



## STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD

7th July 2015

### DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE UPDATE

#### POSITION TO DATE, NATIONAL PERFORMANCE COMPARISON, FINANCIAL POSITION & GOVERNANCE

#### Purpose of Report

1. This report is to provide an update to the Strategic Police and Crime Board on the progress which has been made regarding the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) within the West Midlands and returning performance back to previous Service Level Agreements levels as part of the agreed action plan.

#### Introduction

2. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is a centralised function funded by the Home Office designed to protect the public from people in certain roles who could reasonably be expected to provide protection and safety. Examples of occupations covered in this way are school teachers, taxi drivers, doctors and foster carers.
3. The DBS unit sits within Information Management and is externally funded and the Legal framework that applies to the DBS is Part 5 Police Act 1997 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

#### The DBS position 2014-2015

4. The force processes its applications in line with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) as agreed by NPCC. DBS expect forces to process these applications within a maximum 60 days of receipt and to complete escalation requests as identified by DBS as a priority.

5. In the period from April 2014 to early March 2015 an extra c.6,700 checks had been sent against what was originally forecast and the force's work in progress (WIP) had risen to over 14,000. An acceptable value for WIP is around two weeks' work or around 4,000 checks. A Gold group was setup to bring the force back into compliance with the service level agreement SLA.
6. As of the 16/6/15 the amount of outstanding applications is 3948. This is a reduction of c.9,000 applications since the formal recovery plan commenced on the 13/4/15 and a reduction of approximately 12,000 applications from the peak of the backlog
7. WMP reviewed its own processes with the support of WMP Performance colleagues and the DBS's Standards & Compliance Unit (SCU) and made a number of improvements to increase throughput by the unit by 29%.
8. In addition a number of overtime routes were identified which allowed WMP non-DBS staff and DBS staff from other forcers to help clear the backlog of aged applications that were attracting the majority of the complaints. The DBS funded this overtime.
9. The force contributed several force duty-time resources at force cost. This accounted for 1282 checks over 293 hours at a cost of c.£4,000. These additional force resources have been stopped now that the WIP is at an acceptable level.
10. DBS also funded the purchase of new computers which has helped to speed up the response times for requests and the department is now using CORVUS instead of FLINTS to search for police information which has provided more stability and efficiency.
11. ICT agreed to avoid any planned downtime in office hours – helping to increase the overall productivity of the Unit. In the future the force must ensure that the department contributes to the development of any new systems in conjunction with Accenture.

### Performance Comparison

12. In comparison with other forces also on recovery plans, please see the below tables.

Thames Valley			
Date	WIP	Over 60 days	Total Aged over 25 days
15/01/2015	11243	5584	8870
12/02/2015	10574	5178	7191
12/03/2015	11373	4421	7539
16/04/2015	11846	4751	8469
14/05/2015	11389	4872	7835
15/06/2015	10796	4274	7282

Dorset			
Date	WIP	Over 60 days	Total Aged over 25 days
15/01/2015	3286	558	2314

12/02/2015	2832	158	1416
12/03/2015	2724	124	1162
16/04/2015	2926	133	1617
14/05/2015	3110	120	1506
15/06/2015	4111	492	2557

Metropolitan			
Date	WIP	Over 60 days	Total Aged over 25 days
15/01/2015	34198	7303	24202
12/02/2015	34342	7895	19963
12/03/2015	38061	3996	22155
16/04/2015	40092	7537	27008
14/05/2015	41482	10202	26337
15/06/2015	44197	12434	29612

WMP			
Date	WIP	Over 60 days	Total aged over 25 days
15/01/2015	16529	6764	12297
12/02/2015	16418	6037	10448
12/03/2015	14809	4385	8992
16/04/2015	12568	2864	7960
14/05/2015	8976	830	4201
15/06/2015	4217	207	892

## The Financial Position

13. The DBS have funded a growth in the original number of permanent staff and increased funding for the unit as follows:
  - a. Original budget for 2014/15 was £1,618,156 for 48.61 FTE posts
  - b. Final costs charged for 2014/15 were £1,549,270 for 55.61 FTE posts
  - c. The unit incurred an underspend for the period it took to recruit
14. The final budget does not show actual costs incurred from additional support from other forces as those charges will appear in the 2015/16 budget.
15. WMP is currently finalising negotiations for the 2015/16 budget however; an assurance has already been given that the 2015/16 budget will be no less than that provided for 2014/15.
16. The budget setting process will then be investigated with a view to moving to a simple cost per check model as followed by the MPS. A review of the National Service Level Agreement is also being undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose and achievable. Particularly of relevance is the timeframe DBS allow for forces to recruit and train additional staff if extra work is indicated which at this present time is unachievable at 90 days.

## **Complaints**

17. The numbers of complaints from applicants, MPs & employers, have all but disappeared as the number of aged cases has reduced and we expect this to cease completely now we are processing the majority of applications in under 10 days.
18. Redress cases are currently being managed by Legal Services and external counsel. Initial talks suggest that redress will not be paid by WMP. Research shows that this is the same approach adopted by other forces with backlogs.

## **Governance**

19. There has been a Gold meeting, Op Tang, running since March 2015 and these have been held on a monthly basis and will continue until all the recently imposed processes have been bedded in and the NPCC are happy that there is no further need for such close governance and monitoring.

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**West Midlands Police lead for Crime, Intelligence, Public Protection and Forensics.**