



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Review of Continuous Improvement arrangements in Policing



REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL
3 September 2013



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Published 3 September 2013

This report has been prepared under Sections 29 and 30 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 for presentation to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

K J Donnelly

Comptroller and Auditor General

Northern Ireland Audit Office

3 September 2013

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Abbreviations

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland
CISWG	Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IPR	Individual Performance Review
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RMDSS	Resource Management and Decision Support System
R4	Right people, Right Place, Right time, doing the Right Job

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Background

1. The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) was established on 4 November 2001 by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which was designed to put the recommendations of the Patten Report on policing into practice. At the same time, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) came into being, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.
2. Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions, and those of the Chief Constable, are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is required to prepare and publish a performance plan for each financial year. This includes a section setting out how the continuous improvement arrangements are to be implemented. The Board also has to prepare and publish a performance summary in respect of the previous year.

Basis and scope of the audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General

3. As the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for Northern Ireland, I am required under Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 to audit the performance plan and performance summary and to send a report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Chief Constable and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. This is the third such report, following the devolution

of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The C&AG's certificate and audit opinion to the Assembly on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Performance Summary and Performance Plan

4. In accordance with Section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended¹, I certify that I have audited the Northern Ireland Policing Board's and Police Service of Northern Ireland's:
 - performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2012
 - performance plan for the year ended 31 March 2013.

Basis of my opinion:

5. I planned and performed my work so as to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary, in order to provide an opinion on whether:

- (i) **for the 2011-12 Performance Summary** - the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published a summary assessment of its own and the Chief Constable's performance in 2011-12, measured by performance indicators and performance standards. My work included examination, on a test basis, of the evidence supporting the performance indicators and standards set out in the 2011-12 performance plan.

¹ Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003; The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

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(ii) for the 2012-13 Performance

Plan - arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvements; that the plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation; that the arrangements for publishing the performance plan complied with those requirements; and that the performance indicators and standards are reasonable.

Audit Opinion

6. In my opinion:

- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its and the Police Service of Northern Ireland's performance summary for the year ended 31 March 2012 in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000
- the Northern Ireland Policing Board has prepared and published its Policing Plan for the year ended 31 March 2013, as required by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.
- the performance indicators included within the Policing Plan 2012-13 are reasonable. However, 40 of the 44 performance standards included in the Plan lack sufficient clarity as to the degree of improvement

required and the timeframe within which it is to be achieved. On that basis, I do not consider that those standards are reasonable and am qualifying my audit opinion accordingly. Further details are set out in Part 3 of my report below.

Recommendation to the Department of Justice

7. Under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, I am required to make a recommendation as to whether the Department of Justice should issue a direction to the Policing Board under section 31 of the Act.

8. Notwithstanding my qualified audit opinion at paragraph 6 above, I have decided not to recommend that a direction be issued. In doing so, I am taking cognisance of the positive response, by the Policing Board, to the findings and recommendations within my report. This includes assurances around the inclusion of quantified and time-bounded performance standards in future Policing Plans.

Kieran J Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
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26 June 2013

Main findings of my review

9. The main findings of my review are as follows:

On the 2011-12 Performance Summary

- The Policing Board's Corporate Business Plan for 2011-12 included a total of 67 targets, spread across four main themes. Overall, the Board reported that 45 (67%) of its objectives for the year had been fully achieved, with a further 20 (30%) partially achieved.
- As regards PSNI's performance, targets were set in the context of three key themes – personal policing (dealing with local concerns), professional policing (delivering an excellent service) and protective policing (tackling serious crime). Overall, the Board reported that, of the 19 targets set for 2011-12, PSNI met or exceeded 12 (63%), with a further 2 (11%) targets partially achieved. In the case of the remaining five target areas, the outturn figures showed some slippage as against the previous year.
- Based on the information provided in the Board's Annual Report, it is difficult to form a conclusion as to PSNI's overall performance over the period. While the majority of targets were fully achieved, a significant proportion was not. The

Annual Report does not provide any commentary on the reasons for variations. Moreover, it is difficult to obtain a proper appreciation of performance by looking at one year in isolation. In my view, it would be helpful to present a time series of performance data, to show the trend over a period of years.

- I also note that there has not always been a continuity of target areas, year on year, within Policing Plans. It is difficult, therefore, to assess overall performance when looking at only a selection of types of crime in any given period. When assessing overall performance, I believe it would be useful for the Policing Board to monitor and review progress in tackling all types of crime.

On the 2012-13 Policing Plan

- The Policing Plan for 2012-13 comprises 13 separate performance indicators with 44 associated performance standards. However, only four of those standards (on road safety), have been expressed in quantitative terms. The remaining 40 do not specify the degree to which performance is to be improved; instead, they simply refer to an 'increase' or 'decrease'.
- The decision to move away from numerical targets within the Plan, to a narrative-based performance assessment, represents a major shift

Executive Summary

in approach. PSNI has said that the revision is a result of continued difficulty with a 'target driven approach' to planning - it considers that setting realistic but challenging targets is difficult to achieve. It also said that setting numeric targets can, in certain cases, have a detrimental effect on improving performance, particularly when there is a degree of guesswork and a small number of outputs. Instead, PSNI says it will aim for the highest reduction/increase possible for those measures included in the Plan.

- I acknowledge that setting numeric targets can be difficult and does involve a degree of uncertainty. However, I do not see that as a justification for not setting any target levels at all. Specific targets help to orientate stakeholders (including PSNI), to the level of performance expected. They also help to create a clear sense of focus, priority and timeframe. In the absence of target levels, I am concerned that the effectiveness of the Board's scrutiny, and thereby accountability, will be diminished.

