Devon & Cornwall Police

Force Policy & Procedures

Major Investigation

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Portfolio Holder
Assistant Chief Constable
(Vulnerability and Crime)

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The mission of Devon and Cornwall Police is to detect and prevent harm; protect the vulnerable and reduce crime. Working together as one team to safeguard communities and neighbourhoods. Acting in accordance with the national Code of Ethics and Force standards of behaviour to provide a sustainable and resilient high quality service to the public.
1.2 To become the best rural, coastal and urban police service, the Force will work together with partner agencies, respond accordingly to individual needs and will use discretion, professional judgement and common sense to guide actions, being accountable for all decisions made. The investigation of major crimes, particularly those involving the loss of life, will be of the highest priority.

2. Introduction

2.1 This policy and its associated working practice (MCI01) set out the framework the Force has created to respond to major crime investigations. By their very nature these investigations are high profile and generate a high degree of public concern and interest. The professional conduct of these investigations is important if they are to be resolved successfully and maintain the confidence of the public.

2.2 In conducting investigations the force applies the principles of the ACPO Murder Investigation Manual, the Major Incident Room Standard Administrative Practices (MIRsap) and other national guidance documents produced. This policy does not seek to reproduce the guidance contained within these documents, but to outline the way in which the Force delivers major investigations.

2.3 The Victims Code (2015) governs the services to be provided in England and Wales by the police service and other organisations. The Code covers many areas for which the police service has a responsibility to ensure the requirements are complied with. Throughout the investigation process it is necessary to continually consider the victim’s needs and to ensure strict compliance with the Code of Practice.

2.4 The College of Policing offers an online service that provides access to a consolidated body of guidance for policing called Authorised Professional Practice (APP). This enables officers and staff to access and search for the most up to date approved guidance, which replaces a number of previously published NPIA and ACPO documents.

2.5 APP guidance on some types of Major Investigations, such as Homicide, is available and should be accessed and read in conjunction with this policy. It also contains links to the most up to date national guidance. APP guidance on Intelligence should also be referred to.

2.6 In the application of this policy staff are reminded of the need to comply with the standards and principles of the Code of Ethics for policing.

3. Ownership and Accountability

3.1 The ownership of all categories of murder or major crime investigation, including financial accountability sits with the Commander, Crime and Criminal Justice Department.
3.2 The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) will be appointed and is accountable for maintaining a high standard of investigation, the effective management of resources and is ultimately responsible for the planning and execution of the investigation.

3.3 The Commander, Crime and Criminal Justice Department has responsibility for standards of all crime investigations conducted in force.

3.4 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) (Vulnerability and Crime) will act as arbiter in the event of conflict with resource or finance issues within any investigation.

3.5 In the event of linked major crime the ACC (Vulnerability and Crime) will be responsible for the ownership, resourcing and financial accountability of the relevant investigation.

4. **Definition and Categorisation of Major Crime**

4.1 Major crime is defined as any investigation conducted by the Force where an SIO has been appointed or where the Commander, Crime and Criminal Justice Department has deemed that, because of the complex or sensitive nature of the investigation, it is to be treated as a major crime.

4.2 The SIO is responsible for the initial categorisation of the crime which will be reviewed by the Commander, Crime and Criminal Justice Department as soon as is practicable thereafter.

4.3 There are four categories of major crime; Category ‘A+’, ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’, which are designed to assist in the identification of command structure and resource allocation.

4.4 **Category ‘A+’**: A homicide or other major investigation where public concern and the associated response to media intervention is such that normal staffing levels are not adequate to keep pace with the investigation.

4.5 **Category ‘A’**: A homicide or other major investigation which is of grave public concern or where vulnerable members of the public are at risk, where the identity of the offender(s) is not apparent, or the investigation and the securing of evidence requires significant resource allocation.

4.6 **Category ‘B’**: A homicide or other major investigation where the identity of the offender(s) is not apparent, the continued risk to the public is low and the investigation or securing of evidence can be achieved within normal resourcing arrangements.
4.7 Category ‘C’:
A homicide or other major investigation where the identity of the offender(s) is apparent from the outset and the investigation and securing of evidence can be achieved easily.

4.8 The SIO, Commander Crime and Criminal Justice, or ACC (Vulnerability and Crime), will consider the deployment of a Nationally Accredited PIP4 SIO within Major Crime Investigations that involve significant levels of complexity, sensitivity or risk. The Accredited PIP4 SIO will be of the rank of Superintendent or above.

4.9 The PIP4 SIO aims will include:

   a) The provision of strategic coordination in support of the investigation, enabling its successful outcome, resulting in the identification, prosecution and conviction of the person(s) responsible for any offences being investigated.

   b) Strategic coordination in support of the communities affected by the crime(s) being investigated, and will identify, inform & safeguard those who may be, or have been, at enhanced risk within the period of the designated time parameters.

