station and a new emergency services radio network. These developments have been transformational.

Prior to July 2019, staff at the police station's reception counter answered daytime emergency calls. Prison officers answered calls at night. The staff recorded details of calls in a logbook, and then transferred the information onto the OTCRIS computer database. They couldn't contact officers outside Jamestown because the radio system only worked in the capital.

Now, the control room operates 24/7, receiving emergency calls for St Helena Police, St Helena Fire and Rescue Service, and St Helena Sea Rescue Service. The control

room also operates the Maritime Distress and Information Service for the territorial and international waters of St Helena and Ascension Island. Control room operators can log details of the calls on OTCRIS and communicate with operational emergency service personnel across the island, via the new emergency services radio network.

These developments represent considerable progress. The control room is relatively new and will continue to mature. However, at the time of our inspection, its staff were inexperienced, and its processes weren't operating as effectively as the Police Directorate's senior management would like.

Control room staffing, training and experience

Six control room operators work a shift system, which usually gives the following staffing levels:

- 8.00am–2.30pm: one operator on duty;
- 2.30pm–8.30pm: two operators on duty; and
- 8.30pm–8.00am: one operator on duty.

On Friday and Saturday nights, only one operator is on duty. But, often, this is when the force receives most calls.

Area for improvement 2

St Helena Police's staffing of the control room is an area for improvement. The force should map demand against its resources and staff the control room accordingly.

Both the force's operations and civil contingencies manager – who manages the control room – and the control room's acting supervisor only work office hours Monday to Friday. As a result, operators lack support and supervision within the control room at other times.

The fact that the control room staff haven't developed the skills they need to become fully effective in their roles compounds this problem. As with many other problems the force faces, this is primarily a result of the difficulty in giving staff the training and opportunities to gain experience on an island where very few incidents occur. The operations and civil contingencies manager has given operators basic initial training. And, on average, the call room only receives five calls a day for police assistance.

Quality and effectiveness

The force has developed a call grading and deployment policy. However, operators' lack of experience has prevented the policy from being implemented.

The policy states that control room operators will determine the appropriate graded level of response to a call. (The four graded responses are: immediate response by officers, priority response by officers, appointment with officers, and resolution without deployment.) The operators will do this by gathering relevant information and applying a structured assessment based on the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability faced by the victim. This is known as a [THRIVE](#) assessment. The operators should

record on OTCRIS both the information they have gathered from the caller and their own rationale for the grading (to enable auditing). They should ask their supervisor for advice if needed.

However, this process isn't happening:

- Operators aren't consistently recording comprehensive, accurate information. The operations and civil contingencies manager audits the quality of call logs that operators record on the OTCRIS system. These audits revealed that, between December 2019 and February 2020, approximately one-quarter of call logs contained errors. Many of these errors were minor and related to the data formatting; others omitted important information or included incorrect information. This was due to operators making mistakes when completing OTCRIS entries and not consistently asking callers the right questions.
- Operators have pre-set lists of questions that they should ask callers who are reporting child abuse or road traffic collisions. These lists are very useful, because they help operators to elicit relevant information to record onto OTCRIS. However, the force doesn't have question lists for other types of offences. Without the prompts that the lists give, operators aren't likely to routinely gather all the information they need.

Area for improvement 3

St Helena Police's recording of incidents is an area for improvement. The force should liaise with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's British Overseas Territories police advisor to gain access to question sets that can be replicated within its information technology system.

Operators lack the necessary knowledge to carry out a THRIVE assessment, or the evaluation of a victim's vulnerability that is central to it. Despite receiving THRIVE training, operators didn't know the force's definition of vulnerability and who should be categorised as vulnerable.

Recommendation 2

By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should make sure that all control room operators have received appropriate THRIVE training.

Operators were largely aware that repeat victimisation can be an indicator of vulnerability. They told us that, because the island has a small population, they would be able to identify people who had previously been victims of crime. This isn't a reliable mechanism to identify repeat victims.

Most police forces' call-handling systems automatically identify repeat victims when an operator inputs the details of a call. OTCRIS lacks this functionality. Enhancing OTCRIS to automatically identify repeat victims would benefit St Helena Police and the police forces in other British Overseas Territories that use the system.

Recommendation 3

By 1 August 2022, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's British Overseas Territories police advisor should amend OTCRIS to automatically identify vulnerable victims.

Often, supervisors aren't available to give advice.

Given these difficulties, call operators don't carry out THRIVE assessments. Nor do they deploy officers. Instead, after taking information from the caller, operators brief the sergeant who is on duty about the call. This sergeant is likely to be in another part of the police station, but could be involved in other duties elsewhere on the island. They then determine the appropriate response and despatch officers as needed. If the sergeant isn't available, operators contact the senior constable on duty. In very serious incidents, they contact the on-call member of the SLT.

This process poses risks. Operators might not be able to contact the sergeant or constable immediately. This could delay officers' arrival at the scene of emergency incidents. The force doesn't monitor how often officers attend incidents within target times, so it isn't clear whether this risk has caused problems.

Area for improvement 4

St Helena Police's understanding of how often officers attend incidents within target times is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that this forms part of its performance regime.

Sergeants make deployment decisions. But in the cases we examined, there was no evidence that they conduct formal THRIVE assessments. The absence of such risk assessments could lead to delays in preventing serious injury or even loss of life.

The force's senior managers are considering applying for funding to recruit a sergeant with expertise and experience of working in a UK police control room. This sergeant could:

- give more in-depth training and mentoring for control room operators, to enable them to confidently conduct THRIVE assessments and despatch officers to incidents;
- run training scenarios, using fictitious incidents to help the control room operators practise and hone their skills;
- introduce a performance regime for the control room; and
- help to develop question-set scripts for a wide range of incidents.

In the short term, the force could mitigate the risks posed by the inexperienced control room. For example, an experienced member of the force's SLT could give basic THRIVE training to all control room operators and uniformed sergeants. Also, the SLT should be making sure that sergeants produce a THRIVE assessment of all calls and record these assessments on incident reports.

Initial response

In communities with relatively high crime rates and limited policing resources, the public accepts, albeit reluctantly, that the police can't respond to, and investigate thoroughly, all reported offences. This isn't the case on St Helena, where the public expects the police to investigate all incidents. The crime investigation files that we audited contained many examples of St Helena Police investigating crimes that most police forces in England and Wales may have considered too minor to investigate.

St Helena Police doesn't have a telephone investigation unit. Instead, it tries to make sure that officers attend the scenes of those incidents reported, where either:

- the threat, harm or risk necessitates attendance, or
- the complainant hasn't said that they don't need police attendance following a minor incident.

In the context of St Helena, this represents good practice. It increases police visibility. It also reassures victims of crime and the wider community.

Of the crime files that we reviewed, almost 50 percent of the crimes resulted from incidents reported in person at the police station in Jamestown. In almost all cases that were reported in this way, officers saw complainants promptly. Officers also started their enquiries in a timely manner.

Arrival at scene of incidents

It is difficult to accurately determine whether officers routinely arrive promptly at scenes of incidents. The force has set the following targets for the time it should take for officers to arrive at an incident:

Response grade	Target
Immediate response by officers	Urban: 10 minutes; rural: 25 minutes
Priority response by officers	60 minutes
Appointment with officers	48 hours

However, the force doesn't monitor performance against these targets. The incident reports lack data to enable such an analysis. None of the incident or crime reports show the response grading. And most incident reports don't show what time officers arrive at the scene.

We assessed the likely response grading and approximate arrival time for the incidents that we reviewed, and which had been reported to the force by telephone. (The arrival time is based on other information contained in the incident report and an understanding of driving distances on the island.) It appears that officers arrived promptly at the scenes of most of these incidents.

Initial investigation

Most of the force's uniformed officers are in their probationary period. Others are still young in service, and inexperienced. The force tries to make sure that, when probationers attend scenes, they are accompanied by tutor constables or sergeants. Our review of crime files suggests that this happens in most cases. But there are exceptions. For example, two of the four burglaries that we reviewed were attended by inexperienced officers. They weren't accompanied by tutor constables or sergeants.

CID told us that detectives accompany uniformed officers to the scenes of burglaries and other serious cases. This didn't happen in either of the burglaries referenced above. The force hasn't articulated in policy which incidents should receive an immediate CID response.

Area for improvement 5

St Helena Police's initial response to crimes is an area for improvement. The force should implement a policy describing the incidents that should receive an immediate criminal investigation department response.

Quality of initial investigatory actions

While staff are inexperienced, their initial investigatory actions are generally good. This was evident in an incident where a supervisor took command and control of a theft from a motor vehicle investigation. The supervisor made sure that an area search was carried out in the vicinity. This search yielded a suspect who turned out to be an offender who had committed three separate offences that night.

The relatively low volume of calls often enables the force to pursue lines of investigation that wouldn't ordinarily be followed in the UK. During our inspection, we saw many examples of this. One involved an impressive police response to a report of harassment: the force carried out considerable work to establish that the initial victim was an offender who had committed indecent exposure against one of the youths who he had alleged was harassing him.

Investigating crime

Are cases allocated appropriately and investigated thoroughly?

Uniformed officers receive relatively limited training because it is very expensive to send officers to the UK, or to bring UK trainers to St Helena. The investigation training that uniformed officers receive isn't up to the standard given to their UK counterparts. With St Helena's low crime rate, it also takes far longer for officers to gain experience than it would in the UK.

Conversely, most CID officers are highly experienced and fully trained. The force has recruited them into short-term TC posts, primarily for their experience of working in UK forces' CID and public protection units.

In the sample of cases that we reviewed, CID carried out:

- all burglary investigations;
- three of the four sexual offence investigations; and
- half the public assault investigations.

Uniformed officers carried out the other investigations, including all investigations into high-risk domestic abuse cases, with varying levels of support from CID. Most of these investigations were conducted to a very high standard. There was evidence of officers' tenacity to detect crimes. Officers pursue many lines of enquiry, even when investigating those types of relatively minor offences that wouldn't usually be subject to a thorough investigation in the UK.

However, these findings mask a problem: inexperienced officers understandably make mistakes when carrying out their investigations. Officers told us that this happens often, and CID or senior officers rectify mistakes once they review cases. At a briefing we attended, CID had to remind uniformed officers that they should take statements, write them up and include them in the case files, because this wasn't happening routinely. The crime reports lack sufficient detail, so we cannot confirm whether officers made mistakes in the investigations we reviewed.

Developing uniformed officers' investigatory skills

The police force's SLT is fully aware of this problem. It is trying to develop the skills and knowledge of uniformed PCs within its financial and operational limitations in a range of ways, by:

- giving officers opportunities to practise skills;
- more supervision;
- giving officers increased support from CID;
- greater managerial oversight;
- maximising learning; and
- developing policies and procedures.

Giving officers opportunities to practise skills

The SLT's vision is to develop omnicompetent uniformed officers who are skilled in investigation, response and community policing. To gain investigatory skills, uniformed officers must be involved in a range of investigations. Consequently, they carry out some investigations that would be allocated to specialist investigators in some other police forces.

For example, uniformed PCs investigated the three high-risk domestic abuse cases that we reviewed. This is in line with the force's policy, and we aren't aware of uniformed officers making mistakes in these cases. However, many forces assign such investigations to specialist investigators. (See, for example, [Sussex Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse](#), HMIC, 2014, page 10.)

Given the inexperience of many of St Helena's uniformed officers, and the availability of officers with specialist public protection experience in CID, the force should consider allocating such cases to CID until uniformed officers have enough investigatory skills.

