



Service Improvement Review of Security Clearance Processes

Project Initiation Document

August 2004



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working for a safer London

1. BACKGROUND AND BUSINESS NEED

1.1 Background to Service Improvement Reviews

The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) took on the duties of a best value authority under the terms of the Local Government Act 1999 when it was established in July 2000. The purpose of best value reviews is to increase effectiveness, efficiency and economy in a specific area of work.

In 2003, the MPA Planning, Performance and Review Committee (PPRC) took the opportunity to adopt a new approach to best value using Service Improvement Reviews (SIRs) to bring about innovation and excellence in policing London by:

- Thinking afresh about the need for a service and how it is carried out;
- Asking service providers and others how improvements could be made;
- Assessing performance and learning from others who are doing better; and
- Considering if other ways of providing the service might be helpful.

1.2 Background to SIR

This service improvement review topic emerged during MPS budget meetings towards the end of 2003. It was nominated as a subject for review as it was felt that the time taken to complete security clearances was reducing local effectiveness whilst units waited for new employees to join and creating costs due to prospective employees taking up offers of alternative employment with other organisations.

The topic was selected by Management Board in November 2003 and approved by the MPA's Planning Performance and Review Committee in December 2003 for review during 2004/05.

The primary function of the clearance process is to maintain and enhance the integrity of the MPS. The time taken to complete security clearances seems to be widely perceived within the organisation as an area for concern. However, it is not clear what the major causes of the delay in the process are or the extent to which they can be alleviated. Some aspects of the process are outside the control of the MPS. It is important that the correct balance is struck between the need for new staff to be cleared to join the organisation as quickly and efficiently as possible and the need to ensure they will not put the organisation at risk.

There are 2 main types of vetting carried out (see the document SIR Security Clearances Glossary of Terms for more details):

Force (MPS) Vetting – the responsibility of Personnel Security Group (PSG) based in the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) (DCC8). This includes Basic Check (BC), Initial Vetting Clearance (IVC), Recruitment Vetting (RV), Management Vetting (MV) and Non-Police Personnel (i.e. contractors) Vetting. PSG received around 20,000 vetting forms during 2003/04.

National Security Vetting – the responsibility of the MPS' Special Branch based in Specialist Operations (SO12). This includes Counter-Terrorism Check (CTC), Security Check (SC) and Developed Vetting (DV).

The type of vetting and the unit carrying it out varies, depending on the role applied for and the type of vetting required. For example, PSG carry out all vetting (except DV) for Non-police personnel i.e. contractors, whilst SB carry out DV checks for any category of personnel and SC and CTC checks on MPS staff.

On 1st June 2004 a new MPS Vetting policy was published which defines the purpose of vetting within the MPS and sets guidelines to ensure a consistent approach in line with ACPO vetting policy for the police community.

PSG has been the subject of previous internal and external reviews (by Internal Audit during 2000/01 and the MPS' Inspectorate in March 2003). It is recognised that work has already been started within the PSG to improve processes. This review will, therefore, take into account progress made in implementing the recommendations from previous work.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1 Objective

By early November 2004 to complete a Service Improvement Review of Security Clearance Processes and identify recommended improvements.

The SIR will specifically aim to:

- Further speed up the average time taken to conduct security clearances in order that new employees can join the MPS more quickly
- Ensure that the quality of the security clearance process is not adversely affected by speeding up the average time taken
- Improve the service to customers
- Ensure the processes provide the level of protection required by the organisation, proportionate to the risks it faces.

2.2 Scope

The SIR will consider the following:

- Examine the factors that create possible delays and consider how these could be reduced.
- Identify what is required from the process in order to meet statutory requirements and existing minimum standards.
- Examine the roles and responsibilities of different units within the MPS that contribute to the security clearance process and consider how improvements to organisational structure, working practices and processes could be achieved. The review will also attempt to identify areas of good practice. This will need to take account of current and future IT systems and other technology.
- Examine the contributions being made by other organisations to the process and propose ways of improving collaborative working arrangements.

- Consider whether current processes are proportionate to the risks faced by the organisation and whether they are fair, highlighting any diversity implications.
- Consider the mechanisms in place to review both clearance levels after individuals have joined the organisation and those related to specific roles.
- Take account of any relevant findings emerging from the Bichard enquiry and other reviews previously carried out into this area of MPS procedures.
- Aim to recommend improvements which can be achieved within existing resources and which take into account the potential future operational requirements of the MPS.

