

Quality assurance thematic testing to improve investigations

Identifying good practice and areas for improvement to support investigation standards.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Investigation Leadership, development and learning Productivity
Organisation	South Yorkshire Police
HMICFRS report	Police performance: Getting a grip (PEEL spotlight report)
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Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2021

Key details

Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

Quality investigations are more likely to lead to increased:

- victim satisfaction
- opportunities to bring offenders to justice
- public confidence and trust

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of quality assurance thematic testing (QATT) is to:

- increase victim satisfaction
- improve crime outcomes
- increase in public confidence and trust

Description

South Yorkshire Police have developed from academia, local innovative QATT for crime investigations to improve investigation standards and overall performance. The testing seeks to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

Originally focused on crime investigations linked to the Protecting Vulnerable People Department, testing was expanded to all investigations other than major crime in May 2023. Crimes are randomly selected within set parameters for assessment by operational inspectors and detective inspectors.

Reviews

Following training and continuing professional development (CPD) relevant inspectors are allocated the following number of crimes to be reviewed:

- operational uniform inspectors – 10 per month
- operational detective inspectors – 15 per month

Using Microsoft 365 forms to complete the review, the results are collated and shared. Good practice is also acknowledged. Areas for improvement are identified and improvements are targeted towards the necessary officer. On average a review takes around 25 minutes.

The review covers:

- victim focus
- suspect management
- quality of investigations
- supervisors' reviews

In total, the review covers 60 questions. From the review the inspector then gives an overall grade. From the results of the testing, the force has designed a series of guidance and aide memoires to demonstrate what 'good' looks like. This includes supervisor reviews and investigation plans.

The force conducted a review of the process in October 2023 and made amendments. The ambition is to move to automate performance reports and the use of Power BI dashboards to enable improved red, amber and green (RAG) ratings for key performance indicators (KPIs).

The data from the QATT is presented at the force investigation governance group, which is chaired by an assistant chief constable. Monthly analysis reports are also produced, focusing on different areas of the four pillars, picking out key metrics and highlighting areas of concerns or areas of good practice. These are broken down by district and department and supplied to detective inspectors to provide specific insight and analysis for their area of business.

Overall impact

While there are limited results on the impact of this work, improvements in domestic abuse victim satisfaction and reduced demand in the protecting vulnerable people department have been seen.

In terms of inspectors completing the necessary reviews within the months' time-frame, current data shows a 70% compliance rate.

Learning

- Ensure the technology is right from the start.
- Spend time promoting the importance of the reviews with key stakeholders.
- Do not underestimate the potential cultural barriers.
- Ensure the test balances professional experience with consistency.
- The QATT should be seen as a supportive management tool.
- The insights from the reviews provide a basis to see how certain tactics are working better in improving victim satisfaction and bringing offenders to justice.

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Tags

Victim care Operational policing Leadership development