On the continuous improvement arrangements

- Thirteen projects were selected for the programme in 2011-12. Selection was based on a 'prioritisation tool' which assessed various project bids against weighted criteria. These included the extent to which a project would align

to PSNI's strategic objectives and a summary of the expected outcomes to be delivered. By 31 March 2012, seven projects were fully or substantially completed, with the remaining six projects being rolled over into the 2012-13 Continuous Improvement programme.

Key Recommendations

10. My key recommendations are that:
 - The Policing Board, in consultation with the PSNI, should consider adopting a more holistic approach to their assessment and reporting of PSNI's performance. This would include - reviewing progress in tackling all types of crime each year (not just those highlighted as priority areas within that year's Policing Plan); reviewing progress on other aspects of police work, such as improving the service to victims of crime; providing a commentary in the Board's Annual Report on variations between target and achievement and/or where there has been significant change in performance from earlier years; using time series of data to assess and report on performance trends; and benchmarking with similar forces in the United Kingdom.
 - The Policing Board and PSNI should review their approach to performance measurement,

with a view to re-introducing, in future Policing Plans, a range of performance measures which specify the level of improvement sought and the timeframe within which this is to be achieved. I also recommend that future Plans include targets in relation to crime outcomes.

- It is important that the Policing Board and the PSNI make every effort to further enhance the quality of their working relationship. In my view, it is vital that the senior officers within the Department, the Policing Board and the PSNI continue to take a close personal interest in monitoring progress in this regard.

Management Committee, will continue to closely monitor progress. This is encouraging.

12. I also welcome the Chief Constable's assurance on being absolutely committed to the principle of open and transparent public accountability and his undertaking to look at how PSNI can help the Policing Board develop a more holistic approach to assessing and reporting PSNI's performance.

The response of the Policing Board and PSNI to this report

11. The Policing Plan is a key element in the delivery and continuous improvement of police services in Northern Ireland. I welcome the Policing Board's constructive response to my report and its acceptance of each of the recommendations. I note, in particular, the Chief Executive's assurance that performance planning and reporting is a significant priority for the Board and his acknowledgement of the need for a more systematic and comprehensive approach in this area. I note that a number of changes are being introduced with immediate effect and that the Board, through its Audit and Risk

Part One: Introduction and Background



Part One: Introduction and Background

Responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Policing Board

- 1.1 Under section 28 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions, and those of the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), are exercised, with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 The Board must prepare and publish a 'Performance Plan' each financial year, containing details of how these arrangements are to be implemented. In particular, the plan must:
- identify performance indicators, by which performance in exercising functions can be measured
 - set performance standards to be met in relation to those performance indicators
 - include a summary of the Board's assessment of:
 - its, and the Chief Constable's, performance in the *previous* financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators
 - the extent to which any performance standard, which applied at any time during that year, was met.

- 1.3 In practice, the Board works in partnership with the PSNI to develop the Policing Plan and monitor and review progress in its implementation, within an overall context of continuous improvement.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- 1.4 Under section 29 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is required to audit the performance plan (including the assessment of the previous financial year's performance), to establish whether it was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of section 28 of the Act. Accordingly, the C&AG must issue a report:
- certifying that he has audited the performance plan
 - stating whether he believes the performance plan was prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of section 28
 - stating whether he believes the performance indicators and standards are reasonable and, if appropriate, recommending changes to them
 - if appropriate, recommend how the performance plan should be amended so as to accord with the requirements of section 28

- recommending whether the Department of Justice should give a 'direction' to the Policing Board, under section 31 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. Such a direction would require the Board to take appropriate corrective action to ensure compliance with the Act.

1.5 Under section 30 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the C&AG may carry out an examination of the Board's compliance with the requirements of section 28.

Scope of the C&AG's Review

1.6 During the course of the review, my staff liaised closely with both the Policing Board and the PSNI. My findings are set out as follows:

- **Part 2:** Review of 2011-12 Performance
 - **Part 3:** Review of the 2012-13 Policing Plan
 - **Part 4:** Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme.
-

Part Two: Review of 2011-12 Performance



Part Two: Review of 2011-12 Performance

Introduction

2.1 As outlined in Part 1 of this report, the Board is required to report, each year, a summary of its assessment of:

- its, and the Chief Constable's, performance in the previous financial year, measured by reference to performance indicators
- the extent to which any performance standard, which applied at any time during that year, was met.

2.2 In this part of the report, I consider whether the performance summary published in the Board's Annual Report for 2011-12 meets the Board's statutory obligations.

Policing Board Performance, 2011-12

2.3 The Policing Board's Corporate Business Plan for 2011-12 focused on four main themes – setting strategic direction and priorities; scrutinising performance outcomes; achieving results through community engagement and partnerships; and ensuring value for money. The Plan included a total of 67 targets², spread across these themes.

2.4 In accordance with the legislation, the Board's performance was summarised in its Annual Report for 2011-12. Overall, it reported that 45 (67%) of its objectives for the year had been fully achieved, with a further 20 (30%) partially achieved – see **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 2.1: Policing Board performance against targets, 2011-12

Theme	Targets	Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
Setting strategic direction and priorities	22	16	5	1
Scrutinising performance outcomes	20	11	8	1
Achieving results through community engagement and partnerships	17	12	5	0
Ensuring value for money	8	6	2	0
Total	67	45	20	2

Source: Policing Board Annual Report 2011-12

2 The Annual Report for 2011-12 referred to performance 'standards' as performance 'targets'. It can be viewed at http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/nipb_annual_report_and_accounts_1_april_2011-31_march_2012.pdf

PSNI Performance, 2011-12

- 2.5 PSNI's performance indicators and standards for 2011-12 were set in the context of three key themes:
- **Personal Policing** – dealing with local concerns
 - **Professional Policing** – delivering an excellent service
 - **Protective Policing** – tackling serious crime.
- 2.6 During the year, PSNI's performance was subject to regular scrutiny by the Policing Board. This oversight was carried out in part during the Board's monthly public meetings, at which the Chief Constable provided a written progress report on performance against targets. This was supplemented by a formal presentation on a quarterly basis, with questioning by

Members. Reports were also provided by PSNI during the year to Board Committees. At year end, the Chief Constable submitted a final report to the Board, summarising PSNI's overall achievements for the 12-month period, against the Plan.