Area for improvement 6

St Helena Police's crime allocation is an area for improvement. The force should implement a policy to allocate all high-risk domestic abuse cases to criminal investigation department officers.

The force expects officers to investigate all crimes thoroughly – in part, as a learning exercise. As mentioned earlier, most of the investigations that we reviewed were very thorough, with officers pursuing many lines of enquiry. In most examples, this is highly commendable.

However, on occasion, officers carry out full investigations (including house to house and appeals for witnesses) in very minor cases with no chance of positive resolution. The SLT also instructs officers to produce 'full files' for all investigations, including those where they anticipate a guilty plea from the defendant. Officers even produce thick case files (including scene photographs and all witness statements) for very minor, damage-only, road traffic collisions between insured drivers.

The force has developed this practice to give officers the opportunity to gain file preparation experience. However, this practice is time-consuming and reduces the time that officers could be spending in other roles, such as community policing and crime prevention.

Other ways to upskill officers – such as CID attachments – may prove to be more efficient than requiring them to carry out unnecessary investigatory actions in cases that have no chance of being solved, or to produce full files that aren't needed.

Supervision and oversight

It is important that supervisors, managers or specialist investigators give officers direction for their investigations. In every case, this should be stated in an investigatory plan that outlines clear aims, objectives and action. Officers should also receive direction throughout the course of investigations, through structured supervisory reviews and ongoing oversight.

Investigation plans

Senior managers stipulate that crime reports must be generated with investigation plans. They have set this as one of the force's key performance targets. The following table shows that compliance with this target is increasing, but with scope for further improvement:

Period	Proportion of crime report generated with investigation plans
April–June 2019	50 percent
July–September 2019	60 percent
October–December 2019	70 percent

Managers are aware that this is primarily a problem in investigations conducted by uniformed officers, and that CID crime reports usually have investigation plans.

To help officers, the force has produced a useful generic investigation plan. This gives basic guidance for investigating crime incidents, while also stipulating that each investigation plan “must be bespoke to the circumstances ... and fully detailed within ... the ... crime file” (Investigation Plan, St Helena Police, 2017, unpublished).

However, officers aren’t clear who is responsible for creating the initial plan. One senior manager told us that the attending officer writes the plan, which should be reviewed by a supervisor. But another senior officer told us that supervisors should write the initial plan. The generic investigation plan states that attending officers should write the plan, but they should call supervisors for help when it appears that a major crime has been committed, such as rape or murder.

Given the inexperience of most uniformed constables, they shouldn’t be responsible for creating investigation plans without direction from experienced colleagues. Ideally, this support should be given at initial response, to make sure that all ‘golden hour’ actions are identified and carried out. (The ‘golden hour’ is the term used for the period immediately after an offence has been committed, when material is readily available in high volumes to the police.)

Some supervisors lack much investigation experience. But CID TC officers are highly experienced specialist investigators. They would be well placed to offer this support. At the time of our inspection, uniformed officers did sometimes contact CID to ask for help in writing their initial plan. The force should consider formalising this arrangement. Also:

- attending officers should call CID for help in developing all their plans; and
- when CID isn’t available, attending officers should call sergeants for help. CID should then review the plans at the earliest opportunity.

Area for improvement 7

St Helena Police’s production of investigation plans is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that the criminal investigation department provides guidance and monitoring of plans.

Supervisory oversight

It is important that sergeants carry out regular supervisory reviews of investigations. The force's 'Supervisors' flow chart for all crime investigations' reflects this. According to this chart, supervisors must carry out investigatory reviews after 7, 14 and 28 days, as well as at the end of the investigation and prior to submission to the attorney general's chambers.

Our crime file review revealed that most crime reports contained entries written by sergeants, or other supervisors or managers. This suggests that sergeants, or other supervisors or managers, help to steer investigations. However, there was no evidence that sergeants are consistently reviewing cases at 7, 14 or 28 days. Only three of the cases that we examined specifically referred to a seven-day review. All these were CID investigations.

Other evidence also suggests that the quality of investigatory supervision needs to be improved. This evidence includes:

- the poor quality of many crime reports;
- officers not completing DASH forms on files;
- officers not giving victims contact contracts; and
- poor recording of victim contact.

This is primarily a problem within uniformed policing. At the time of our inspection, only three of the force's five uniformed sergeant posts were actively filled. One of these was a constable in an acting rank. We recognise the problems that this causes the force, and we are aware of the difficulties the force has in giving further training to officers.

Support from CID

There are good working relationships between uniformed and CID officers, with CID giving uniformed officers valuable support and advice. Detectives also give uniformed officers chances to gain experience. For example, they invite PCs to sit in on interviews and attend strategy meetings. Although CID only conducts ad hoc mentoring of uniformed officers, its management is keen to formalise this. This should be beneficial because it should help to increase the skills of uniformed officers. It would also show that TC CID officers are helping with capacity building, which is one of their annual appraisal objectives.

The force has also decided to include an attachment with CID as part of the training programme for the current cadre of student officers. This seems to be a positive initiative.

Managerial oversight

Investigations are subject to review by managers. DMMs review ongoing investigations. The chief inspector of operations chairs these meetings. The uniformed inspector and CID carry out ongoing monitoring of cases. And the head of CID reviews all undetected cases, to make sure that officers have completed all lines of enquiry.

Many of the PCs we spoke to felt that a minority of managers are too quick to criticise them for minor mistakes. On occasion, officers have been put on report for very minor ones. This led to some officers feeling that managers weren't empowering them to make decisions. Officers have also feared that any decisions they made would be criticised.

From our inspection, it was clear that this 'blame culture' isn't endemic in the force. Most managers adopt a more supportive management style. The longer-serving officers also told us that the culture has improved in recent years. However, the force should try to make sure that all managers adopt a style that helps officers to learn from their mistakes by explaining what went wrong, rather than telling them off or putting them on report unnecessarily. This is particularly important given the inexperience of many officers and the problems the force has had in retaining them.

Maximising learning

The force's SLT is fully aware of the importance of offering learning opportunities to help develop local officers. This informs how the force selects TC officers. Selection is partly based on candidates' potential ability to pass on their knowledge to local officers. Occasionally, officers have the opportunity to gain experience via short-term attachments with UK forces. But the cost, operational impact and lack of interoperability between St Helena and UK officers all mean that such opportunities are understandably rare.

The chief of police is also committed to developing a broader learning culture in the force. He wants to make sure that any lessons learned are shared across the workforce. Through their oversight arrangements, senior managers occasionally identify common problems with investigatory practice and instigate local remedial training. This is commendable. However, there is room for improvement. We heard of many examples where, in the course of reviewing cases or giving ad hoc mentoring, CID or managers highlighted issues and gave guidance to individual PCs or all PCs on duty. In many of these instances, it would be beneficial for such guidance to be communicated to the entire force. However, there is no process for lessons learned, or good practice, to be communicated across all shifts.

Policies and procedures

Written policies and procedures form the foundation for most police forces' activity. When properly developed, they guide officers in doing their duties. They also give officers the information they need to act decisively and consistently, which in turn increases their confidence in carrying out their roles.

St Helena Police has few written policies and procedures. By developing a full range, the force would give officers invaluable guidance. It would also improve corporate memory, reflecting how the force previously acted in certain scenarios. As one detective remarked, "When you join, it's like no one ever did the role before".

It is understandable that the force lacks the capacity to develop the policies and procedures it needs. The force's small SLT doesn't have time to develop them. And no other officers within the force have the necessary policing and policy-writing experience and knowledge of St Helenian law to fulfil this role.

In the short term, the force could fill some policy and procedural gaps with policies and procedures that are published by the College of Policing. In the medium term, it should consider applying for funding to recruit a short-term TC policy officer to develop other policies and procedures.

Recommendation 4

By 1 August 2022, the chief of St Helena Police should develop the necessary policies and procedures (drawing on the College of Policing's authorised professional practice and UK police force policy, as appropriate), and apply for funding for a short-term technical assistance policy officer.

Complex and serious investigations

At the time of our inspection, CID had a full complement of officers. It also had the capacity and skills to investigate sexual offences, and other complex and serious investigations. CID's on-call arrangements provide for a 24/7 investigation service.

Our recommendations about uniformed officers' investigatory role would have an impact on CID's capacity. Additional CID posts may be needed. The force's SLT is also aware that the arrival of fibre-optic broadband in 2022 will inevitably increase cyber-enabled offending, with a consequent impact on CID's workload.

Occasionally, small police forces need to use outside experts to help with serious crimes, major incidents or complex investigations. If there was a major incident involving mass casualties, St Helena Police would liaise with the FCO to receive UK support. However, there are no formalised agreements between the force and either the UK police service or other law enforcement or government agencies to facilitate requests for support at other times.

In 2018, the SLT needed to bring in specialist police staff from the UK for a short while. This was a time-consuming process because managers had to contact many forces to identify who they needed to speak to.

This isn't a problem unique to St Helena Police. It applies to police forces across the British Overseas Territories. Officials from the FCO are examining this issue. We would welcome the development of formalised links between British Overseas Territories' police forces and designated UK forces or units, to simplify and speed up the process.

Area for improvement 8

The lack of formalised links between British Overseas Territories' police forces and designated UK forces or units is an area for improvement. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office should explore the potential for developing such links to improve British Overseas Territories' police forces' access to support.

Criminal justice processes

The force lacks criminal justice procedures that give a step-by-step process for officers to follow from charge through to trial.

Disclosure is one of these key criminal justice processes. However, the force lacks disclosure policies or procedures. As a result, officers' approach to disclosure is inconsistent.

The crown prosecutor has identified several common mistakes that officers make and has offered to provide disclosure training to officers. The force has welcomed this offer, and the training should help to improve officers' knowledge and understanding.

In the medium term, once the force appoints a policy officer, this person should prioritise producing criminal justice and disclosure policies and procedures.

Area for improvement 9

St Helena Police's approach to disclosure is inconsistent and, therefore, an area for improvement. The force should produce criminal justice and disclosure policies and procedures.

Intelligence capability

Recently, the force has developed a limited intelligence function. It has started to store intelligence on OTCRIS. It has introduced weekly intelligence meetings and developed intelligence requirements. Officers collect intelligence against these requirements. This is a positive development.

Senior managers realise that the force would need a trained intelligence analyst if it were to further develop its intelligence function. They decided to use TC funding for specialists other than analysts. Given the force's operational context and limited budget, we support this decision.

In the absence of a local analyst, there may be potential for St Helena Police and other British overseas forces to approach UK forces to carry out specific analytical tasks remotely. These tasks could include creating problem profiles or giving investigatory support.

Area for improvement 10

St Helena Police's ability to conduct analysis is an area for improvement. The force should liaise with the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) to obtain analytical services.

Forensics support

Investigators receive good forensic support.

The force arranged for a uniformed sergeant to take crime scene manager training in the UK. This sergeant manages all crime scenes on the island. She is supported by several crime scene investigators (CSIs). The chief of police supplemented the police officer CSIs by training and appointing some fire and rescue and immigration officers as CSIs. This is a good example of the chief constable using his position as director of the whole Police Directorate to increase the force's capacity.

CSIs attend incidents promptly and return results to investigating officers in a timely way.

The force has a contract with a commercial provider that examines forensic samples. Usually, the provider conducts these examinations relatively quickly, considering the time it takes for samples to travel to and from the UK.

Digital forensics support

St Helena Police has no digital forensics capability.