The SIR will ensure coverage of the 4C's by:

Comparison with other forces and organisations' security processes;

Consultation with key stakeholders across the organisation and outside, in particular customers of the service;

Challenge the current status quo by identifying and asking pertinent and relevant questions; and

Competition - Identifying whether there are appropriate, alternative ways of providing the service.

3. ORGANISATION

3.1 Project Board

The Review will be directed and controlled by a Project Board. The Project Board will ensure the conduct of the Review and the delivery of its key products in accordance with legislation, statutory guidance and relevant MPS/MPA protocols.

The board comprises the following members

Phil Hagon	Chair, Commander, Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS), MPS
Richard Barnes	Member, Metropolitan Police Authority
Caroline Bridgman	Internal Consultancy Group, Review Team Leader, MPS
Phil Flower	Detective Chief Superintendent, DPS, MPS
Simon Marshall	Head of Recruitment, HR Directorate, MPS
Mike McAndrew	Chief Superintendent, Superintendents' Association, MPS
Alan McCawley	Detective Chief Inspector, Personnel Security Group, DPS, MPS
Sarah Naylor	Deputy Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark, Chair, Independent Challenge Panel

Rob Ritchie	MET-TUS, Police Staff associations, MPS
Anne Roberts	Senior HR Manager Specialist Crime Directorate, MPS
Colin Rogers	Police Sergeant, Police Federation, MPS
Parm Sandhu	T/Chief Inspector, Diversity Directorate, MPS
David Skelton	Programme Manager, Service Improvement Reviews, MPS
Steve Walsh	Detective Inspector, Special Branch, MPS
Claire Webb	Territorial Policing Business Support Manager HR, MPS

3.2 Review Team

Role	Name and Contact	Activities
Sponsor	Cdr. Phil Hagon (65223)	As Chair of the SIR Project Board, to agree the PID, provide direction to the Review Team and sign off the Review products
Sponsor Liaison	DCI Alan McCawley (65704)	To provide liaison between PSG and ICG Review Team, as required
ICG Review Team Leader	Caroline Bridgman (65515)	Responsibilities in line with the ICG Project Processes Manual
ICG Team member	David Arden (65735)	Responsibilities in line with the ICG PPM
ICG Team member	David Dibble (65726)	Responsibilities in line with the ICG PPM
ICG Team member	Daniel Burden (65716)	Responsibilities in line with the ICG PPM
ICG Support	Chris Risley (65380)	ICG administrative support

3.3 Independent Challenge Panel (ICP)

Chair -Sarah Naylor, Assistant Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark

John Cochrane, Director of Defence Security, Ministry of Defence

Rachel Whittaker, Member, Metropolitan Police Authority

Ben Owusu, Vice Chair, MPS Independent Advisory Group

Jeff Saunders, Vetting Officer, Sussex Police

Tim Burgeoyne, Assistant Director (B1/0) Ministry of Defence

Mike Millward, Director of Corporate Security, Merrill Lynch Europe plc

4. PROJECT PLAN

The Review will follow a phased approach with four main stages:

Work Strands and Activities	Responsibility	End Date
Stage 1: Background research and scoping		
1.1 Background research: review previous studies and recommendations made, review status of recommendations made in Internal Audit's review (2000/2001), review status of PSG action plan, review recommendations arising from Bichard enquiry, ACPO guidance etc	Team	Early July
1.2 Research into guidance governing MPS security clearance processes, e.g. Cabinet Office Manual of Protective Security, MPS Security Code.	Team	Early July
1.3 Agree membership of and set up Project Board	Sponsor and Team	Early July
1.4 Agree membership, set up Independent Challenge Panel (ICP)	Sponsor, Project Board and Team	End of July
1.5 Present Project Initiation Document (PID) to Project Board	Team	19th July
1.6 Presentation of PID to MPA PPRC	Team	9th September