- 2.7 Overall, the Board reported that, of the 19 targets set for 2011-12, PSNI met or exceeded 12 (63%), with a further 2 (11%) targets partially achieved. In the case of the remaining five target areas, the outturn figures showed some slippage as against the previous year – see **Figure 2.2**. A more detailed analysis, showing the year-end position for each target, is set out in **Appendix 1**.

Figure 2.2: PSNI performance against targets, 2011-12

Theme	Targets	Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
Personal Policing	4	3	1	0
Professional Policing	5	4	1	0
Protective Policing	10	5	0	5
Total	19	12	2	5

Source: Policing Board Annual Report 2011-12

Part Two: Review of 2011-12 Performance

2.8 I am not required to audit the published performance results for policing targets. However, as regards the data systems underpinning the performance reporting, my staff carried out a sample check to review their reliability. No matters of concern were noted.

Performance indicators and standards

2.9 As regards the indicators and standards used to measure the PSNI's 2011-12 performance and the Board's subsequent assessment and reporting of that performance, I have several observations to make:

Performance assessment

- Based on the information provided in the Board's Annual Report, it is difficult to form a conclusion as to PSNI's overall performance over the period. While the majority of targets were fully achieved, a significant proportion was not. The Annual Report does not provide any commentary on the reasons for variations.
- It is a basic tenet of performance assessment to ensure, when setting targets, that they strike the appropriate balance between being both realistic and challenging. This can often be difficult. It is important, therefore, that the Board satisfies itself that any target agreed with PSNI properly meets this criterion.

- It is difficult to obtain a proper appreciation of performance by looking at one year in isolation. In my view, it would be helpful to present a time series of performance data, to show the trend over a period of years.

- There has not always been a continuity of target areas, year on year, within Policing Plans. It is difficult, therefore, to assess overall performance when looking at only a selection of types of crime in any given period. I recognise that, in any given year, priority may be given to tackling specific crimes and that this would be reflected in that year's Policing Plan (along with other policing priorities). However, when assessing overall performance, I believe it would be useful for the Policing Board to monitor and review progress in tackling all types of crime³. I note that PSNI has extensive statistical databases which would facilitate such an approach.

Targets used

- Some 2011-12 targets focused only on measuring activity, rather than examining the outcomes of that activity. For example, target 4.1 at Appendix 1, measured the submission of progress reports on the implementation of the 'Policing with the Community' strategy, rather than the impact of that strategy.

3 For manageability, it may be helpful to combine certain crimes into broader groupings.

- For some targets, there was no benchmark against which to judge how good the performance actually was - for example, target 4.4 on increasing the amount of time spent by each officer on patrol by 30 minutes per shift. While the target was met in full, it is difficult to judge the extent to which the result – an average of 57.02 % of police officers' time being spent on patrol – represented a good performance. It may be useful, in cases like this, to include benchmarks from other similar police forces in the United Kingdom, when assessing and reporting on PSNI's performance.
- In a target area like road safety (target 6.1), the work involves a number of different organisations, of which PSNI is only one. It is difficult, therefore, to determine the specific contribution made by PSNI towards the overall outcome and, thereby, the effectiveness of its performance.
- As regards the targets used in Section 8 of Appendix 1 (to increase the detection rate for serious crimes), there is no reference to the actual numbers of crimes and detections involved. This is significant, since variations in the numbers of crimes committed can affect the performance measurement. For example, in a given situation, achievement of (or

failure to meet) a detection target may be effected merely through a change in the number of crimes committed, rather than through any increase or decrease in the actual number of detections⁴. In my view, the performance assessment should include both the percentage achievement and the actual numbers involved.

- Targets and reported performance did not make any reference to local/District variations - for example, target 2.1 in Appendix 1, on reducing the percentage of people who perceive the level of antisocial behaviour in their local area to be high. Focusing only on the overall Northern Ireland position can mask important local variations where poor performance may be an issue.

2.10 The above observations are not a criticism of the work being done by PSNI or of its performance; rather, they are about how objectives and targets have been set and the extent to which a meaningful assessment of PSNI's ongoing performance can best be obtained.

4 Detected crimes are those which have been 'cleared up' by the police. Under revised Home Office direction on the definition and counting of crime, which took effect from 1 April 2013, the term 'detection' is no longer used – instead, cases where a suspect has been identified (i.e. where there has been a 'detection') are now categorised under different types of 'outcomes'. These include, for example, issue of a Charge or Summons, a Caution, a Penalty Notice for Disorder, or a Community Resolution (which captures informal disposals).

Part Two: Review of 2011-12 Performance

NIAO Recommendation

2.11 I recommend that the Policing Board, in consultation with the PSNI, considers adopting a more holistic approach to their assessment and reporting of PSNI's performance. This would include - reviewing progress in tackling all types of crime each year (not just those highlighted as priority areas within that year's Policing Plan); reviewing progress on other aspects of police work, such as improving the service to victims of crime; providing a commentary in the Board's Annual Report on variations between target and achievement and/or where there has been significant change in performance from earlier years; using time series of data to assess and report on performance trends; and benchmarking with similar forces in the United Kingdom.

Part Three: Review of the 2012-13 Policing Plan



Part Three: Review of the 2012-13 Policing Plan

Introduction

- 3.1 In this part of the report, I consider whether:
- the performance plan published in the Policing Plan for 2012-13 meets the Board's statutory obligations
 - the proposed performance indicators and standards are reasonable.