Even though smartphone usage is far lower on St Helena than in the UK, many offences involve mobile phones. The force has evaluated the benefits of investing in cyber kiosks. (These allow officers to access and download material that is held on mobile digital devices. Many UK forces, and some Crown Dependencies' and British Overseas Territories' forces, use them.) However, the cost of equipment and licensing fees would be disproportionately high for the current demand. As smartphone usage is forecast to increase significantly once St Helena gains fibre-optic connectivity in 2022, the force has scheduled a re-evaluation of this issue within the next three years. In the interim, the force sends any phones that need analysing to the UK.

Supporting victims

The victim care that the St Helena Government provides is unstructured and could be improved.

Victim care policy

St Helena Police doesn't have a victim care policy.

In 2015, the statutory [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) was introduced in the UK to comply with the European Union Victims' Directive. The code outlines a range of victims' entitlements. They include:

- a written acknowledgement that the victim has reported a crime, including the basic details of the offence;
- a needs assessment to help work out what support the victim needs;
- a referral to organisations that support victims of crime;
- updates about the police investigation (for example, if a suspect is arrested and charged, and any bail conditions imposed); and
- the opportunity to make a VPS.

The code also requires police and other bodies to provide an enhanced service to victims of serious crime, persistently targeted victims, and vulnerable or intimidated victims. This includes 'special measures' to help vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to give their best evidence in court.

St Helena Police is under no obligation to adopt the code, and some of the code's entitlements can't be fulfilled on St Helena. For example, the force can't refer victims to an organisation that supports victims of crime, because there isn't a victim support organisation operating on St Helena. This is a cause for concern.

Recommendation 5

By 1 August 2021, the St Helena Government should develop a victim support scheme.

The force should have a victim care policy and procedure that clearly articulates the minimum standards of victim care that it expects its officers and staff to give. It should also outline a range of victims' entitlements that are achievable on St Helena. Currently, the force has no such policy or procedure.

Area for improvement 11

St Helena Police's lack of victim care policies and procedures is an area for improvement. The force should produce victim care policies and procedures.

Victim contact

Officers aren't consistently updating victims about progress with investigations.

Despite the lack of an overarching victim care policy, the force has produced documents that outline what officers should do to make sure they update victims appropriately. The force's 'Investigation officers' flow chart for all crime investigations' includes the following steps (some steps are omitted from the following list because they don't relate to victim contact):

At the scene of an incident: "Officer completes victim contact contract with victim – agreeing with the victim timescales and preferred means of contact. Completing their own contact details on tear-off slip and provide this to victim."

On returning to the police station: "Officer completes report on OTCRIS and scans a copy of victim contact contract and attaches to crime."

Within seven days of the report of a crime: "the victim should be contacted by investigating officer and provided with update of investigation - update to be recorded on OTCRIS crime file (details of conversation to be noted).

Investigating officer will continue contact with victim as per agreed timescales, no more than 28 days between each contact and record updates provided on OTCRIS crime report."

The flow chart also outlines when officers must contact the victim following the arrest of the suspect. It concludes:

It is important to complete full updates of conversations with victims within your OTCRIS crime file, this will include date and time of contact, information provided to victim, any queries raised by victim and responses provided. This will provide your supervisors with evidence that you are complying with your victim contact contract. A supervisors' process will be linked to this to make sure that the victim contact contract is being met.

Simplified versions of the process are also included on the victim contact contract template and the force's investigation plan template.

The process set out in the flow chart should make sure that victims receive updates as and when needed. However, this isn't happening consistently.

Officers told us that they complete victim contact contracts when they first meet a victim. But of the 16 crime files that we reviewed, only two contained contracts.

Some forces in the UK set performance indicators to monitor whether their officers create victim contact contracts for each recorded crime. St Helena Police would benefit from introducing a similar process.

We reviewed the 16 OTCRIS crime reports to examine how often officers are contacting victims to give them updates, in line with the requirements outlined above:

- In seven crime reports, there were no records of victim updates.
- In eight crime reports, some victim updates were recorded but some were missing.
- In one crime report, all the necessary updates were recorded.

There were no examples of the "full updates of conversations" mandated by the investigation officers' flow chart.

It may be the case that officers are forgetting to record contact with victims on OTCRIS, rather than failing to make contact. However, interviews with officers suggest that, at least occasionally, they are failing to make contact. Some uniformed officers told us that they try to update victims regularly, but this doesn't always happen because of other commitments.

Area for improvement 12

St Helena Police's victim contact is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that victim contact contracts are completed, and that victim contact is conducted and recorded.

Victim personal statements

St Helena Police doesn't routinely offer victims the opportunity to give personal statements.

A VPS gives victims an opportunity to describe the effects of a crime on them, to express their concerns and to indicate whether they need any support. This can strengthen prosecution evidence, and make clear to the offender the consequences and gravity of their behaviour.

St Helena Police's *Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure* instructs officers to give victims of domestic abuse the opportunity to make a VPS. It also requires officers to include the VPS within the victim's statement and "if the victim chooses not to make a VPS this must be recorded on the [w]itness [s]tatement form after the [e]vidential statement has been taken" (St Helena Police, page 10, unpublished).

Officers don't appear to be complying with this policy. We reviewed four domestic abuse cases. In all four cases, there was no reference to VPS among the crime reports, statements or crime files.

Victim personal statements: other crimes

Officers should offer all victims the opportunity to make a VPS, regardless of the severity of a crime. Despite this, only one of the 12 other case files we examined mentioned a VPS. In that case, an entry on the crime report stated: "complainants will need to be approached regarding victim personal statements". But there were no further records to say whether this had occurred.

The force lacks guidance and policy in this area. Its Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure was the only force policy, procedure or guidance document that it gave us that includes reference to VPS. Significantly, neither the investigation officers' flow chart for all crime investigations nor the force's investigation plan template mention it. This is a gap. If the force updated these documents to include reference to VPS, the documents could act as a valuable reminder to officers. They may also improve compliance.

Area for improvement 13

St Helena Police's use of victim personal statements is an area for improvement. The force should create procedures on the use of victim personal statements and improve monitoring of their use.

Special measures

St Helena Police has some special measures in place to give children and other vulnerable victims and witnesses the support they need.

The force has a facility for filming 'Achieving best evidence' video interviews. Our review of case files showed that the force is carrying out these interviews when needed.

Victim satisfaction

St Helena Police doesn't effectively monitor victims' satisfaction with the service that it provides.

The force has developed a callback procedure. This involves control room operators calling victims of crime seven days after a crime is reported, to check whether they feel safe and whether they are satisfied with the police's initial response. This procedure can also alert the force to any problems, so that it can deal with them urgently. For these reasons, this is a good initiative.

However, the force can't get a robust understanding of victim satisfaction by contacting victims one week after a crime occurred. It is too early in the process. Most UK forces assess victim satisfaction by carrying out comprehensive surveys of victims whose crimes have already been through the investigative process. These surveys ask a wide range of questions that help forces to identify weaknesses in their practice so that they can improve. (See, for example, [Bedfordshire Police's victim survey](#).)

Area for improvement 14

St Helena Police's understanding of victim satisfaction is an area for improvement. The force should develop victim surveys that evaluate victims' experiences throughout the life cycle of an investigation.

The force may benefit from retaining the callback procedure, to augment a new victim satisfaction survey. If it does, it should address the several weaknesses that we identified.

One of these weaknesses is that control room operators don't try to contact all victims:

- A schedule of callbacks conducted in 2019 shows that victims who had a hearing impairment, a mental health condition or other vulnerabilities weren't contacted. It may not be possible to telephone some of these people. But if the force is trying to make sure that all victims are safe and satisfied one week after reporting a crime, then it needs to modify its procedure to make sure that it includes its most vulnerable victims.
- Also, operators don't seek alternative ways to contact victims who don't have a telephone or whose telephone number isn't known to the force.

The force should also improve the quality of the data it collects about callbacks. One of its key performance indicators reports the percentage of victims who told the force they were satisfied. However, the force's calculations are inconsistent: in some months, it calculates this percentage as a proportion of victims who answered the callback. And sometimes it calculates the percentage as the proportion of total victims. This creates an inaccurate picture of victim contact and satisfaction.

Area for improvement 15

St Helena Police's callback procedure is an area for improvement. The force should improve the consistency of how callback data is recorded.

Protecting vulnerable people

Initial response to vulnerable victims

Officers' initial response to a vulnerable person is vital. This could be the first time that a victim has contacted the police, or the victim may have had repeated contact with the police. Either way, the initial response to a vulnerable victim must give the victim practical support to keep safe. It must also inspire confidence that the force is taking the victim's concerns seriously.

The officer should assess the risk to the victim at that moment, and to others in the same household. They should also collect enough information to support the longer-term response of the force and other partner organisations.

Uniformed officers' understanding of vulnerability

Officers understand their responsibility to protect people from harm and to protect vulnerable victims. However, most young, in-service, uniformed officers haven't received any training or guidance about the force's definition of vulnerability. Many are unaware of the definition. Few knew the range of factors that could cause a person to be vulnerable.

Area for improvement 16

St Helena Police's officers' understanding of vulnerability is an area for improvement. The force should give guidance and raise awareness.

Risk assessments

There is a widely held belief among the force's officers that 'we know who the vulnerable people are'. The force clearly knows about many of these people. This is because of the island's small population, and the close working relationships between the police and the safeguarding adults and children boards.

However, people's vulnerabilities can change over time. And people with hidden vulnerabilities might not have had previous interactions with the police or partner agencies. It is imperative that officers know what constitutes vulnerability, and seek to assess the vulnerability of people they interact with.

Uniformed officers assess people's vulnerability when attending some incidents. The force has a process to assess the vulnerability of victims of domestic abuse (see below). Our file review showed that officers recognised victims of sexual offences, children, and people with visible mental health conditions as being potentially vulnerable. The CPN attends scenes to carry out assessments when needed. Officers of all ranks were very complementary about his support.

However, uniformed officers aren't always considering or identifying vulnerability at other types of incidents, if they don't encounter a person with an 'obvious vulnerability'. The force would benefit from introducing a process to make sure that officers identify and assess vulnerabilities at all incidents. This process would maximise early intervention opportunities and help to prevent victimisation.

Many UK forces have such processes. For example, the Metropolitan Police Service expects its staff to conduct a vulnerability assessment when attending incidents. Officers measure vulnerability across five areas, and the assessment suggests action(s) if the score meets certain thresholds.

DASH assessments

St Helena Police has adopted the UK [domestic abuse, stalking and harassment \(DASH\) risk assessment process](#). This helps frontline officers to identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and so-called 'honour-based violence'.

The DASH form outlines clear requirements for officers and supervisors. Officers must complete DASH forms for every domestic abuse incident. Supervisors should then check these forms, assess whether there are risks facing children in the family, sign the forms and refer cases to the MARAC, if appropriate. The force has poor adherence to this process.

We audited case files relating to 11 domestic abuse incidents. The force recorded these between November 2019 and January 2020. All these files should have included a completed DASH form. However, of the 11 files:

- six didn't contain a DASH form;
- one contained a DASH form that the officer hadn't fully completed;
- three contained completed DASH forms that omitted the supervisor's comments and signatures; and
- only one contained a DASH form that the officer and supervisor had fully completed.

The force should improve its assurance of the DASH process. Managers told us that officers' completion of DASHs for domestic abuse cases is monitored in DMMs. CID is also supposed to review DASHs, and to update them as necessary during uniformed officers' investigations. Our audit reveals that such monitoring and reviews aren't being routinely carried out.

Area for improvement 17

St Helena Police's procedures to risk assess vulnerability is an area for improvement. The force should develop vulnerability risk assessment for non-DASH cases and monitor their use.

