

Evaluation

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013 Updated 29 August 2019

Written by College of Policing

4 mins read

Police information undergoes evaluation appropriate to the policing purpose for which it was collected and recorded. All police information is evaluated to determine:

- provenance
- accuracy
- continuing relevance to a policing purpose
- what action, if any, should be taken

Evaluation involves searching and making connections with other records. This may require staff to search the different business areas and apply relevant evaluation criteria.

Principles

Evaluation should be proportionate to the nature of the information. For example, [incident records](#) should be evaluated quickly to determine the urgency of response required. A crime-in-action normally requires a faster response than an abandoned vehicle report. A series of reports relating to similar events or situations might, however, require a more in-depth analysis to see if they represent a pattern. For example, several reports of fires being started at particular locations might warrant details being entered onto an information/intelligence report.

When evaluating any information, the following principles apply, regardless of the business area where the information is held.

- The provenance, accuracy and reliability of the information should be established; this includes assessment of the reliability of the source, risk to the source and subject, and risk to the storage and use of the information.
- A risk assessment applies where appropriate.
- Links between different records are identified.

- Information is assessed for its intelligence value.
- A priority assessment can be applied.
- A decision is made on whether to sanitise the police information where the source or content is sensitive. Sanitisation of information occurs when material is removed which explicitly or implicitly identifies a source, or identifying details of a data subject are removed.

For further information, see APP on [intelligence management/intelligence report](#).

Evaluating records

The details of people held in police custody, incident records, crime records and other investigation records are an important source of information that may have an intelligence value. It is essential that the personal details of all detainees are verified to ensure the accuracy of the record. [The Data Protection Act 2018, part 3, chapter 2, s 38](#) enforces the obligation that all information should be accurate and where necessary kept up to date, and any inaccuracies should be rectified without delay.

Evaluating this information can provide details of:

- intelligence value
- victims, witnesses and, if known, offenders
- crime location
- offending methods (modus operandi)
- times of offences

Evaluation may occur automatically but, in some circumstances, the information needs to be recorded onto the intelligence report for input into the intelligence system. Reports need to be evaluated for their accuracy before being assessed for the level of policing response necessary. Incident reports are managed through a priority assessment process which identifies the urgency of the response required.

Many forces have adopted an immediate incident research capability or bureau (IRB). The IRB is responsible for conducting immediate research on the details of incident reports relating to high-risk issues. It does this by examining all other business area records relevant to the report.

The IRB ensures that all officers attending incidents are informed of any risks they are likely to face on attending the location or dealing with the subject of the report.

Action management

This process identifies whether an immediate response is needed, for example, is there a threat to life or significant risk to the public?

Actioning any police information results in one of the following responses.

- Initiating a response – this could include an immediate operational response to the information, a decision to share the record with other partners, or a referral to the tasking and coordination group.
- Generating further research and development – this could include the development of intelligence products.
- Making a decision not to do anything, but to review the information at a future date.
- Deciding to take no action.

For further information, see APP on:

- [**decision making**](#)
- [**intelligence management**](#)

Key roles for the evaluation of information

Managers:

- ensure that the staff responsible for evaluating police information are trained in accordance with the national training and delivery strategy

Supervisors:

- oversee the quality assurance process for accuracy, adequacy, relevance and timeliness
- regularly dip sample records created in their business area to ensure that the intelligence report is being used where necessary
- ensure the proper completion of the [**intelligence report**](#), in line with guidance

Users:

- quality assure the recording of the [**intelligence report**](#) and ensure that the information is linked where relevant

- identify opportunities for analysis of series or linked events
- apply provenance to the information recorded
- apply relevant priority assessment if appropriate
- disseminate information where appropriate

Tags

Information management