The planning process

- 3.2 The current approach is to produce a three-year Policing Plan, updated annually to reflect changing circumstances and priorities. Each year PSNI prepares a draft Plan for consideration by and discussion with the Policing Board. The Plan for 2012-13 represents Year 1 of the 2012-15 Policing Plan. The focus and content of the Plan were identified through consultation with the community, together with PSNI's own assessment of the major policing issues facing Northern Ireland and a review of best practice at home and abroad.
- 3.3 The proposed Policing Plan for 2012-13 was tabled and discussed at a Joint Strategic Conference, at which the PSNI Top Team and Policing Board Members discussed and agreed the performance indicators and standards for the incoming year.

The Policing Plan 2012-15

- 3.4 The main theme of the 2012-15 Policing Plan is to increase community confidence in policing by improving:
- how PSNI delivers its service
 - its engagement, consultation and involvement with the community
 - how it works in partnership with other agencies.

The proposed performance indicators and standards for 2012-13

- 3.5 The 2012-13 Plan comprises 13 separate performance indicators with 44 associated performance measures⁵ – details are set out in **Appendix 2**. I note, however, that only four of these measures (those on road safety – see 2.5 (a)-(d) of Appendix 2), have been expressed in quantitative terms. The remaining 40 measures do not specify the degree to which performance is to be improved; instead, they simply refer to an 'increase' or 'decrease'.
- 3.6 The decision to move away from numerical targets within the Plan, to a narrative-based performance assessment, represents a major shift in approach. PSNI has said that the revision is a result of continued difficulty with a 'target driven approach' to planning - it considers that setting realistic but challenging targets is difficult to achieve.

5 The Policing Plan for 2012-13 referred to performance 'standards' as performance 'measures'. The Plan can be viewed at http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/policing_plan_2012_-_2015.pdf

It also said that setting numeric targets can, in certain cases, have a detrimental effect on improving performance, particularly when there is a degree of guesswork and a small number of outputs. Instead, PSNI says it will aim for the highest reduction/increase possible for those measures included in the 2012-13 Policing Plan.

3.7 While I note PSNI's comments on target setting, I have concerns about their approach. What precisely the "highest reduction/increase possible" will mean in practice and the basis on which performance will be judged acceptable or otherwise, is not clear. I acknowledge that setting numeric targets can be difficult and does involve a degree of uncertainty. However, I do not see that as a justification for not setting any target levels at all. Specific targets help to orientate stakeholders (including PSNI), to the level of performance expected. They also help to create a clear sense of focus, priority and timeframe.

3.8 It is also relevant to note that the extent to which a target is or is not met should not be the only criterion for judging the success or failure of PSNI performance. In essence, targets act as 'flags' for scrutineers – where a target is substantially exceeded, or where performance is well below expectations, this should lead to closer examination and explanation. In the absence of target levels, I am concerned that the effectiveness of such scrutiny, and thereby accountability, will be diminished.

3.9 I have a number of other observations, based on the review of the performance indicators and measures in the 2012-13 Plan:

- With the exception of one performance measure to "increase the number [not specified] of cases resolved by the use of officer discretion", there are no other measures on crime detection/outcomes. This is surprising, given the references within the Plan to helping victims of crime.
- Some of the performance measures are expressed in very high level or general terms; for example, measure 3.2 (k) is to "put into practice the Procurement Strategy, Estates Strategy and Transport Strategy". Performance measures should more clearly articulate the intended outcomes and impact of the activity being undertaken.
- Some measures are expressed in quite vague terms; for example, measure 3.2 (e) is to "develop our ability to communicate using the internet". It is not clear what exactly is to be measured and how.
- The target dates for the four road safety-related measures (2.5(a)-(d)) are 2020, some eight years away. In the context of a Policing Plan for 2012-13/2012-15, this has limited meaning. In such cases, interim targets would be helpful. Of the remaining 40 performance

Part Three: Review of the 2012-13 Policing Plan

measures, none have a deadline for completion/achievement. While, for many, there may be an implicit deadline of 31 March 2013, there are a number of others which, in my view, should have a specific deadline attached; for example, measure 4.3(a) which seeks "to benchmark and analyse the number and type of incidents where alcohol is a contributory factor".

NIAO Recommendation

3.10 I recommend that the Policing Board and PSNI review their approach to performance measurement, with a view to re-introducing, in future Policing Plans, a range of performance measures which specify the level of improvement sought and the timeframe within which this is to be achieved. I also recommend that future Plans include targets in relation to crime outcomes.

Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme



Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

Introduction

- 4.1 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Policing Board to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in its and the PSNI's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is also required to carry out reviews of the way in which its functions are exercised.
- 4.2 This part of the report examines the specific continuous improvement programmes operating within the Policing Board and the PSNI.

commissioned a consultant to carry out an independent review of its role and work. The consultant's November 2010 report highlighted the strengths of the Board, together with a broad range of areas where improvements could be made. The report included a series of recommendations, focusing on strategic direction and priorities; scrutinising performance outcomes; achieving results through community engagement and partnership; and ensuring value for money.

- 4.4 The Board accepted 118 of the 134 recommendations and drew up an Implementation Plan. This formed the basis for the Board's continuous improvement programme during 2011-12. The Board has since reported that, over the 12 months to 31 March 2012, 45 (33%) of the recommendations made had been implemented, with 72 more in the process of implementation – see **Figure 4.1**.

Continuous Improvement within the Policing Board:

Independent Review of the Policing Board's Role and Work

- 4.3 In 2010, some 10 years after its initial establishment, the Policing Board

Figure 4.1: Progress in implementation of the Independent Review recommendations, as at 31 March 2012

Status	Recommendations	
	Number	%
Implemented	45	33
In Progress	72	54
Not Implemented	1	1
Not Accepted	16	12
Total	134	100%

Source: NI Policing Board

Note: As regards the recommendations 'Not Implemented' and 'Not Accepted', I am satisfied that the Policing Board properly considered each issue before making its decision.

Organisational Review of the Policing Board

4.5 One of the recommendations of the independent review was that the Board should further commission an 'Organisational Review', focusing on its governance, organisational structures and staffing resource. This review, which was also carried out by consultants, was completed in June 2011. The findings included concerns about communication and continuous improvement:

- There could be a more meaningful engagement between the Policing Board, Department of Justice and the PSNI.

- The Policing Board needs to focus on outputs and outcomes and to become less process driven. The aim should be on ensuring that any activities of the organisation are concentrated on policing, that they add value and are outcome focused.

4.6 Overall, there were 20 recommendations for improvement. These also formed a part of the Board's continuous improvement programme during 2011-12. As regards implementation, almost half (40%) of the recommendations were reported as implemented by 31 March 2012.

Figure 4.2: Progress in implementation of Organisational Review Recommendations, as at 31 March 2012

Status	Recommendations	
	Number	%
Implemented	8	40
In Progress	11	55
Not Implemented	0	0
Not Accepted	1	5
Total	20	100%

Source: NI Policing Board

Note: As regards the recommendation 'Not Accepted', I am satisfied that the Policing Board properly considered the issue before making its decision.

Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

Internal Audit Review of progress

- 4.7 During 2011-12, the Policing Board's Internal Auditors examined its progress in implementing the recommendations from the reviews outlined above. This resulted in a 'satisfactory assurance' rating - there was 'some risk that objectives may not be fully achieved, with some improvements required to enhance the adequacy and/or effectiveness of risk management, control and governance'.
- 4.8 Internal Audit also submitted a proposed action plan, for implementation of the remaining recommendations. This was accepted by the Policing Board. The Board told me that it aimed to have implemented all remaining recommendations by 31 March 2013.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.9 Overall, I am satisfied that the Policing Board has responded meaningfully and constructively to the findings of both the 2010 Independent Review and the 2011 Organisational Review. The Board must now ensure that the remaining elements of the Reviews are implemented as soon as possible.⁶

Working Relationships

- 4.10 As regards the need for more meaningful engagement between the Policing Board and PSNI (paragraph 4.5 above), the consultants suggested that as much dialogue as possible between the two parties – both formal and informal - should be encouraged. I would strongly support this approach. In doing so, I recognise that there is an inherent tension within the relationship, given the need to strike a balance between holding the PSNI properly to account while, at the same time, providing the necessary support to help it achieve its goals.
- 4.11 I note that in response to the consultant's report, efforts have been made to improve the quality of the relationship between the Board and the PSNI. Indeed, more widely, the need to do so was publicly acknowledged by the Chief Executive of the Board and the Chief Constable at a Public Accounts Committee hearing on policing in late 2012. In my view, this was a very positive step, but it is clear that more work needs to be done to further cement the partnership.

⁶ Since the preparation of my report, the Policing Board has confirmed that all remaining recommendations have now been implemented.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.12 It is important that the Policing Board and the PSNI make every effort to further enhance the quality of their working relationship. In my view, it is vital that the senior officers within the Department, the Policing Board and the PSNI continue to take a close personal interest in monitoring progress in this regard.

which a project would align to PSNI's strategic objectives and a summary of the expected outcomes to be delivered

Figure 4.3: PSNI Continuous Improvement Projects 2011-12

- Introduction of a Resource Management and Decision Support System
- 'R4' project – an improved case and contact management process
- Review of the delivery of Custody
- A Streamlined Case File format for volume crime and low level charge cases
- Introduction of Penalty Notices for Disorder, for volume and low level crimes
- Establishment of Reducing Offending Units in Police Districts
- Provision of a New Police College – as part of the Joint Public Services College
- Introduction of a new Individual Performance Review appraisal process
- Expansion of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition platform
- Review of Rape Crime Investigation process
- Development of an Intelligence Officer accredited training programme
- Review of policies and procedures for dealing with Serious and Organised Crime
- Review of the District CID function.

Continuous Improvement within the PSNI:

Methodology

- 4.13 PSNI's current approach to continuous improvement was adopted in 2010-11. It consists of three strands:

- Improvement projects
- External Inspections
- Project Assurance.

Management of the process sits within PSNI's Process Improvement Unit, under the direction of the Deputy Chief Constable.

Strand 1: Improvement Projects 2011-12

- 4.14 Thirteen projects were selected for the programme in 2011-12 – see **Figure 4.3**. Selection was based on a 'prioritisation tool' which assessed various project bids against weighted criteria. These included the extent to

Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

- 4.15 Milestone plans detailing the objective(s), scope, benefits and expected deliverables for each project were prepared. Each was assigned a senior PSNI member to lead and deliver, with a Programme Board (of which there are five in total, each chaired by two Assistant Chief Constables) responsible for tracking project progress.

Policing Board Attendance at PSNI Programme Boards

- 4.16 In January 2012, PSNI issued an invitation to Policing Board Members to sit on its continuous improvement Programme Boards. To date, however, the level of attendance has been mixed. While the amount of time which Policing Board Members can devote to this type of engagement with PSNI may be limited, it nonetheless offers the prospect both of enhancing scrutiny and further developing the working relationships between the two organisations.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.17 I recommend that the Policing Board look at ways in which they can take best advantage of the opportunity to sit on PSNI's continuous improvement Programme Boards.