Immediate safeguarding

The force's domestic abuse policy instructs officers to safeguard victims of domestic abuse. This should be done by arresting the suspect when there is evidence that an offence has occurred, and taking any reasonable steps to ensure the victim's (and children's) safety.

Uniformed officers regularly take positive action when attending violent domestic abuse incidents, to help and protect victims and any other vulnerable people present. Our crime file review showed that officers routinely safeguard victims of domestic violence by arresting and removing offenders when they have the opportunity. Our review also showed that officers conduct good initial safeguarding for victims of sexual abuse. These findings are encouraging.

However, our crime file review suggests that officers are only routinely conducting initial safeguarding at domestic violence and sexual abuse incidents. The case files relating to other offences made little or no mention of such safeguarding. This is probably a consequence of officers' limited understanding of vulnerability.

Investigating offences involving vulnerable victims

After the force conducts an initial investigation, it gives uniformed officers responsibility for subsequent investigation, or allocates responsibility to CID. Unlike most forces, St Helena Police hasn't produced a crime allocation policy that sets out the criteria for allocating cases to CID. The force makes case allocation decisions on a case-by-case basis. These decisions are based on senior officers' assessment of the threat, harm and risk to the victim and the severity of the offence.

Members of the senior management team quickly allocate cases that uniformed sergeants identify as being serious or high risk. The force makes sure that a senior officer who can make these decisions is always on call.

The force allocates other, seemingly lower-risk cases, at its DMMs. Despite their name, DMMs only take place on weekdays. This is because senior officers don't routinely work at weekends. As a result, where an incident takes place on a Friday night or over the weekend, and officers don't bring it to the attention of the on-call senior officer, the force only considers the incident for allocation to CID at Monday's DMM. This arrangement could delay the force both in identifying threat, harm and risk associated with an incident, and in allocating cases to CID.

Area for improvement 18

St Helena Police's daily management meeting (DMM) is an area for improvement. The force should hold DMMs at weekends.

Multi-agency arrangements for ongoing safeguarding

St Helena Police works constructively with partner organisations to protect vulnerable people and support victims. These organisations include the Health Directorate and the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate. Government officials and representatives of partner agencies commented positively on the force's involvement in this area, and its increased focus in recent years on child and adult safeguarding.

However, the force's provision of adult safeguarding, and the island's arrangements for safeguarding adults, could be improved.

Adult safeguarding

In the UK, the Care Act 2004 sets the legal framework for how local authorities, police and other statutory partners should safeguard adults who are at risk of abuse or neglect. But there is no comparable legislation on St Helena. There are no formal governance arrangements for adult safeguarding provision, apart from those relating to people who have mental health vulnerabilities.

Despite this, some adult safeguarding does take place. The force has good working relationships with the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate, and there are good examples of joint working. The force does refer some vulnerable adults to this directorate. But, given that uniformed officers' understanding of vulnerability is inconsistent, it is likely that some vulnerable adults aren't being identified and referred.

The force also contributes to the wider multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It actively participates in MARAC meetings and the detective sergeant attends the safeguarding board. (The St Helena safeguarding boards fulfil a role akin to [multi-agency safeguarding hubs](#) or MASHs in the UK.)

Ongoing safeguarding of domestic abuse victims

Because of officers' inconsistent use of DASH forms, we haven't been able to assess whether the force is giving appropriate safeguarding to all victims of domestic abuse. However, uniformed officers had referred all the identified medium- and high-risk cases that we examined to specialist officers. This was done in order to offer prevention and safety planning, in partnership with other agencies.

Unlike some other British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, St Helena has updated its legislation to enable the police to issue [domestic violence protection orders](#) (DVPOs). This is good practice. The force uses these orders, which give victims of domestic violence a level of protection. It has arrested people who were in breach of them.

Capacity for multi-agency public protection arrangements

The force recruited an officer locally to carry out offender management. It also made sure that the officer has the necessary skills by sending him to the UK for training and a short secondment. At the time of our inspection, this officer had a manageable workload of 35 RSO cases. Eight of these were in prison and only three were high risk.

Uniformed officers are aware of the RSOs through the force's daily briefings. There are intelligence requirements against the three high-risk RSOs, and PCs are submitting intelligence against the requirements. This is good practice.

Community policing and public engagement

This chapter covers:

- the provision of community policing; and
- community engagement and crime prevention.

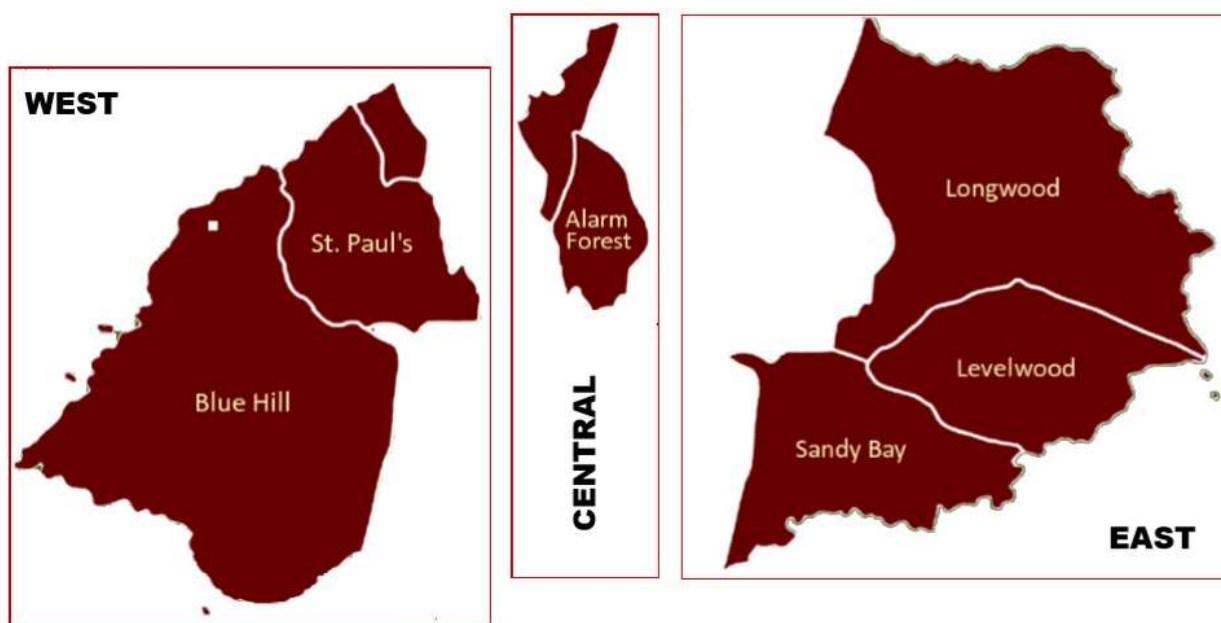
The St Helena public wants (and expects to see) police officers in their neighbourhoods, delivering community-based policing. This was evident from public surveys that the force carried out in 2014 and 2015. The surveys showed that respondents wanted high-visibility policing, with officers patrolling on foot rather than in vehicles, to facilitate engagement. Throughout our meetings with St Helena councillors and government officials, it was clear that community policing is still a priority for the public and the government. As the Governor told us, “community-based policing is crucial” on the island.

St Helena Police’s senior managers are aware of the public’s desire for community policing and the benefits that community policing engenders in increasing public trust and confidence in policing, reducing public perceptions of disorder and facilitating problem solving.

Community policing

The force has structured its uniform section to facilitate community engagement, with each of its three teams assigned to one of three geographic policing districts. Each policing district encompasses several council districts.

Figure 2: St Helena’s policing districts



Officers are responsible for community policing in their district, but their incident response and investigation responsibilities are island-wide.

Until 2015, officers were based in the three districts. But reductions in officer numbers led to the force relocating all officers to police headquarters. In 2017, an internal review of the force’s community policing model highlighted that this had led to “Jamestown centric” policing. Officers tended to “congregate at police headquarters” and policing had become “more reactive than proactive”. (*Community Policing, St Helena Police*, unpublished). It also reported that high staff turnover is the main reason why the force’s structure couldn’t change to focus more on communities.

The force has since tried to increase its community policing capability. For example, it set targets in its policing plan for the number of hours each team should spend on community policing duties every month. However, as the 2017 report warned, the force’s problem with retaining officers limits the success of its community policing. By October 2019, most uniformed officers were new and so inexperienced that senior managers stopped all community policing activity. They did so in order to get officers trained, and to let them focus on their response and investigative roles.

In January 2020, the force resumed community policing. However, most uniformed officers still can’t regularly fulfil their community policing duties. These comprise:

- offering a visible police presence in their community;
- identifying community problems and working in partnership with the public, agencies and other organisations to find long-term solutions; and
- engaging with residents, and finding out their concerns and priorities.

Uniformed officers’ investigative workload is the biggest barrier to them carrying out their community duties. The limited time available for community policing is evident from the target of just 25 hours per month for each uniformed team to spend on these duties. This equates to fewer than three hours per month, per officer.

Uniformed officers expressed to us their frustration at not having time to do more community policing.

Visible patrols in communities

Uniformed officers regularly carry out foot patrols in Jamestown. Often, they walk from police headquarters to non-emergency appointments in other parts of the capital. However, it isn't only officers from the central division team – with responsibility for community policing in Jamestown – who conduct foot patrols there. During our inspection, officers from all divisions carried out patrols in Jamestown.

Eastern division officers told us that, when they are outside headquarters, they spend more than 70 percent of their time in Jamestown rather than in their own district. This leaves them little time to patrol in their districts. Such patrols are often limited to weekends and the time officers have after responding to incidents in their districts. This leads to limited knowledge of community problems in other districts, as well as few crime prevention opportunities. It also leaves less time to investigate crime and contact victims.

Councillors were critical of the infrequent patrols. They told us that St Helena “needs more community officers on the beat”.

They also highlighted that, although TC senior officers attend some community events, they aren't very visible to the community and rarely patrol with junior officers. Historically, senior officers took turns to accompany officers at busy times, such as Friday and Saturday nights. But now, senior officers primarily work office hours Monday to Friday, so this rarely happens. By increasing their visibility in this way, senior officers may help to maintain public confidence in the force.

Identifying and solving problems

Clearly, the force has found it difficult to carry out community policing effectively. This has restricted its understanding of local communities. Most UK forces develop neighbourhood profiles to identify areas of risk, community tension, and vulnerable individuals and groups. They can then target these matters through collaborative problem-solving activity, including foot and car patrol plans. St Helena Police used to have such profiles for each district. But, as a senior officer told us, “It was a lot of work to update them all the time, so we stopped doing that”. This decision, coupled with the force's reduced engagement with people who live in outlying districts, limits its ability to identify problems in these communities.

Despite this, the force is trying to improve and increase [problem-solving policing](#). It has trained all uniformed officers in the [National Decision Model](#). It has also begun training them in the [SARA](#) problem-solving policing model.

We heard of very few recent examples of uniformed officers carrying out problem solving. And we saw no proper problem-solving plans. This should improve, as new training will give officers the skills they need. But the success of the force's problem-solving policing depends on identifying the problems, and then giving officers the time to solve them.

The force is also looking to secure greater co-operation from other St Helena government departments and partner agencies to solve problems. Senior officers were frustrated that some agencies didn't use their powers to help the force with some of its problem-solving initiatives. To improve this situation, the force took the initiative and started developing a multi-agency problem-solving group.