4.10 The PIP4 SIO objectives will include:

   a) Supporting and advising the SIO, as necessary, ensuring that the relatives of the bereaved, victims and potential victims of serious crime are provided with avenues of support and welfare delivery throughout the life of the investigation.

   b) Providing support and, as appropriate, advice to a Gold Commander, enabling effective strategic decision making, which may be impacted upon or affected by the index investigation and associated offences linked to serious violent crime.

   c) Ensuring co-ordination of operational activity relating to the investigation and/or associated operation(s).

   d) Providing a review function for the investigation / operation, as appropriate.

5. Procedures

5.1 The SIO will also ensure a Geographic Chief Superintendent or their representative is briefed within 24 hours to allow them to assess any impact on the local community and address any issues deemed appropriate.

5.2 One of the most important aspects of the management of any murder or major investigation is the systematic recording of policies made by the SIO. A policy file should be maintained on all enquiries where a Major Incident Room is set up and whenever else felt appropriate by the SIO.
5.3 In the interests of efficiency the local Major Crime Investigation Team (MCIT) office should take the lead in the investigation of offences. This will not always be possible and the SIO should consider how to use resources available to them from across the force area. Local MCIT officers should be allocated the key long-term roles within investigation teams and the SIO should look to release resources from other parts of the force as local resources become available.

5.4 **Mutual Assistance**

5.4.1 A protocol has been developed with other forces in the region to provide mutual assistance when one of the collaborating forces are faced with:

- Major Crime beyond their own Force capability.
- Critical Incidents requiring exceptional investigation and support assets.
- Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) incidents requiring regional mobilisation.
- Casualty Bureau activation

5.4.2 The protocol explains the benefits, funding issues and authorities of mutual assistance.

5.5 Designated Major Crime Investigations will have a member of finance assigned to the SIO/Gold/Silver without delay to support the operation.

5.6 At the close of an investigation, whether detected or otherwise, an audit must be commissioned by the SIO to ensure that all documents and exhibits relating to the investigation are accounted for and recorded.

5.7 **Intelligence**

5.7.1 The Alliance Intelligence Directorate will provide intelligence support and development to serious and organised crime via the Force Tasking Process. Outside normal business hours initial liaison should take place with the Duty Field Intelligence Officer (FIO) who will review and assess the intelligence provision as required.

5.7.2 The formation of an appropriate intelligence cell will be authorised by an Alliance Intelligence Directorate Supervisor in consultation with the SIO.

5.7.3 Core staffing within an intelligence cell will be determined by the Lead Intelligence Supervisor. All staff employed in the Intelligence Cell must ensure that the provisions of the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) are complied with.

5.7.4 Guidance can be obtained from Force Policy D025 Handling Intelligence and the Disclosure Manual, as well as the intelligence section of APP.

5.8 For full details on Command structure and the roles and responsibilities of a major Investigation see the associated MCI01 working practice which should be adhered to in conjunction with this policy.
6. **Assessment Compliance**

6.1 This document has been drafted and audited to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act. Equality and diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with Equality legislation and policies. In addition Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Management of Police Information and Health and Safety issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy will therefore ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and internal policies.

7. **Monitoring**

7.1 Given the nature of Major Investigations there is a clear need to monitor their quality. A number of mechanisms are in place to do this. These include the SIO’s review, reviews by the Force’s Criminal Case Review Unit that are commissioned by the Chief Officer Group and the use of Peer Review processes when necessary.

7.2 In addition a Hot Debrief process has been established through the Department SIO’s meeting which reviews new Homicide cases at the earliest opportunity to identify any lessons that can be learnt in relation to the initial response. Any recommendations are owned by the Crime and Criminal Justice Commander and monitored through this forum.

8. **Review and Ownership**

8.1 The review of the content of this policy is the responsibility of the Commander, Crime and Criminal Justice. Review of the policy will be undertaken every two years.

9. **Useful Links**

9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures Manual (MIRSAp)
- ACPO 2006 Murder Investigation Manual (MIM)

9.2 The following working practices support this policy and should also be complied with:

- **MCI01** – Major Investigation
- **CFM22** – Fire Deaths
- **FLO001** – Family Liaison working practice
9.3 Related areas in Authorised Professional Practice

- Major Investigation and Public Protection
- Intelligence Management
- Investigations

9.4 Connected Policy Documents:

- D023 – Honour Based Abuse
- D034 – Domestic Abuse
- D075 – Adults at Risk
- D121 – Sudden and Unexpected Deaths
- D124 – Surveillance
- D226 – Investigation and Prosecution of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
- D229 – Protecting the Public – Managing Sexual offenders, Violent Offenders and Potentially Dangerous Persons
- D281 – Harassment and Stalking
- D285 – Hate Crime
- D309 – Dealing with cases of forced marriage
- D339 – Management of Threats to Human Life or to Cause Serious Harm/Injury

9.5 Other guidance documents:

- Major Crime working practices
- Human Rights Act 1998
- National Intelligence Model Code of Practice
- ACPO (2008) Family Liaison Officer Guidance
- Corporate Homicide and Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)
- PACE Codes of Practice

9.6 Other material which is classified as restricted: