

Problem-solving approach to performance management

Supporting the delivery of the force strategy with a framework to assess and manage performance.

First published

10 December 2024

Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Prevention Organisational
Topic	Organisation including workforce
Organisation	Merseyside Police
Contact	Shirley Jones
Email address	shirley.jones@merseyside.police.uk
Region	North West
Partners	Police Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Health services Local authority
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	April 2023

Key details

Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Communities General public Offenders Victims

Aim

The performance framework is intended to drive sustained improved performance for the force, to provide local communities with an improved level of service. Through its application and review of performance at all levels, the deputy chief constable and other senior leaders can identify areas of underperformance and take the remedial actions necessary to correct emerging issues.

The performance framework that underpins delivery of the strategy takes a tiered approach. The force can demonstrate the direction of travel in each of the strategic objectives to ultimately drive performance in each of these areas.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the performance management approach are to:

- improve the force's performance
- optimise the identification of areas that are underperforming
- provide remedial actions to reduce the number of emerging issues
- improve the allocation of resources

Description

The [Force Strategy](#) 2020-2025 set out nine strategic objectives following consideration of national, regional and local issues by chief officers. The strategy is supported by a performance framework, led by the deputy chief constable, which enables the force to measure the success of the delivery.

The force currently uses a tiered approach to performance in crime reduction and detection.

1. Tier one key performance indicators (KPIs) are those that are critical to delivery of public confidence and Threat Harm Risk. These KPIs might include national indicators of performance, for example those in the Strategic Policing Requirements or Beating Crime Plan.
2. Tier two indicators are those that have a large impact on communities and may also be statutory requirements.
3. Tier three indicators are those that are identified as priority or risk areas for the force.

The tiered performance indicators provide a measure of performance for teams throughout the force, enabling the identification of areas where performance is particularly strong, as well as areas where focus is required to achieve improvements. KPIs are measure on a place-based level, as well as on a force-level. Targets are considered and set on an annual basis; the process used for setting and reviewing KPI targets is complex, using predictive analytics on crime volume as well as previous performance as indicators for the coming year.

Force management statement

The force management statement (FMS) is one of several considerations when identifying force organisational risks. Each year, chief officers consider the emerging themes from within the FMS and risks identified through other sources. Mitigating actions taken to address identified risks are identified in the FMS and become commitments for delivery during the following financial year and beyond in some cases. Where the mitigating action incurs financial expenditure, this is also referenced in the FMS. Delivery of the commitments collectively support improved performance.

Twice a year, the force formally reviews its organisational and MoRiLE risk registers. Potential risks are identified by the following methods:

- FMS
- corporate meetings
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspections

Aside from this formal process, risks are escalated for consideration of inclusion in the force organisational risk register.

Governance

Governance arrangements are in place to enable the measurement and monitoring of performance at every level throughout the force. Central to performance are the area performance meetings, where performance is considered against key indicators at a local level. Key risks and considerations are identified and feed through to strand performance meetings, where colleagues in similar roles can discuss performance relating to their area and how they might use the command team corridor to drive improvements.

Key risks from both are then escalated to strategic performance meeting, with the purpose of providing a monthly review of performance in all areas of the force. Senior leaders then discuss key issues affecting performance and measures being taken to drive improvements. strategic planning process

Risk management

The FMS and risk management processes are integrated into the force's strategic planning process. At an early stage in the budget setting process, chief officers consider the emerging findings from the FMS, which includes risks from within the respective organisational and the management of risk in law enforcement (MoRiLE) risk registers. This informs decision making for the following financial year the allocation of resources, commission of organisational reviews and investment in technology to mitigate identified risks, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Not all decisions taken by chief officers result in investment; in some cases, chief officers will accept the level of risk identified. Decisions taken as a result of this process are captured in the FMS. Investment decisions are also reflected in the budget and revised medium term financial strategy. This ensures alignment between the allocation of resources and the management of force finances.

To support the delivery of the nine strategic force objectives, several commitments are identified for delivery. The majority of which will be delivered during the following financial year, albeit there are those that may take longer than one year to deliver. These commitments are decided from the mitigating actions agreed by the chief officers and consider the following factors:

- FMS
- force organisational register

- MoRiLE risk registers
- recommendations from HMICFRS inspections

The recommendations identified by HMICFRS supported the development of performance improvement plans which became commitments, bringing focus to identified areas of underperformance. The commitments are communicated to all officers and staff through 'Shaping our Future' sessions which are chaired by the chief constable and attended by all chief officers. These sessions are subsequently cascaded and supported by internal communications.