Priority setting and feedback to the community

At the time of our inspection, St Helena Police lacked any formal, effective processes to consult the public about its priorities. It also lacked processes to reflect these priorities in its policing plan, or to feed back what action it had taken to address them.

The force didn't consult the public or councillors when it worked with the Governor's Office to produce the strategic priorities in its Directorate Strategy and Delivery Plan April 2020–March 2023. And it hasn't produced local priorities for the districts.

Surgeries

Uniformed officers carry out local surgeries. These are conducted to give members of the public the opportunity to tell the force about their concerns, and to give the force the opportunity to tell them what it has done to address these concerns. However, the surgeries aren't achieving these aims.

Despite the force advertising surgeries on the radio and social media, very few people, if any, attend them. During our inspection, we attended a surgery that was held at a bus stop in Western Division. No members of the public were present, so some officers resorted to visiting nearby houses to talk to residents. This is typical for surgeries that are held outside Jamestown.

Councillors told us that the force holds surgeries at inconvenient times, and that more people would attend if they were held later in the evening. The force could also do more to promote attendance – for example, it could tell churches, and community and social groups, about upcoming surgeries, so that they could in turn tell their members.

Without increased attendance, the surgeries aren't an effective or efficient use of officers' time and serve little or no purpose.

Where surgeries are attended by members of the public, they are unstructured. There are no agendas. And officers don't always record any issues raised by members of the public on OTCRIS.

Area for improvement 19

St Helena Police's use of surgeries is an area for improvement. The force should map appropriate times, networks and locations where the public is more likely to engage with the police. It should also structure surgeries to make them more effective.

New initiatives

The week after our inspection fieldwork, the force announced two new initiatives on its [website](#). In part, the force has designed these initiatives so that it can understand the public's policing priorities.

The force's Trust and Confidence Survey focuses primarily on understanding public trust and confidence in the police. It also asks people about their concerns and priorities, and what level of community policing they would like. To maximise responses, the force has posted the survey online, and has placed copies in the post office, the public library and shops across the island. It has advertised the survey in the local newspapers, on social media and on the radio. Uniformed officers have even distributed hard copies to members of the public.

As well as advertising its survey, the force invited people to join a new community focus group. It will use this group to understand what the public expects from its police service. While St Helena is a relatively homogenous society, the force should consider directly inviting people who represent different sections of society. These could include young people, older people, LGBTQ people, people of different faiths and denominations, and groups representing people who have disabilities. The force used to keep lists of these key individual networks, but the lists have become out of date as other work has taken priority. The force should update these lists when it can.

The survey and focus group are very positive initiatives. They should identify issues of public concern, and enable the force to incorporate public opinion when setting its priorities.

Taking action to address public concerns and giving feedback

It is important that forces act to address public concerns, when possible and appropriate, and tell the public what they have done. This fosters dialogue between forces and their communities. It shows that forces are listening to the public. And it helps to maintain the public's trust and confidence.

The force could take some relatively easy and inexpensive measures to address public concerns. For example, officers and interested parties told us that members of the public are concerned about speeding. However, the force can't enforce speed limits. This is because one of its speed guns isn't calibrated, and the other is broken. The force has tried (so far unsuccessfully) to secure permission from the government to calibrate the speed gun on the airport runway. If this permission isn't forthcoming, the force should consider investing in a new device. By enforcing speed limits and telling the public that it is doing so, the force could easily show that it listens to and acts on the public's concerns.

During 2017 and 2018, St Helena Police published on its website a series of quarterly neighbourhood policing articles entitled "You Said, We Did" (see, for example, the [September 2018 edition](#)). These articles highlighted the issues raised at community meetings and surgeries, which more people used to attend. They also explained what action(s) the force had taken to address the issues. This was a good initiative, but in late 2018 it ended. Since then, the force hasn't routinely published what it has done in response to issues raised by the public.

The new community focus group should give the force the opportunity not only to listen to public concerns, but also to show that they have responded to them and to share “You Said, We Did” with a wider audience.

Community policing – a different model

St Helena’s inexperienced uniformed officers are struggling to find time to carry out community policing. This is due to their investigatory workload. They are also struggling to develop their investigation skills. It may be possible for the force to develop omnicompetent uniformed officers at some point. But currently its expectations of its uniformed officers are too high.

The force should consider removing uniformed officers’ investigative duties in the short term, instead allocating those duties to CID or a new referred investigation unit. This change would require more TC officers. It would give uniformed officers time to learn about their communities, hone their community policing skills, patrol their districts, engage with communities, and carry out problem-solving policing in between responding to calls for assistance.

The force has recruited one officer as a community beat officer. Currently, the officer is still in her probationary period. Once she passes probation, she will be responsible for carrying out community policing across the whole island. If this is successful, the force plans to assign a community beat officer to each policing district.

If this initiative works, these officers, who are doing community policing only, would carry out more community policing activity in one week than each shift of six officers are supposed to carry out in a month. This could release other uniformed officers from some of their community engagement roles. The force could then give them further training, and attachments to CID, to give them the skills needed to carry out basic investigations. But this will only be possible if the force can reduce officer turnover.

The force also needs to develop a community policing strategy. The strategy needs to have policies, procedures, training and guidance that set the vision for what the force wants to achieve through community policing. And the strategy needs to help officers to accomplish that vision.

Recommendation 6

By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police should develop a community policing strategy.

Community engagement and crime prevention

Community engagement

St Helena Police carries out a range of other engagement with St Helena’s community and the St Helenian diaspora around the world. This includes:

- officers, including members of the SLT, regularly appearing on the police-focused *Fuzz Buzz* programme on the local radio station;
- holding a Christmas card competition for local children; and

- inviting children to visit the police headquarters.

The St Helena Police Directorate also has a social media presence, with [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. These channels are still relatively new. They are primarily intended for the diaspora community, given St Helena's low internet usage. The force could regularly analyse the geographic spread of those who follow and interact with its social media accounts, and increase messaging to its local community as and when internet usage increases on the island.

Occasionally, the force also uses the local newspapers to communicate to the public. However, this is an expensive way of doing so. Also, media releases have to be reviewed by the Government Communications Office, and this is a slow process. As a result, the force doesn't do this as often as senior officers would like.

Complaints

The force can strengthen public trust and confidence through its complaints procedure. This not only involves investigating complaints appropriately (we didn't examine this, because it fell outside our terms of reference) but also making sure that:

- the public knows how to make a complaint and can do so easily; and
- it publishes data about the number of complaints it receives, and their outcomes.

St Helena Police doesn't effectively promote its complaints procedure. It should consider outlining its complaints procedure on its website, putting up notices about it in the publicly accessible areas of police headquarters and providing officers with information about the procedure to pass on to members of the public.

The force doesn't publish any data about the number of complaints it receives or their outcomes.

Area for improvement 20

St Helena Police's communication about complaints is an area for improvement. The force should publish its complaints procedures, statistics and outcomes online.

Crime prevention

[St Helena Police's website](#) states:

Crime Prevention is something which we give out to educate the public on how to not be victims of crime. We do this by informing the public how to keep their homes and property safe by locking their doors and windows when leaving their home, making sure that all their valuables are kept locked away in a safe place.

St Helena Police gives crime prevention advice through its *Fuzz Buzz* radio programme. But, unlike most police forces, it doesn't use its website to share crime prevention advice with the public. (The above-mentioned quote is the only mention of crime prevention on the site.) And the force only rarely communicates crime prevention advice through its social media accounts.

In recent years, the force has contributed to multi-agency campaigns to prevent youth offending, domestic violence and CSE as follows:

- Police officers give presentations to secondary school students about alcohol, violence and drugs as part of the youth diversion scheme.
- In 2019, the force secured funding from the United Nations to run a 'Stand Up to Domestic Abuse' campaign, alongside the Health Directorate and the Adult & Children's Services Directorate. Officers visited schools, and the force issued press releases as part of this initiative.
- The force is also heavily involved in a new campaign led by the Adult & Children's Services Directorate to prevent CSE. The force has trained uniformed officers to identify CSE. It has started to use the radio to tell the public about signs of CSE. And information sharing between the force and Adult and Children's Services has improved.

The force's involvement in these campaigns is impressive.

Armed policing

In this chapter we cover:

- the use of the APSTRA process;
- firearms command;
- weapons;
- AFOs;
- training;
- armoury;
- less lethal weapons; and
- firearms policy.

The College of Policing's [Code of Practice on Armed Policing and Police use of Less Lethal Weapons](#) (subsequently referred to as 'the Code') and the College's [Armed Policing Authorised Professional Practice](#) set the standards that UK police forces should adhere to and that St Helena Police aspires to. While we have taken account of the APP in assessing the force's armed policing, police forces in British Overseas Territories aren't mandated to comply with the Code of Practice or the armed policing APP.

St Helena Police can't be expected to adhere to all aspects of the Code or the armed policing APP. The highest capability and capacity that the force could realistically achieve would still be sub-optimal when compared with a police force in the UK.

Because St Helena Police is remote, it must be more operationally self-sufficient than other forces that we generally inspect and which can obtain immediate armed support if needed. The force must have effective armed contingencies in place to manage the immediate response to any emerging threats and risks.

Some of the force's armed policing structures and practices work well. Armed officers are professional and mostly make the best of the situation in which they operate. However, we did identify several areas for improvement. Our recommendations to improve these situations fit St Helena's operating environment. As a result, on occasion, they aren't in line with the armed policing APP.

Armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment

According to the Code of Practice, chief officers in the UK must assess the armed policing-related threat and risks to their jurisdiction, and assess their force's capability and capacity to respond effectively to these risks. They should use the resulting armed policing strategic threat and risk assessment (APSTRA) to determine:

- the numbers and ranks of officers to be trained to command incidents involving firearms;
- what types of firearms the force needs; and
- the numbers of officers in their forces who need to be trained in the use of firearms and in providing tactical advice on the use of firearms. ([Code of Practice on Armed Policing and Police use of Less Lethal Weapons](#), College of Policing, 2020, page 13.)

St Helena Police has written an APSTRA that follows the format of the current College of Policing guidance.

The assessment highlights five armed policing-related threats and risks:

1. The limited resources on the island and its isolation presents a risk that the force may not be able to maintain a viable firearms capability

Likelihood	Impact	Overall risk
Medium	High	Medium

2. Attack on the airport or hijack

Likelihood	Impact	Overall risk
Very Low	High	Low

3. High level of firearms ownership

Likelihood	Impact	Overall risk
Low	Medium	Low

4. Criminal use of firearms/edged weapons

Likelihood	Impact	Overall risk
Medium	Medium	Low

5. Firearms on visiting yachts

Likelihood	Impact	Overall risk
Unknown	Medium	Low

We agree with most of this analysis. But, in our view, it underplays the risk associated with high firearms ownership among the public. There are 224 firearms certificate holders among St Helena's 4,000 population, who hold a total of 349 firearms. Also, the force holds 169 firearms in the police armoury for safe keeping.

The availability of firearms, combined with instances of serious violence involving alcohol, poses a significant risk. We believe that this is St Helena's most significant armed policing-related threat and that the force should focus its armed policing capability and capacity to counter this threat.

St Helena Police should be realistic about the level of armed policing it can develop to address the threat of a firearms attack on the airport or a hijack. Although not impossible, there is a very low likelihood that such events will happen at St Helena Airport.

In 2016, the force transformed from an unarmed to an armed service. It did this to comply with the terms of the airport licence. We believe that its current capabilities meet this requirement. While the force's APSTRA identified a need to "develop tactics for aircraft entry based on the UK modules (not CTSFO)", we disagree. These are very advanced tactics. Normally, they are only conducted by very highly trained specialist firearms officers. It is unrealistic to expect that a force the size of St Helena Police, with its limited opportunities for training and exercising, could develop and maintain such capabilities.