Strand 2: External Inspection 2011-12

- 4.18 PSNI is subject to an external inspection process, largely undertaken by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland (CJI). In addition, there are also a small number of ad hoc reviews carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). I note, however, that while the CJI and HMIC inspection programmes extend across all aspects of the PSNI's work, there is no particular focus on PSNI's continuous improvement projects. In my view, introducing a degree of independent external scrutiny to the Continuous Improvement Programme would be a useful quality assurance mechanism.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.19 I recommend that the Policing Board and PSNI liaise with CJI to explore the extent to which inspections of specific continuous improvement projects might be included within the CJI annual inspection programme.

Strand 3: Project Assurance - 2011-12 Continuous Improvement Programme

- 4.20 This strand seeks to provide assurance to the Policing Board that PSNI's continuous improvement projects are running in accordance with their milestone plans. PSNI provides updates on progress, at mid-year and year-end, to a sub-committee of the Board.

- 4.21 **Appendix 3** provides further details of each of the 13 continuance improvement projects in the 2011-12 programme, together with a summary of the outcomes/progress to 31 March 2012. Overall, seven projects were fully or substantially completed, with the remaining six projects being rolled over into the 2012-13 Continuous Improvement Programme.

Project Implementation Reviews

- 4.22 On completion of a continuous improvement project, a 'Project Implementation Review' (PIR) should be carried out by PSNI to review implementation, the extent to which targets and milestones were met and to assess the initial impacts of the project. I noted, however, that PSNI did not provide the Policing Board with copies of the initial 'prioritisation tools' (see paragraph 4.14) nor, subsequently, completed PIRs. In my view, without these, the extent to which the Board can meaningfully review PSNI's performance on continuous improvement projects is limited.
- 4.23 Since I completed my fieldwork, PSNI has said that, for both 2012-13 and 2013-14, the prioritisation tools have not been used. Instead, PSNI has made a conscious effort to align the Continuous Improvement Programme with its efficiency programme. Accordingly, from 2013-14, new continuous improvement projects have been drawn from PSNI's 'Service First' efficiency programme.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.24 In order to better support their scrutiny of the Continuous Improvement Programme, I recommend that the Policing Board takes steps to secure copies of PSNI's continuous improvement Prioritisation Tools; for more recent projects, the relevant project planning and approval documents should be obtained. The Board should also secure copies of PSNI's Post Implementation Reviews, following completion of projects.

Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group

- 4.25 A Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group (CISWG), organised and chaired by the Policing Board, was set up in 2004. This has provided a forum to discuss the development and implementation of a continuous improvement environment within each of the two organisations. It has also helped to ensure a level of co-ordination in the external inspection activity involving PSNI and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.
- 4.26 As well as the Policing Board and PSNI, membership of the Group currently includes the Department of Justice, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Until mid-2011, the Association of Police Authorities was also involved.

Part Four: Operation of the Continuous Improvement programme

- 4.27 I note that in recent years the level of activity of the Group has been quite irregular; for example, it did not meet during 2008-09 and 2009-10 and only once in 2010-11. Activity revived the following year with two meetings, in October 2011 and March 2012, but since then the work of the Group has again fallen into abeyance.
- 4.28 In my view, the Group has significant potential, but it needs to meet on a regular basis – two to three times each year - if it is to be fully effective.

NIAO Recommendation

- 4.29 The Policing Board should ensure that the Continuous Improvement Strategic Working Group meets on a regular cycle, of some two to three times each year.
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Appendix 1: PSNI performance against targets 2011-12 (paragraph 2.7)

Explanation of Colour Coding	Green	Target Achieved – meeting or exceeding the target
	Amber	Target partially achieved – improvement on previous year but insufficient to meet target
	Red	Target not achieved – Not meeting the target and deterioration on previous year

(1) Personal Policing – Dealing with Local Concerns

1.1 To reduce the number of burglaries by 3%.			
2010/11	2011/12	Change	% Change
11,849	10,580	-1,269	-10.7

1.2 To increase the detection rate for burglary by 2% points.			
2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts	
11.1%	12.6%	+1.5% pts	

2.1 To reduce the percentage of people who perceive the level of antisocial behaviour in their local area to be high.			
2009/10 Baseline	Jan to Dec 11	Variation from Baseline	
14.2%	11.7%	-2.5 pts	

2.2 To establish a baseline of the number of antisocial behaviour incidents during Quarter 1 and achieve a reduction in subsequent quarters.			
2011/12 Q1	Rolling 3 mths to 31 Mar 12	Change	Change in %
16,358	14,681	-1,677	-10.3%

(2) Professional Policing – Delivering an Excellent Service

3.1 To increase the percentage of people who agree Police and other agencies are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in local area to 60% by 31 March 2012.		
2010/11	Jan 2011 to Dec 2011	Variation from target of 60% (in % pts)
38.4%	40.5%	-19.5%

4.1 To implement the Policing with the Community Strategy in line with the agreed project milestones reporting progress to the Board every 2 months.	All reports received
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4.2 To reduce the number of allegations of incivility made against police officers by 5%.	
Change	% Change
-75	-11%

4.3 To increase the amount of cases resolved by the use of police officer's discretion to 3,000.	
2011/12	Variation from target of 3,000
5,698	+2,698

4.4 To increase the amount of time spent by each officer on patrol by 30 minutes per shift (based on a 10 hour shift, a 5% increase equates to 30 minutes).	
On patrol	Variation from baseline of 38.25%
57.02%	+18.77%

Appendix 1: (continued)

(3) Protective Policing – Tackling Serious Harm

5.1 To report five times per year on the number of organised crime gangs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled.			
	Frustrated	Disrupted	Dismantled
2011/12	36	70	23

6.1 To demonstrate the Police Service's contribution to reducing the number of adults and children killed or seriously injured on the road through six monthly reports.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change
Killed	58 killed (3 children)	52 killed (1 child)	-6
Seriously Injured	891 Seriously Injured (102 children)	806 Seriously Injured (85 children)	-85

