

Updated CCTV investigators support role

Supporting thorough crime investigations by introducing an updated CCTV investigator job profile.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Criminal justice Investigation Productivity
Organisation	Surrey Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Surrey Police
Region	South East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2009
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

CCTV investigators support the investigations of priority crimes, including high risk investigations. They recover, acquire, view, and process CCTV to ensure that such evidence is secured and preserved in a timely manner to facilitate the investigative process and assist in bringing offenders to justice.

Intended outcome

The purpose of the role is to improve investigative standards in relation to CCTV strategy and retrieval and ensure that key lines of enquiry relating to CCTV evidence are fully explored.

CCTV Investigators assist and support Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP)2 serious and complex investigations (divisionally and to specialist teams such as the major crime team, sexual offence investigation unit, serious and organised crime unit and serious collision investigation in it). CCTV Investigators will also assist with relevant PIP1 investigations, and with enquiries from other forces.

As a result, the terms of reference set for the review were to:

- ensure the role is still relevant to the needs of the business
- ensure each division has the same service level
- ensure the job profile accurately reflects the role requirements and work to be undertaken
- ensure the appropriate equipment is provided
- ensure the appropriate training and support is provided
- ensure that the pay is reflective of the role to be undertaken

Description

The role of CCTV investigator (previously called CCTV reviewer) has been in force since 2009, however the job profile had not been updated since 2011.

Review

Considering advancements in technology and changes in crime types, in April 2023, a review of the role of the CCTV Investigators was commissioned to explore and ensure:

- an effective service to the public
- staff and their roles are valued
- threat, harm, and risk are appropriately prioritised
- performance is effectively monitored and managed
- the work done in the role is an effective use of public funds

This review was conducted in force by a detective inspector, overseen by a superintendent, and consultation was conducted with a variety of stakeholders within the force, including divisional commanders, PIP1 investigative units, PIP2 investigative units, forensic services, designated powers team, digital investigations support unit, ICT, uniform services and human resources.

The review answered each of the terms of reference, concluding that the role is still relevant to the needs of the business, but that the job profile and training for the role required updating to ensure:

- role holders were compliant with the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) Codes of Practice and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Framework for use of video evidence
- role holders were granted designated powers sections 19, 20, 21 and 22 of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and police staff investigator status to effectively undertake their duties
- the service level provided was consistent across all divisions and departments
- the appropriate equipment was provided to the role holders

There are currently three CCTV Investigators in force, aligned to each division basic command unit (BCU). The key tasks completed by the role holders are:

- attending the scenes of crime and premises of victims, witnesses, and suspects to access CCTV systems and download relevant footage in an appropriate format
- reviewing footage to assist the investigating officer in identifying evidence of the offence and further CCTV opportunities
- assisting the case officer with court presentation in relation to CCTV such as producing storyboards
- preparing evidence to be presented at court and attend court if required for continuity and/or to present evidence

As a result of the conclusions of the review, the following were actioned.

- Compliance with the FSR Codes of Practice and the NPCC Framework for use of video evidence. It was identified that the work that the CCTV investigators do predominantly sits at level one of the NPCC Framework for use of video evidence, but they are required to work at level two for more complex downloads, format conversion and clipping and compilation. The force did not provide level two training, and as a result the CCTV Investigators were non-compliant with the FSR codes of practice. The interim position is that the CCTV Investigators declare non-compliance with the code and provide mitigation with every statement and report completed whilst the force forensic services team are ISO accredited and able to train to level 2 of the NPCC Framework.
- Granting designated powers (sections 19, 20, 21 & 22 PACE) and police staff investigator status. Previously the CCTV Investigators did not have any designated powers. Items which they download were 'produced' by the person in control of the CCTV system, even if the whole of the download has been completed by the CCTV Investigator. All CCTV Investigators have now been granted designated powers for sections 19, 20, 21 & 22 PACE (s19 general power of seizure, s20 extension of powers of seizure to computerised information, s21 access and copying, s22 retention). This was achieved easily with a two hour training input by their detective sergeant. Additionally CCTV Investigators were granted police staff investigator status which allows them to use the designated powers outside of the Surrey Police area.
- The service level provided was not consistent across all divisions and departments. The review identified that the service level had not been consistent across divisions and departments. As a result, a new consistent line management process was put in place – all CCTV investigators are now line managed by a detective sergeant (DS) in criminal investigation department (CID). A new consistent tasking and prioritisation process was introduced, ensuring transparency of all activities tasked to the CCTV Investigators, and a clear method of prioritisation overseen by the duty CID DS to ensure tasks are prioritised based on threat, harm, risk of the investigation and expiry of the CCTV.
- The appropriate equipment was provided to the role holders. CCTV investigators had not been provided with all the equipment required for their role. Following the review, they were supplied with all the kit and equipment recommended within the NPCC CCTV working group publication 'The Recovery and Acquisition of Video Evidence'.

Overall impact

A completely new job profile was written to ensure that it was accurate and relevant to the role being completed taking into consideration the changes in process identified and implemented

following the review, and all the identified changes have been implemented.

The change in the role profile and the changes implemented following the review have resulted in consistency across the role within the force; taskings being appropriately prioritised based on threat, harm, and risk and a more effective service being provided to the public.

The review also served to highlight that CCTV is a crucial component in many investigations therefore it is essential that this is obtained, retained, and shared according to national best-practice standards.

Learning

One learning point from the review process was to ensure that job profiles are reviewed more frequently to ensure that they are current and relevant.

The learning for the role is that, even with the inception of digital processes to allow individuals to upload their own CCTV to police forces, there are still a significant number of CCTV systems within Surrey (both personal/residential and business) which are not digital, for which a CCTV download is necessary.

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Tags

Operational policing