Recommendation 7

By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should revise its APSTRA, making a new assessment of the capacity and capability to counter the threat of high public ownership of firearms. The requirement to develop tactics for aircraft entry should be removed.

Firearms command

St Helena Police doesn't have an effective armed policing command structure.

[The armed policing APP sets out the three levels of firearms command](#) used by UK forces:

- **Strategic firearms commander (SFC):** determines the strategic objectives and sets any tactical parameters. Retains strategic oversight and overall command and responsibility.
- **Tactical firearms commander (TFC):** develops, commands and co-ordinates the overall tactical response in accordance with strategic objectives.

- **Operational firearms commander(s) (OFC):** commands a group of officers carrying out functional or territorial responsibilities related to a tactical plan.

More detailed role profiles are outlined in Annex C.

This is an element of the armed policing APP that, because of its size, the force cannot comply with. In its *Armed Policing Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment 2019/20* (St Helena Police, 2019, unpublished, official-sensitive), the force recognises that it “doesn’t have sufficient resilience to maintain the required command resilience” and:

the limited resources on the island including firearms exposure, staffing levels and training, will by necessity result in a hybrid version of the strategic, tactical and operational levels to deliver armed policing on St Helena.

Consequently, at strategic level, the force’s senior officers “share the responsibility of being available or on call to fulfil this function” rather than having a designated SFC.

The APSTRA outlines that at tactical level the force has:

sufficient resilience within the force to maintain required command resilience, assuming all qualified commander retain their competency. This will only be possible with a considerable investment in their development and training ... It’s recommended that existing TFCs are re-accredited, and proper records are retained to evidence competence in this role, and make sure that TFCs are able to perform to the required standard.

At operational level, the force’s one qualified OFC left the force in March 2020. This leaves the force without anyone who is trained to perform the role. The APSTRA stated that “plans are in place to commence training local officers as OFCs from October 2020”.

These gaps in command could have serious consequences. If a risk arises that requires the deployment of firearms officers, the force has limited TFC and OFC capability. This makes it unlikely that an effective command structure could be implemented. The force is aware that the current structure is untenable.

The force is considering flattening the command structure, according to the likely availability of officers to attend any armed incident. The force’s chief inspector (operational support) is an experienced qualified TFC. He has the requisite skills and experience to give the necessary strategic and tactical direction and authorisation. If the force follows this approach, we suggest that it:

- gives him the opportunity to keep his accreditation;
- designates him as the senior firearms lead; and
- combines the SFC and TFC roles and gives these responsibilities to the chief inspector (operational support).

As a UK national, the force’s chief inspector (operational support) will inevitably travel from St Helena on occasion. Therefore, the force should identify another officer to provide cover. The force should, if possible, train this person to TFC level. Because the chief inspector (operational support) is on a short-term TC contract, the

force must develop succession plans. It should also include accredited firearms command in the role profile for at least one SLT post in future recruitment campaigns.

The force doesn't have many deployable AFOs. Even if it can train officers to the OFC, it will be virtually impossible to guarantee command structure on the scene. It follows, then, that command is only likely to be exercised at the higher level remotely.

Weapons

St Helena Police doesn't need the range of weapon systems that it currently keeps. At the time of our inspection, the force operated three weapon systems:

- Heckler & Koch G36 5.56 carbine;
- Heckler & Koch MP5 9mm carbine; and
- Glock 9mm pistol.

The G36 is surplus to the force's requirements. The MP5 and the Glock would be enough for the firearms operations that the force envisages. Furthermore, the risk of over-penetration of a round from a G36 would tend to rule out its use. If the force were to reduce its weapons systems, this would also bring efficiencies through less maintenance and ammunition purchase, and fewer training costs.

Area for improvement 21

St Helena Police's superfluous weapons system is an area for improvement. The force should dispose of its G36 stock.

Authorised firearms officers

St Helena Police faces a series of problems in developing and maintaining its AFO capability.

The force has very few trained AFOs. Only six police officers and one immigration officer (sworn as a special constable) are qualified to use a carbine and pistol. In late 2020, the force plans to run an initial training course to maintain numbers of firearms officers (*Armed Policing Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment 2019/20*, St Helena Police, 2019, unpublished, official-sensitive).

However, funding for continued training and maintaining of a firearms officer might not continue beyond 2019/20. This would lead to an erosion of the firearms capability, including supporting a firearms response to the airport. Also, firearms training will become more expensive: the force's chief firearms instructor was due to leave in early 2020. As a result, the force will need to source further training from the UK.

Streamlining the command structure, as suggested earlier, would generate some savings: it would mean that the force wouldn't have to procure OFC training. However, it is essential that the force secures funding for firearms training beyond 2020.

Indemnity and compensation for authorised firearms officers

When police officers attend a firearms incident, there are inherent risks: their actions may lead to the injury or death of another person, and the officer may be injured or killed in the line of duty. So it is essential that officers receive appropriate legal protection, and have financial support, in the event of tragic circumstances.

St Helena Police is aware that there might not be indemnity cover in place to support firearms officers and commanders, should they become involved in an armed confrontation that results in the discharge of a police firearm. The force's senior managers have asked St Helena Government officials whether such indemnity cover is in place. Officials haven't been able to give a definitive answer.

The force has also highlighted that the level of life insurance coverage for AFOs is too low. The force and the government have made efforts to increase life insurance cover from its current maximum of £8,000. These efforts haven't yet been successful.

These issues worry officers. At least two AFOs have declared that they won't deploy with firearms until these issues are resolved. This significantly reduces the force's small AFO cohort, and the force's ability to conduct firearms operations.

Recommendation 8

By 31 December 2020, the St Helena Government should have resolved the issue of the indemnity and life assurance for firearm officers.

Remuneration

St Helena's AFOs are also concerned about inconsistent pay and conditions. These concerns could lead to officers resigning their AFO status. They could also deter officers from volunteering to become AFOs. The force has paid some AFOs a bonus on qualifying for the role, while others receive a monthly increment to their salaries. Many AFOs perceive this as being unfair. In response, senior managers told us they are reviewing pay and increments.

The force should consider developing an on-call allowance. This could help to make sure that there is appropriate cover from a relatively small number of qualified officers.

Maintaining operational competency

St Helena Police can't give AFOs much continuation training.

Unlike UK forces, there is no permanent carriage of firearms on St Helena. This means that the force's AFOs only deploy with weapons occasionally. Without regular deployments, officers inevitably become deskilled. Therefore, there is an increased onus on the force to give training, to make sure that AFOs retain their operational competence.

The force's location, budgetary constraints and lack of a qualified firearms instructor all work against its ability to run such training courses. The force only needs AFOs to requalify annually. But even this requirement will pose problems for the force.

If the force switched to only maintaining two weapons systems, the training burden would be reduced. However, this wouldn't solve the problem completely.

The force could try to recruit a qualified firearms trainer. This could form part of the next TC training sergeant's role. However, it would be extremely difficult to recruit someone with both the National Firearms Instructor qualification as well as the breadth of knowledge for the wider training. The force could create a new TC training sergeant role. But this would need additional funding or, more likely, it would have to be in place of other TC posts. Given these difficulties, the force should consider:

- regularly bringing in suitably qualified trainers to help maintain AFOs' skills;
- using the skilled officers in its workforce (a qualified range conducting officer and UK firearms officers) to give a level of professional supervision and guidance;
- dry weapon handling opportunities for its AFOs; and
- arranging for AFOs to pay more frequent visits to the firing range – between formal qualification shoots – to help them stay familiar with the weapon systems.

The force could also reduce AFOs' and commanders' 'skill fade' by carrying out more operational firearms deployments. The force should consider routinely deploying firearms officers to St Helena Airport when flights are scheduled. As well as helping to maintain AFOs' skills, this would give commanders the opportunity to plan and deliver operations. It would also help the public to accept the need for police officers to carry firearms in certain circumstances.

Training facility

St Helena Police has a 50-metre training range in a remote location. Police officers took the lead in constructing the range, which involved levelling the area and constructing the targets. The construction of the range is a good example of where the force has made best use of its staff, and the land available, to develop effective facilities.

When the range is in use, the force maintains safety by positioning flags on approaches and using officers to keep lookout. The force also makes sure that St Helena's radio station broadcasts warnings when the range is being used. But the force needs to consider how it would deliver first aid if there was an accident, and how any casualty would be transported to hospital.

The force's range wouldn't meet the UK standards. But, in our view, the facility is adequate given the island's geography, remoteness and limited resources.

Armoury

St Helena Police's armoury is well-maintained, although there is a problem with its security arrangements.

The [APP sets out the requirements for police armouries](#):

Chief officers must ensure that there are secure armoury facilities for storing firearms and munitions held for operational and training purposes. The system of accounting for weapons and ammunition (including Taser) must provide an audit trail for the movement of weapons, and of the issue and use of ammunition.

The force appropriately stores police weapons separate from seized and stored weapons. It stores all weapons and ammunition appropriately and keeps detailed records.

The armoury is behind multiple locked doors. Generally, it has good physical security. However, the force needs to improve key security. There are two sets of keys to the armoury. The armourer has one, either on his person or at his home, while the other is stored securely at police headquarters and is accessible by the chief inspector.

Recommendation 9

With immediate effect, the chief of St Helena Police should address the identified key security issue.

Less lethal weapons

St Helena's chief of police has given operational officers authority to routinely carry [conducted energy devices](#) (*Armed Policing Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment 2019/20*, St Helena Police, 2019, unpublished, official-sensitive). This authority came after the attempted murder of two police officers (later prosecuted as grievous bodily harm) who did not have access to such devices. According to the force's APSTRA, officers' routine carriage of conducted energy devices reduces the threat of criminal use of firearms or edged weapons, such as knives, from high to low.

The chief of police clearly set out his rationale for granting this authority in a well-reasoned and structured policy. The force also held public meetings to discuss this issue after the authority was signed.

The decision to arm officers with conducted energy devices proved unpopular with some councillors and members of the public, who were concerned that the decision was disproportionate.

The Governor's Office, in consultation with the chief of police, wrote to agree an accepted approach to address these concerns. This requires officers to assess risk before carrying conducted energy devices, and to store the devices in lock boxes in vehicles in lower threat situations.

This contradicts the chief of police's operational policy decision to grant the authority to carry conducted energy devices, which addressed the threat that the force identified. Requiring officers to accurately predict risk, or use lock boxes, is impractical. And it runs the risk that a conducted energy device won't be available when it is needed.

Generally, the public's initial concerns about this issue have lessened. Rather than placing restrictions on carriage in place, the force should take other steps to further reassure councillors and the public. These steps include:

- reintroducing body-worn cameras and mandating their operation before any use of conducted energy devices;
- formalising the process for senior management review of data about conducted energy devices; and
- discussing the matter further with those councillors who are opposed to the police carrying conducted energy devices, and sending them data about their use, as appropriate.

Recommendation 10

With immediate effect, St Helena Police officers should comply with the chief of police's operational policy decision, outlined in his standing authority for the use of conducted energy devices. The force should also review the use of such devices and share data with interested parties.

Firearms policy

The force seeks to meet College of Policing standards, but this is impossible. It must develop its own pragmatic solutions that fit its operational context. It is essential that the force documents the risks involved in deviating from the standards, and the action it has taken to mitigate such risks. The St Helena Government should acknowledge these risks in the context of a need to provide armed policing.