7.1 To reduce the number of non-domestic violence with injury crimes by 3%.				
	2010/11	2011/12	Change	% Change
	11,770	12,006	236	+2.0%

8. To increase the detection rate for serious crimes:			
8.1 Violence with injury crimes by 3%			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	36.7%	34.0%	-2.7 pts

8.2 Domestic violence with injury crimes by 5%.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	46.8%	42.9%	-3.9% pts

8.3 More serious sexual crime by 2%.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	19.6%	24.9%	+5.3% pts

8.4 Homophobic crime by 4%.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	17.5%	15.0%	-2.5% pts

8.5 Racist crime by 2%.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	13.4%	16.8%	-3.4% pts

8.6 Sectarian crime by 2%.			
	2010/11	2011/12	Change in % pts
	28.8%	16.8%	-12.0% pts

9.1 To reduce the number of armed robberies of business property by 3%.				
	2010/11	2011/12	Change	Change in % pts
	333	297	-36	-10.8%

Appendix 2: Policing Plan 2012-13: performance indicators and measures (paragraph 3.5)

(1) Confidence in Policing	
Desired Outcome: Improved confidence in policing	
Performance Indicators	Performance Measures
1.1 Level of confidence in policing	<p>Increase the level of confidence/satisfaction in policing: the percentage of people saying they strongly agree/tend to agree that the local police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Can be relied on to be there when you need them. b) Would treat you with respect if you had contact with them. c) Treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are. d) Can be relied on to deal with minor crimes. e) Understand the issues that affect this community. f) Are dealing with the things that matter to this community. g) Increase overall confidence in the local police.

(2) Personal Policing	
Desired Outcome: Reduced level of crime and antisocial behaviour, fewer road deaths and injuries and fewer victims	
Performance Indicators	Performance Measures
2.1 The number of burglaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A reduction in the number of burglaries. b) A reduction in the number of domestic burglaries and robberies where older people are victims.
2.2 The number of antisocial behaviour incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour incidents.
2.3 The percentage of people who perceive the level of antisocial behaviour to be high in their local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A reduction in the percentage of people who perceive the level of antisocial behaviour to be high in their local area.
2.4 The level of overall crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A reduction in the level of overall crime.
2.5 The number of people killed or seriously injured on the road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In partnership with other agencies, a reduction in the number of people killed in road collisions by at least 60% by 2020. b) In partnership with other agencies, a reduction in the number of people seriously injured in road collisions by 45% by 2020. c) In partnership with other agencies, a reduction in the number of children (0-15yrs) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by at least 55% by 2020. d) In partnership with other agencies, a reduction in the number of young people (16-24yrs) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by at least 55% by 2020.

Appendix 2: (continued)

(3) Professional Policing	
Desired Outcome: Improved satisfaction with the service received	
Performance Indicators	Performance Measures
3.1 Continued Implementation of the Policing with the Community Strategy	<p>Continue to implement the Policing with the Community Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to reduce the level of allegations of incivility. b) Continue to increase the number of cases resolved by the use of officer discretion. c) Continue to increase the amount of time spent by each officer on patrol. d) Maintaining and enhancing our Policing profile in areas of particular disadvantage.
3.2 Achievement of a balanced budget whilst maintaining our operational capability, high standards of Leadership, Governance and Stewardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complete a review of custody facilities. b) Make the most of technology through implementation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy. c) Continued progress towards the building of the New Public Services College. d) Develop our ability to deal with crime committed on the internet. e) Develop our ability to communicate using the internet. f) Make sure we have the most effective workforce mix between police officers, police staff and outsourced contracts. g) Raise the investigative and behavioural standards of our officers. h) Put in place a new Individual Performance Review process for our officers and staff. i) Reduce the time and cost involved in paperwork, dealing with red tape and official procedures. j) Continue to put the Four-Year Efficiency Plan into practice. k) Put into practice the Procurement Strategy, Estates Strategy and Transport Strategy.

(4) Protective Policing	
Desired Outcome: Vulnerable people are protected	
Performance Indicators	Performance Measures
4.1 The impact on Organised Crime	<p>To demonstrate progress in tackling organised crime by reporting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The number of organised crime gangs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled. b) The actions taken to reduce the harm caused by human exploitation. c) The actions taken to reduce the harm caused by drugs. <p>To increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) The number of financial interventions into criminal finances. e) The amount recovered by interventions.
4.2 The level of Violent Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To reduce the number of non-domestic violent crimes involving injury.
4.3 The level of Alcohol Related Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To benchmark and analyse the number and type of incidents where alcohol is a contributory factor.
4.4 Service to Vulnerable Groups	<p>To improve the quality of engagement with, and service provided to, the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Children and Young People, in particular males aged 16-24 and Children in care b) Older People (age 60 or over) c) Victims of Domestic Abuse d) Victims of Hate Crime e) Victims of Serious Sexual Crime.
4.5 The harm caused by public disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To demonstrate progress in tackling public disorder by implementing the actions identified by the Review of Public Order.

Appendix 3: PSNI Continuous Improvement Projects 2011-12 (paragraph 4.21)

Project	Description	Target Date	Outcome/Position at 31 March 2012
Resource Management and Decision Support System (RMDSS)	<p>This system will support the principles of Policing with the Community by enhancing our engagement, partnership and service delivery.</p> <p>Through the use of tracking technology it will enable the Police Service to significantly improve the efficiency of our response and visibility.</p> <p>Operational resources will not only be deployed and managed in accordance with calls for service but also local community priorities and National Intelligence Model analysis.</p>	March 2012	The project has been rebranded as 'Locate' and rolled into 2012-13. It will continue into the 2013-14 programme.
Right people, Right place, Right time, doing the Right job (R4)	<p>The Right People, in the Right place, at the Right time, doing the Right job to improve service delivery to the community will support front line officers through efficient case and contact management processes. The key results will be improved victim updates, increased police visibility and a consistent delivery of services to meet community expectations.</p>	October 2011	The project became operational in 2012.
Individual Performance Review (IPR)	<p>A revised appraisal process linking to organisational priorities within a performance management framework and encouraging individual ownership and personal responsibility.</p>	March 2012	The new IPR system was launched on 1 April 2012.
Custody	<p>To undertake a review of the delivery of custody including policies, locations, procedures and health care provision and to seek to develop effective partnerships to enhance the professional service delivery to people held in custody.</p>	March 2013	The project has been rolled over into 2012-13 and will remain in the schedule until 2015.