Work Strands and Activities		Responsibility	End Date
Stage 2: Identification and definition of issues			
2.1	Consultation with key stakeholders involved in or customers of the process	Team	Ongoing
2.2	End to end process analysis of the current arrangements (build on previous work) – examine responsibilities for different aspects of the process, IT implications.	Team	Mid August
2.3	Analysis of process times and volumes.	Team	Mid August
2.4	First meeting of the ICP.	Team	11th August
2.5	Dip sample of cases (randomly selected to examine causes of delay and quality of the process)	Team	Mid September
2.6	Consultation/survey of recruiters/personnel managers	Team	Early September
2.7	Present initial findings from process mapping and early consultation to Project Board	Team	17th August
2.8	Research into the expectations/experiences of new starters / internal transferees	Team	Early September
2.9	Comparisons with other organisations – working practices of other organisations e.g. other police forces, government departments.	Team	Mid September
2.10	Competition – exploring alternative forms of delivering a security clearance service	Team	Mid September
2.11	Issues paper to ICP and PB by correspondence	Team	13th September

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Work Strands and Activities		Responsibility	End Date
Stage 3: Solution generation			
3.1	Presentation of options paper on potential improvements to the process to the ICP.	Team	5th October
3.2	Presentation of options paper on potential improvements to the process to the Project Board.	Team	6th October
Stage 4: Solution evaluation and recommendations			
4.1	Detailed assessment of the preferred solution options to determine which will be the most effective in addressing the issues, including determining in more detail how the proposed solutions would work in practice and their associated costs and benefits.	Team	Mid October
4.2	Preparation of a high-level implementation plan. These findings will be tested with key stakeholders through further consultation.	Team	End October
4.3	Presentation of proposed solutions and recommendations to the ICP.	Team	8th November
4.4	Presentation of proposed solutions, recommendation and final report to the Project Board.	Team	16th November
4.5	Presentation of final report to MPS Management Board and MPA PPRC	Team	13th January 2005

5. PRODUCTS

The main product from this Review will be a Final Report, to be completed by November 2004. This report will highlight the findings of the review and offer recommendations for improving the current process. These recommendations will be supported by an Improvement Plan.

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared and presented along with the Final report.

The Review Team will also produce a set of high level process maps at the end of stage 2.8 which will assist the team in identifying the issues and potential areas for improvement.

The Review Team will additionally provide regular highlight reports to the Project Board.

Process maps will be quality assured by those involved in the process. Other key products will be discussed with key stakeholders prior to being presented to the Project Board and the ICP.

6. RESOURCES, COSTS AND BENEFITS

6.1 Resources

The Review's consultation will require input from a range of MPS officers and police staff, notably PSG, Special Branch and other relevant units.

6.2 Costs

It has been estimated that this work will take 150 days which will be deducted from Service Improvement Reviews' allocation of Internal Consultancy days. ICG does not charge for its work: for information, the total cost of these days would be £67500.

6.3 Benefits

The potential benefits of this Service Improvement Review will be:

- Recommendations which will ensure that the security clearance process is as efficient as possible
- Recommendations which will reduce the apparently excessive time taken for the security clearance process
- Recommendations which will improve the quality of the current process
- Improving the service to customers, both the MPS as the employer and potential employees
- Reducing the costs and improving local effectiveness associated with losing potential employees to other organisations
- Ensuring the MPS continues to provide a satisfactory and adequate level of security
- Ensuring the MPS meets statutory requirements and existing minimum standards for the security clearance process.

7. CONSTRAINTS, ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

7.1 Constraints

The Review must be completed by the beginning of November 2004.

The timing of the consultation and comparison stages are constrained by the availability of ICG staff and key stakeholders during the summer holiday period.

Due to the sensitive nature of the security vetting process, there is a possibility that required information will be sensitive or restricted. This may limit aspects of the review.

The timing of key MPS and MPA meetings will determine when specific products will be signed off.

7.2 Risks

- Review team resources not being available in an appropriate timescale, delaying production of recommendations
- The scope changes during the course of the Review, so that additional resources are required or timescale needs to be extended (as a result, for example, of new MPS or Home Office initiatives which may influence or change the direction of the Review)
- The review is overtaken by other MPS decisions or external change, pre-empting Review recommendations
- MPS and other stakeholders not being available for Project Board/ICP meetings or consultation stages of Review
- Changes made in the vetting unit during the review impact/negate recommendations
- The limited availability of performance information with which to assess the efficiency of the current processes

A separate Risk Register will be produced to enable the Project Board to review and monitor risks at its meetings.