At the time of our inspection, the force's armed policing policies and procedures hadn't been signed off. It should develop these in line with its structure and practice.

Recommendation 11

By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police should amend policies and procedures to reflect changes that the force makes to structures and practices recommended in this report. The chief of police should document any deviation from authorised professional practice. And the St Helena Government should acknowledge the associated risks.

Custody

In this chapter, we cover:

- custody facilities at HMP Jamestown;
- leadership, accountability and partnerships;
- police actions prior to taking detainees to custody;
- procedures in the custody suite;
- treatment of detainees while held in the custody cell; and
- release and transfer from custody.

When the police arrest a person, they must take them to a secure custody facility and detain them safely, in dignified conditions, until their appearance in court or any immediate investigation is completed.

The [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#), [Codes of Practice](#) and the [College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice – Detention and Custody](#) set the standards that UK police forces should adhere to, and to which St Helena Police aspires. The provisions of the 1984 Act were enshrined in St Helena law in the [Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance 2003](#) and its associated Codes of Practice.

Her Majesty's Prison Jamestown

The physical condition of St Helena Police Service's custody facilities is unacceptable and a cause of serious concern.

St Helena doesn't have a dedicated custody suite and custody facilities are located within Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Jamestown (the island's only prison). Built in 1827, HMP Jamestown was first condemned in 1850. It has been repeatedly condemned since then.

Since 2009, the Overseas Territories Prison Advisor (OTPA) has visited HMP Jamestown four times and written five reports. These reports called for the prison to be closed as soon as possible, and an alternative location used. The reports also recommended that many improvements were needed if the prison was to continue to be used ([Conditions of Detention at HMP Jamestown 2018: The Equality and Human Rights Commission Inquiry Report](#), The Equality and Human Rights Commission St Helena, 2018, page 32).

At page seven of its [report of its 2018 inquiry into conditions of detention at HMP Jamestown](#), the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) St Helena found that:

- many aspects of the prison building failed to meet the standards set by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Prisons;
- the St Helena Government was failing in its positive obligation to protect prisoners' and detainees' right to life (under Clause 6 of [The Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha](#), Article 2 of the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) and Article 6 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)); and
- issues that would engage other rights of prisoners (under the instruments listed above and the [United Nations Convention Against Torture](#), the [International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)).

The inquiry recommended that the current prison "... be replaced with a new, fit for purpose facility which meets international human rights standards and fire safety standards. The St Helena Government should secure adequate funding without delay." ([Conditions of Detention at HMP Jamestown 2018: The Equality and Human Rights Commission Inquiry Report](#), page 19.) It listed a lengthy series of findings that needed to be rectified in the interim. They included the following:

- The danger of fire was a serious risk to life.
- The inadequate segregation of female and male prisoners and detainees infringed the right to dignity and humane treatment.
- The danger of heat and humidity in the cells infringed the right to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.
- The condition of the police cells was unacceptable, and their location within the prison equally so.
- The toilets in the police cells were unhygienic and inadequately screened from both the rest of the cell and the outside areas. This infringed the right to be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.
- The lack of opportunities for prisoners to exercise was a risk to their health and mental wellbeing.

We didn't inspect the prison building against the OPA and the EHRC recommendations, or assess St Helena's progress in meeting them. These matters fall outside our terms of reference. However, by visiting the prison, we understand why it has been repeatedly condemned. The building's limitations make it a wholly unacceptable place to detain people. It is also clear that making the prison compliant with human rights standards would be very difficult and expensive.

Detainees, then, are held in a prison that has been condemned. But they shouldn't be held in a prison at all. As the OPA and the EHRC St Helena prison report both highlight, detaining persons at the prison contravenes Clause 11 of The Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Police Directorate's senior management team and the prison service are acutely aware that the prison isn't fit for purpose. They have worked hard to make

improvements to the facility, and to secure funding for a new prison and a separate custody facility from the St Helena planning board. However, the new custody facility isn't due to be operational until early 2021. Until then, people who are arrested by St Helena Police will continue to be held at HMP Jamestown.

In our inspections of English and Welsh forces' custody facilities and procedures, we judge them against [HMICFRS and HM Inspectorate of Prisons' Expectations for Police Custody](#).

This chapter will assess St Helena's custody provisions against the five core expectations that we use in those inspections:

1. Leadership, accountability and partnerships
2. Pre-custody: first point of contact
3. In the custody suite: booking in, individual needs and legal rights
4. In the custody cell: safeguarding and healthcare
5. Release and transfer from custody.

Leadership, accountability and partnerships

The force's SLT recognise the need to improve custody provision. And they are personally involved in leading the necessary change. The chief chairs the strategic custody user group. This group is attended by representatives from the St Helena Government's Health Directorate and Children & Adults Social Care Directorate, HMP Jamestown and the probation team.

The user group assesses progress on the project to build a new prison and custody suite. It has a wide remit, which includes:

- addressing current custody health and safety issues, such as cleaning of cells and constant observations of vulnerable detainees; and
- considering additional training for police officers, such as the need to arrest, and update inputs for custody officers.

User group meetings aren't held often, but they are useful in bringing together appropriate interested parties. And they focus on priority issues.

Vulnerable detainees

The Police Directorate has clear and appropriate guidance for the detention of children. It stipulates that officers should only arrest children as a last resort. And, if arrested, juveniles must be separated from all other prisoners and other persons who aren't involved in their direct care or case. (*Guidance on Care of Juvenile Prisoners within HMP Jamestown*, St Helena Police Directorate, 2014, unpublished.)

The guidance acknowledges that officers must respect children's status, and must give them access to appropriate support. This includes social services, legal advisors, healthcare and appropriate adult support. Recently, the force trained all custody officers. They were aware of the guidance. We were told that officers only place children in a cell when necessary, and the force seeks alternative options to overnight detention.

Wellbeing

Police custody officers use a health assessment tool to assess risk to new detainees. And they use a body-mapping tool to record injuries. These tools are effective.

Usually, custody officers take to hospital detainees who arrive at the custody suite injured or intoxicated. However, the force doesn't have a policy that states this.

The force also lacks protocols and procedures that explain how detainees who have mental health conditions should be looked after. However, this is in development and is subject to discussion at the strategic custody user group.

The force doesn't have an overarching policy for the whole custody process. While custody officers understood parts of the legislation and their basic responsibilities, their practice differed. By speaking to all the force's custody officers and reviewing custody files, we uncovered many inconsistent practices. Examples include some custody officers not knowing that female detainees should be offered the opportunity to speak with a female officer, and not understanding the relevant time when detention starts.

The lack of clear custody policies and procedures is a cause for concern.

Recommendation 12

By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must publish an overarching policy for the whole custody process so that consistency of practice and improvements in safety and treatment can be achieved.

Pre-custody: first point of contact

The force has a strong focus on diverting children away from custody and entering the criminal justice system. Officers regularly use alternatives to arrest, such as voluntary interviews, community resolutions and restorative justice options. Officers said that they only took children into custody as a last resort, and where they could robustly demonstrate to the custody officer that arrest was necessary. During our inspection, we confirmed that it had been some months since a child was brought into custody, and in that case, the child wasn't in custody for long.

People who showed signs of having mental health conditions, and who had committed an offence for which they needed to be arrested, were taken into custody. Officers said that detainees received good support from the mental health professionals who were called in by custody officers. They also said that any health needs were addressed (often in hospital) before any action was taken in relation to the offence.

Invariably, the custody officer is the patrol sergeant who is responsible for the team of uniform officers on duty at the time of an arrest. Where possible, arrests (and multiple arrests) are planned for, so that additional officers can be available to help.

In the custody suite: booking in, individual needs and legal rights

During our inspection fieldwork, the police didn't make any arrests. Therefore, we couldn't see how officers booked in and risk assessed detainees. However, through interviews with officers, and our review of custody records, we could assess how detainees are treated.

The overall quality of records could be improved. Handwriting isn't always legible. And when mistakes are made and crossed out, they aren't always initialled by the person amending the record.

We visited the custody office, which is a cell in the basement of the prison. It contains a desk, chairs and cupboards, but no telephone or computer. It is rare for more than one arrest to be made at a time, so detainees have privacy when the custody officer is booking them in. Should others be arrested, they are told to wait at the top of the basement stairs. Officers don't take pregnant women, people with disabilities or elderly detainees to the custody office. Instead, they take them to the police station to be booked in. This is a suitable solution.

Officers deal with detainees promptly. There are very few delays either in transporting people to the prison or in the booking-in process. Very few detainees are handcuffed on arrest (this only happened in 6 of the 20 files we reviewed). This is good. However, officers don't record the time they remove handcuffs from compliant detainees. Not all custody officers record whether they checked a detainee's wrists for any injury.

There is no recorded use of force or restraint in the custody suite, and most detainees are recorded as being calm and compliant.

Area for improvement 22

St Helena Police's custody records are an area for improvement. The force should improve the monitoring of records, to make sure that all relevant information, including details pertaining to the use of force, are recorded.

Records showed that officers routinely explain to detainees their rights and entitlements. Printed copies of these, and the code of practice, are available on request. However, this is insufficient, because the code of practice stipulates that the police must give all detainees a copy of their rights and entitlements.

However, detainees can only exercise their rights to make a telephone call (to solicitors, family or friends) from the prison guards' desk. This places detainees at risk: they have to walk past convicted prisoners to access the telephone. Also, this arrangement isn't dignified because prison guards can overhear conversations.

Furthermore, in the cases that we reviewed, three of the detainees were female. None were offered the opportunity to speak with a female officer. We did find good practice when two detainees had difficulties in communicating. One was partially deaf: he was told to let officers know if he couldn't hear or understand what they were saying. They would then repeat themselves. The other detainee was unable to

hear or speak. Officers paid very good attention to meeting this detainee's needs: the custody officer tried to get his sister to come and communicate with him. When she wasn't available, the officer tried to find a speech and language therapist to help. Officers also use visual aids to enable the detainee to understand his bail conditions.

Not all practices meet the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance, or its codes of practice. For example, there is some confusion in relation to the relevant time someone can be kept in custody under the ordinance. In at least five cases that we reviewed, this is recorded as 24 hours after the time of arrest when it should be 24 hours after the time of arrival at the custody suite. Also, officers don't always tell foreign national detainees about their right to communicate with their high commission, consulate or embassy.

There were many examples of when the force's custody reviews weren't compliant with the ordinance:

- In too many cases, the officer completing the review doesn't record their rank.
- Reviews don't clearly show whether the detainee is spoken to in person or given the opportunity to make representations.
- Detainees aren't reminded of their right to free legal advice before reviews are conducted.
- In one case, the reviewing officer conducted their review while the detainee was asleep and didn't tell them about it when they woke.
- Another case involved a detainee who the force arrested, released on bail and then re-arrested when new evidence appeared. Rather than continuing the previous custody record, the custody officer wrongly started a new custody record and 'reset' the custody clock.
- In a third case, the force charged the detainee after he had been in custody for more than 24 hours. It didn't conduct the requisite third review of detention. And the custody record doesn't mention that a superintendent authorised detention to be extended beyond 24 hours.

In conclusion, the force is poor at recording custody reviews of detention.

Many entries only state "further detention authorised" with no clear recording of:

- the rank of the officer completing the review;
- whether or not the officer has spoken to the detainee and reminded them of their rights and entitlements; and
- whether or not the officer has allowed the detainee the opportunity to make any representations.

This is a cause for concern.

Recommendation 13

By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must make sure that the force's custody officers act in compliance with all aspects of the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance and its codes of practice. This involves:

- providing all custody officers with appropriate training and guidance about their obligations under the ordinance and codes of practice; and
- instigating regular audits of custody records to assess compliance.