Streamlined File	To introduce a streamlined case file format for volume crime and low level charge cases to first hearing.	October 2011	The new format was introduced in the 8 policing Districts on a phased basis between December 2011 and May 2012.
New Police College	<p>The delivery of a project plan to facilitate the migration of training functions from the existing training locations in the Police Service to the new Joint Public Services College in Desertcreat, Cookstown. This includes all operational training programmes including foundation programmes, firearms and public order training.</p> <p>To carry out research to scope out the procurement requirements for the Joint Public Services College in Cookstown and to put in place effective and efficient procurement processes to enable the migration of training functions from existing locations to take place and be established in the new College.</p> <p>To work with partner agencies to devise appropriate and efficient methods of co-operation within the Joint Public Services College in Cookstown to ensure that maximum training and operational benefits are achieved from the new joint training environment.</p> <p>To work with relevant agencies to research opportunities to establish common training needs and develop joint training opportunities across the different organisations. These can be addressed in priority areas such as leadership and management so that fully integrated training courses can be developed which maximises the operational and organisational benefits.</p>	June 2014	The project has been rolled over into 2012-13 and will remain in the schedule until completion in 2015.

Appendix 3: (continued)

Integrated Offender Management (IOM)	<p>To bring together the right agencies to ensure that the right interventions are undertaken with the right offenders at the right time.</p> <p>IOM is a system that provides all agencies engaged in local criminal justice a single coherent strategy for the management of a cohort of offenders. IOM consists of three strands which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent and Deter - To reduce crime and antisocial behaviour involving young people through early identification and effective intervention strategies. 2. Catch and Control - Pro-active approach by Police and Partners against those individuals who persist in their offending behaviour. 3. Rehabilitate and Resettle - Joint approach by all agencies to provide a gateway out of crime for offenders. 	<p>Sept 2013</p> <p>April 2012</p> <p>Sept 2013</p>	<p>The project has been rolled over into 2012-13 and will be further rolled over into 2013-14.</p>
Penalty Notices for Disorder	<p>To introduce Penalty Notices for Disorder for volume crime and lower level crimes.</p>	<p>November 2011</p>	<p>Statutory power was introduced in April 2012, with all Police Districts 'going live' by June 2012.</p>
Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)	<p>To continue to expand the ANPR platform to complement the existing camera systems, thus improving road and public safety.</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Project completed and implemented.</p>
Major Crime and Critical Incidents	<p>There is a need to support Rape Crime investigations with an effective and robust review process which ensures that all investigative opportunities are exploited. The Police Service will review process for Rape Crime investigations to improve the rape clearance rate.</p>	<p>November 2011</p>	<p>Project completed and implemented.</p>

Major Crime and Critical Incidents	The development of an Intelligence Officer accredited training programme, in conjunction with Kent and Strathclyde Police, to professionalise the role of Intelligence Officers.	March 2012	Programme developed and introduced during year. Further development and roll-out is continuing, post-March 2012.
Serious and Organised Crime	<p>Vice within Northern Ireland and its link to Human Trafficking and Organised Crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Police Service has a policy for dealing with the issue of on/off street prostitution. • To ensure that Human Trafficking within the Vice trade in Northern Ireland is recognised and dealt with effectively, addressing both the needs of the victims of trafficking and offenders. <p>To ensure that organisational knowledge on the issue of Trafficking and the issues of prostitution and related offences is increased.</p>	June 2011	The project has been rolled over into 2012-13 under the banner of Human Exploitation.
District Criminal Investigation Department (CID)	This project will review and examine the District CID function to ensure that it is correctly aligned to deliver against our service priorities and manage risk. The findings of the review will be implemented in due course to ensure we are continuously improving our ability to deliver a high quality services in this area of policing.	March 2012	The project has been rolled over into 2012-13 and the scope widened to a review of the Operational Policing Model.

NIAO Reports 2012 and 2013

Title Date	Published
2012	
Continuous Improvement Arrangements in the Northern Ireland Policing Board	20 March 2012
Invest NI: A Performance Review	27 March 2012
The National Fraud Initiative: Northern Ireland	26 June 2012
NIHE Management of Reponse Maintenance Contracts	4 September 2012
Department of Finance and Personnel - Collaborative Procurement and Aggregated Demand	25 September 2012
The Police Service of Northern Ireland: Use of Agency Staff	3 October 2012
The Safety of Services Provided by Health and Social Care Trusts	23 October 2012
Financial Auditing & Reporting 2012	6 November 2012
Property Asset Management in Central Government	13 November 2012
Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme	11 December 2012
The exercise by local government auditors of their functions in the year to 31 March 2012	19 December 2012
2013	
Department for Regional Development: Review of an Investigation of a Whistleblower Complaint	12 February 2013
Improving Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Schools	19 February 2013
General Report on the Health and Social Care Sector by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland	5 March 2013
Northern Ireland Water's Response to a Suspected Fraud	12 March 2013
Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure: Management of Major Capital Projects	22 March 2013
Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector	23 April 2013



Published and printed by CDS

CDS 101214

ISBN 978-1-909532-61-8



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