Governance of the extent to which commitments are delivered is exercised by the chief constable at the strategic management board, and the deputy chief constable during the strategic performance meeting. This approach ensures a clear line of sight between key elements of the strategic planning process, ensuring consistency between the key findings of the FMS, the budget setting process, the allocation of resources, and the commitments of the force.

Strategic meetings

Further strategic meetings provide scrutiny and governance at both a tactical and strategic level. Updated performance metrics are taken to the chief officer morning briefing (COMB) every fortnight. This provides chief officers with a snapshot of performance and may generate further work into some areas of risk. Tactical performance is considered at area performance meetings and supports senior leaders in the tasking and orientation of their resources. Strategic performance meetings focus more on the overarching elements of force performance, linking performance to force strategic objectives and against national indicators.

To test the performance and quality of service delivery, the DCC and assistant chief constable (ACC) regularly conduct reviews at a local policing authority level or thematic based level. This is to provide a detailed insight into the performance, demand and health of each strand and department in respect of their capability and capacity. Over the past 12 months, the DCC has reviewed the following thematic areas:

- custody
- child protection
- economic crime

In addition, the ACC has led on the following LPA reviews:

- Liverpool
- Knowsley
- Wirral

Evaluation

In August 2023, Merseyside Police commissioned Social and Market Research (SMSR Ltd), an independent research agency, to conduct surveys with residents. A sample of 800 residents across all five authorities within Merseyside were invited to participate in an interviewer led survey using random quota sampling. A further sample of 400 residents who live, work, or otherwise engage in areas of higher serious violent crime were invited to participate in the research. This survey was repeated in January 2024.

Survey responses

The following statistics were reported from the survey responses:

Resident's feelings that Merseyside Police:

- are doing a good job increased from 58% to 69%
- have resident's support increased from 86% to 89%
- can be relied on upon to be there when needed decreased from 77% to 72%
- act with integrity increased from 73% to 74%

Resident's feelings of:

- confidence in the police in residents' area increased from 66% to 70%
- safety where residents live during the daytime increased from 94% to 97%
- safety where residents live during the night-time increased from 57% to 59%
- crime and anti-social behaviour being a problem in residents' local area decreased from 41% to 31%
- fear that residents may become a victim of crime in their area decreased from 20% to 16%

Overall impact

The analysis of force performance has influenced the allocation of resources, (both financial and people), organisational reviews, 'deep dives' in understanding the root causes of performance, and investments in technology.

The performance across each of the key performance indicators has shown continued improvement over the past 12 months. This relates to both crime reductions and outcomes for victims outlined in the table. With regards to serious violence, this data considers the homicides and serious disorder following the Southport incidents during the Summer 2024.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside produces an annual report that outlines the independent scrutiny of force performance. This report supports the comments that have been previously outlined around improved performance at neighbourhood level and improved outcomes for victims.

Learning

- The force is reviewing its overall performance framework to ensure that the KPIs in the respective tiers are closely aligned with the force's key objectives and priorities. The force has engaged with the senior leaders from across the organisation to ensure that the performance improvement plans it has identified remain current.
- The force highlights the importance of widening performance data reach to areas that are not routinely captured in KPIs and strategic performance meetings, such as police decision making file quality, vulnerable persons referral forms, and domestic violence disclosure.
- Improved operational performance is dependent upon the contribution also made by enabling functions, such as corporate assets, people service and finance. During the past year, and as part of the ongoing review of the performance framework, the force have sought to establish key indicators to manage performance in these areas.
- The force has sought feedback from the workforce about the tiered structured approach to performance. Overall, there has been overwhelming positive feedback to support this approach.
- Performance improvement plans have proved beneficial, shining a spotlight and bringing focus on cross-cutting themes that impact several areas of performance. During the past year, the approach has demonstrated that improved performance is more likely when a cross-cutting approach is taken to getting the basics right, irrespective of the crime type.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.

Tags

Operational policing