The overall approach to identifying risk is good. Observation levels are generally set appropriately. Officers identify existing health conditions and ask family members for appropriate medicine.

But officers didn't take appropriate action to address risk in all the cases that we examined. In two cases, detainees who had obvious head injuries were booked into custody, rather than being sent to hospital immediately. Although officers subsequently took both to hospital, there was an unnecessary delay.

In two of the cases, when detainees were under the influence of either alcohol or drugs, officers didn't ask the CPN to assess their fitness to be interviewed. The codes of practice require this.

Officers routinely remove detained persons' cords, laces and belts, even when no risk has been identified. In one case, a detainee had his glasses removed. This was disproportionate to the risk he posed. Officers only remove detainees' clothing for forensic examination. When they do so, they give detainees replacement clothes. Finally, detainees only have to remove their footwear if a risk exists or for forensic examination.

In the custody cell: safeguarding and healthcare

Detainees aren't held in a safe or clean environment. And detainees' safety is at risk at many points during custody. The steps down to the custody office are steep: the risk of falling is high. The custody office is a cell with limited space and moveable furniture. The route from the office to the custody cells is through the prison gym.

The custody cells are separate from, but adjacent to, convicted prisoner accommodation. This means that convicted prisoners can see and talk to detainees. And detainees walk past their cells when officers escort them to other parts of the prison. This is unacceptable – particularly for female detainees, and for detainees who are vulnerable. This process also poses a significant risk of harm: the custody cells have open grill bars that are wide enough for prisoners to pass items to detainees.

Officers we spoke to understand their obligations to keep detainees, particularly vulnerable children and adults, safe. They used constant observations when necessary. However, the construction of the building has created numerous ligature points. And the close proximity of detainees and convicted prisoners doesn't assure good order.

Recommendation 14

By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must make sure that existing practices to keep detainees safe are constantly monitored and revised in light of adverse incidents and accidents until the new custody facility is operational.

The force provides for detainees' healthcare needs. Generally, officers recorded CPN referrals accurately. There were few delays, and CPNs address detainees' physical, mental and substance use needs in one referral. CPNs also detailed their assessments, and any medication they gave to the detained person, on the custody records.

Those detainees who needed an appropriate adult got to see one. Officers paid good attention to meeting diverse needs. Officers can arrange for an appropriate adult to attend without delay. When the appropriate adult raised any concerns, the force bailed detainees to return at a more appropriate time. This is good practice.

The force pays good attention to detainee care. Generally, it expedites cases quickly. As a result, detainees don't spend much time in custody. Again, this is good practice.

Officers supply those who stay in custody with basic food and drinks at regular intervals. Detainees who are held overnight have access to washing facilities or showers. At least two of the detainees whose cases we reviewed were given the opportunity to smoke or vape.

Release and transfer from custody

There is no specific checklist for staff to complete when they release a detainee, to make sure that all risks have been mitigated. However, many custody officers do note how the detainee is feeling upon their release. The CPN or appropriate organisations follow up safety and wellbeing. This is good.

Annex A – Recommendations

1. By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should implement a robust crime and incident record management system.
2. By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should make sure that all control room operators have received appropriate THRIVE training.
3. By 1 August 2022, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's British Overseas Territories police advisor should amend OTCRIS to automatically identify vulnerable victims.
4. By 1 August 2022, the chief of St Helena Police should develop the necessary policies and procedures (drawing on the College of Policing's authorised professional practice and UK police force policy, as appropriate), and apply for funding for a short-term technical assistance policy officer.
5. By 1 August 2021, the St Helena Government should develop a victim support scheme.
6. By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police should develop a community policing strategy.
7. By 1 August 2021, the chief of St Helena Police should revise its APSTRA, making a new assessment of the capacity and capability to counter the threat of high public ownership of firearms. The requirement to develop tactics for aircraft entry should be removed.
8. By 31 December 2020, the St Helena Government should have resolved the issue of the indemnity and life assurance for firearm officers.
9. With immediate effect, the chief of St Helena Police should address the identified key security issue.
10. With immediate effect, St Helena Police officers should comply with the chief of police's operational policy decision, outlined in his standing authority for the use of conducted energy devices. The force should also review the use of such devices and share data with interested parties.
11. By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police should amend policies and procedures to reflect changes the force makes to structures and practices recommended in this report. The chief of police should document any deviation from authorised professional practice. And the St Helena Government should acknowledge the associated risks.
12. By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must publish an overarching policy for the whole custody process so that consistency of practice and improvements in safety and treatment can be achieved.

13. By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must make sure that the force's custody officers act in compliance with all aspects of the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance and its codes of practice. This involves:
- providing all custody officers with appropriate training and guidance about their obligations under the ordinance and codes of practice; and
 - instigating regular audits of custody records to assess compliance.
14. By 31 December 2020, the chief of St Helena Police must make sure that existing practices to keep detainees safe are constantly monitored and revised in light of adverse incidents and accidents until the new custody facility is operational.

Annex B – Areas for improvement

1. St Helenian law does not reflect developments in UK legislation. This is an area for improvement. The St Helena Government should review St. Helenian criminal law and the police and criminal evidence ordinance to reflect developments in the UK.
2. St Helena Police's staffing of the control room is an area for improvement. The force should map demand against its resources and staff the control room accordingly.
3. St Helena Police's recording of incidents is an area for improvement. The force should liaise with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's British Overseas Territories police advisor to gain access to question sets that can be replicated within its information technology system.
4. St Helena Police's understanding of how often officers attend incidents within target times is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that this forms part of its performance regime.
5. St Helena Police's initial response to crimes is an area for improvement. The force should implement a policy describing the incidents that should receive an immediate criminal investigation department response.
6. St Helena Police's crime allocation is an area for improvement. The force should implement a policy to allocate all high-risk cases to criminal investigation department officers.
7. St Helena Police's production of investigation plans is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that the criminal investigation department provides guidance and monitoring of plans.
8. The lack of formalised links between British Overseas Territories' police forces and designated UK forces or units is an area for improvement. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office should explore the potential for developing such links to improve British Overseas Territories' police forces' access to support.
9. St Helena Police's approach to disclosure is inconsistent and, therefore, an area for improvement. The force should produce criminal justice and disclosure policies and procedures.
10. St Helena Police's ability to conduct analysis is an area for improvement. The force should liaise with the National Police Chiefs' Council to obtain analytical services.
11. St Helena Police's lack of victim care policies and procedures is an area for improvement. The force should produce victim care policies and procedures.
12. St Helena Police's victim contact is an area for improvement. The force should make sure that victim contact contracts are completed, and that victim contact is conducted and recorded.

13. St Helena Police's use of victim personal statements is an area for improvement. The force should create procedures on the use of victim personal statements and improve monitoring of their use.
14. St Helena Police's understanding of victim satisfaction is an area for improvement. The force should develop victim surveys that evaluate victims' experiences throughout the life cycle of an investigation.
15. St Helena Police's callback procedure is an area for improvement. The force should improve the consistency of how callback data is recorded.
16. St Helena Police's officers' understanding of vulnerability is an area for improvement. The force should give guidance and raise awareness.
17. St Helena Police's procedures to risk assess vulnerability is an area for improvement. The force should develop vulnerability risk assessment for non-DASH cases and monitor their use.
18. St Helena Police's daily management meeting (DMM) is an area for improvement. The force should hold DMMs at weekends.
19. St Helena Police's use of surgeries is an area for improvement. The force should map appropriate times, networks and locations where the public is more likely to engage with the police. It should also structure surgeries to make them more effective.
20. St Helena Police's communication about complaints is an area for improvement. The force should publish its complaints procedures, statistics and outcomes online.
21. St Helena Police's superfluous weapons system is an area for improvement. The force should dispose of G36 stock.
22. St Helena Police's custody records are an area for improvement. The force should improve the monitoring of records, to make sure that all relevant information, including details pertaining to the use of force, are recorded.

Annex C – Firearms commander roles

Strategic firearms commander

This role:

- has overall strategic command, with responsibility and accountability for directions given;
- must set, review, communicate and update the strategy based on the threat assessment and the available intelligence;
- should consider consulting a [tactical advisor](#);
- should consider any [tactical parameters](#) to be placed on the police response;
- must ensure that the [strategy](#) for the armed deployment is recorded, including any changes to it, to provide a clear audit trail;
- must authorise the deployment of authorised firearms officers (AFOs), or ratify or rescind the deployment when it has already been approved by the [tactical firearms commander](#) (TFC);
- should ensure that all decisions are recorded, whenever practicable, in order to provide a clear audit trail;
- must ensure that the firearms strategy complies with the wider strategic aims of the overall operation;
- should test the tactical plan against the established strategy, whenever practicable and/or time allows;
- is responsible for overall resourcing in respect of the deployment of AFOs;
- when appropriate, will chair meetings of the [strategic coordinating group](#) when they are held during a multi-agency or multi-discipline response;
- should set [command protocols](#) when appropriate;
- should consider consulting partners, stakeholders and interest groups involved (if any) when determining [strategy](#) (see also [development of strategy](#) [gold]);
- should consider the need for [community impact assessments](#);
- should consider declaring and managing the event as a [critical incident](#);
- should maintain a strategic overview;
- must be able to be contacted by the TFC;
- is responsible for reviewing and ensuring the resilience and effectiveness of the command structure, and the effectiveness of the TFC;

- should consider the appointment of more than one TFC when there are clear demarcations geographically (that is, police boundaries), or in respect of roles, or when the management of AFOs is only one part of the operational police response.

Tactical firearms commander

This role:

- must assess and develop the available information and intelligence, and complete the threat assessment;
- should consult a [tactical advisor](#) as soon as practicable;
- is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the tactical plan in order to achieve the strategic aims, within any tactical parameters set;
- is responsible for ensuring that officers and staff are fully briefed;
- should consider the provision of medical support;
- should be so located as to be able to maintain effective tactical command of the operation;
- should ensure that all decisions are recorded, whenever practicable, in order to provide a clear audit trail;
- provides the pivotal link in the command chain between strategic and operational firearms commanders (OFCs);
- must constantly monitor the need for the continued deployment of AFOs;
- must review and update the tactical plan and ensure that any changes are communicated to the operational firearms commanders and, when appropriate, the strategic firearms commander;
- should consider and, when appropriate, conduct a community impact assessment;
- should consider declaring and managing the event as a [critical incident](#);
- should consider the number, role and function of the OFCs;
- should consider the wider community, public safety and evidential implications of the use of [specialist munitions](#), pyrotechnic devices or incapacitants;
- should ensure that, after all deployed staff are appropriately debriefed, operational and organisational learning take place.

Operational firearms commander

This role:

- must have knowledge and clear understanding of their role and the overall aim of the operation;
- must, whenever practicable, ensure that their staff are appropriately briefed;
- should be located where they are able to maintain effective command of their area of responsibility;
- ensures the implementation of the [TFC](#)'s tactical plan within their territorial or functional area of responsibility;
- updates the TFC, as appropriate, on current developments;

- makes decisions within their agreed level of responsibility, including seeking approval for any variation in agreed tactics within their area of responsibility;
- must ensure clear communication channels exist between themselves, the TFC and those under their command;
- should consider declaring and managing the event as a [critical incident](#);
- should be available to those under their command; however, they should allow them enough independence to carry out their specific role in accordance with the [strategy](#) and tactical plan;
- should ensure that decisions taken are recorded, whenever possible, to provide a clear audit trail.

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