

SECURITY OPERATION GROUP (SOG)

Minutes of the SOG meeting held on Thursday, 28 February 2008 at The New Connaught Rooms, London

Attendees:

Cathy Payne	DWP HBSD(Chair)
Steven Carey	Leeds City
Terry Ritchings	Wandsworth
Tracey Banfield	Bradford
Martin Stubbs	Bradford
Kathy Bateman	Lambeth
John Rosenbloom	Manchester MBC
Jan Roxby	London Councils
Andy Hyatt	Kensington and Chelsea
Elaine Turner	Carlisle City Council
Jackie Dye	Camden
Ian Gibbins	JCP Partnerships
Jane Perfect	DWP LAPD
Andrew Bell	DWP FESD
Mark Craimer	DWP HRAD
Colin Ormes	DWP DMS
John Southworth	DWP IFD
John Viggers	DWP HBSD
Graham Dove	DWP HBSD
Bridget Smartt	DWP HBSD (Minutes)

1.0 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Diane Baker (Peterborough), Jill Hawtin (Bradford), Karen McNeil (East Ayrshire), Jean Cheeseman (South Bucks), Daren Nowlan (South Kesteven), Michelle Charles (DWP Debt Management, Cardiff), Simon Lane (Brent), and James Ablewhite (DWP HBSD).

2.0 Welcome and Domestic

- 2.1 Cathy Payne welcomed all to the meeting

3.0 Minutes of the last Meeting/Matters arising/ Action Points

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting were cleared. The following comments were made on the action points log:

Action point Jan 1: Graham Dove was to ensure that the NFI data was sent to SOG members prior to meetings with the agenda. Action point cleared.

Action point Jan 2: The issue of the WIB4A's being recorded by local FIS offices had not yet been communicated to LAs. Graham Dove advised that the advice was communicated to LAs by General Information Bulletin. Action point cleared.

Action point Jan 3: LA representatives wanted to know whether the sanctions from LAs are recorded on FRAIMS and can a note be sent prior to the next meeting. Graham Dove advised that all existing sanctions and prosecutions have been transferred to FRAIMS. Action point cleared.

Action point Jan 4: The LA representatives had asked what is the length of time sanctions information can be retained on FRAIMS. Dave White advised.

Action point Feb 1: Ian Gibbins said he would provide further clarification and advise the group.

Action Point Jan 5: The LAAs said they were not sure why the data movement embargo impacts on them obtaining the NFI figures. Dave White advised that security protocol regarding the issue of figures had to be agreed (following recent embargoes on data transfer) before the information could be accessed. They have now been agreed. Action point cleared.

Action Point Jan 6: Graham Dove was to draft a note to the LAs to go in the General Bulletin on SSFA AOs and to check training controls. GIB G3/2008 was subsequently published. Action point cleared.

Action Point Jan 7 WRA: Graham Dove was asked to find out whether DWP will do PNC checks on LAs' behalf and vice versa on witnesses, following the April changes. Graham Dove advised that DWP Prosecution Division is currently considering this issue and it will be debated in SOG at a later date.

- Action Point Jan 8 Ad Pens: Mary Collins said she will come back to the next meeting about the possibility of a review.

Action point Feb 2: LA representatives were asked to submit a detailed log of issues on this subject (we will also be able to highlight the wider view e.g. how this may affect FIS) to FESD for discussion at a future Prosecution Policy Steering Group.

4.0 Review of PM10/PM16 for 2007/08 and Right Benefit - updates

- 4.1 PM10/PM16. Prior to the meeting, Mark Craimer copied to SOG data on the number of sanctions LAs carried out in the 2nd quarter of 07/08

under PM16. John Viggers pointed out that they were the best 2nd quarter figures ever produced.

- 4.2 The LA representatives asked:
- What if the LA achieved a score of 1 but had had a better score last time? Would they be disadvantaged by only scoring the first two quarters of the year?
 - Can the ranges be reviewed so that there are fewer bands – just 2 and 4?
 - The data covers submissions from 348 LAs – what about the other LAs who did not submit data? Did they do well last year?
- 4.3 John Viggers said that similar questions have arisen on PM10 scoring. Our position is that we are sticking with the decision to use the 6 months data and will be speaking to the Audit Commission about those individual LAs who think they would have performed better if the 3rd and 4th quarter figures had been used. No further changes can be made without CLG and Audit Commission approval as it is a BVPI.
- 4.4 Only having 2 bands for PM16, scoring 2 and 4, means a change to the PM which would require agreement from the Audit Commission. They are unlikely to agree to modifying the measure in that way. John Viggers agreed to discuss the matter with members of LAPD
- 4.5 Cathy Payne commented that it was agreed at the LAA Steering Group that there would be no changes to the CPA. Also when HRAD analysed the figures for PM10, some LAs were shown to be worse off if the CPA weightings for the security PMs were reduced.

Action point Feb 3: HBSD will take away the comments raised here for discussion with LAPD, and the Audit Commission.

- 4.6 Right Benefit. The LA representatives said that DWP should make it clear in any communication on this issue to LAs, that they do not support this initiative.
- 4.7 The LAs' main concern was that DWP intended to adjust figures. They do not think it is appropriate for DWP to adjust the figures that the LAs have submitted by replacing them with estimated figures. They are being judged on adjusted figures not on their reported performance which LAs have to report to the Audit Commission. They would like to know what authority DWP has to approach the Audit Commission about LA performance based on these figures.
- 4.8 The LA representatives also asked for a clarification of the method used to determine the LA groupings for the indicator. Mark Craimer said that the groupings are needed since the volume of changes in circumstances depends on caseload make-up. So in order for LAs to

benchmark themselves, DWP will publish information on the LAs who would be expected to have a similar volume of changes. Groupings are based on the distribution of risk groups. DWP agreed to clarify groupings in the circular to be issued.

- 4.9 The LA representatives then asked whether DWP would finance new IT so that the LAs can report the details themselves. John Viggers said not and replied that there is no indication that DWP will be reporting the figures to the Audit Commission. The issue is what data is put on HOBOD. Instead of financing new IT for LAs, whether adjustments can still be done for internal use, and whether HOBOD figures can be published as extracted, John Viggers suggested that an option is to only issue unadjusted figures on HOBOD.

Action point Feb 4: He will put this up for discussion at the next LAA Steering Group meeting on 12 March and update SOG at the next meeting.

- 4.10 The LA representatives also commented on the methodology for changing the measurement of the single HB extract mid-year. John Viggers said that it is conceivable that DWP will not switch measurement, but he put this to the LAASG as well (in the event it was agreed stick with the HBMS extract for the whole of 2008/9).

5.0 HB Data transfer

- 5.1 John Southworth gave a short presentation, updating the group on work so far, including the following:
- DWP has agreed interim solution for the collection of data
 - IT Departments in all the LAs have been contacted.
 - The system has been tested at Wigan, Bury, Fylde and Warrington.
 - The DWP Permanent Secretary has also sent a letter to the LA CEOs.
 - Instructions have been drafted
- 5.2 The LA representatives gave overall agreement to the recommendations so far.

6.0 Person Centric Referrals – an update

- 6.1 Colin Ormes returned to update the group and gave a short review of the presentation he gave in November 07.

Action point Feb 5: Steven Carey to send nominees for a working group to John Viggers.

7.0 HB Fraud and Error Project - update

- 7.1 E-Learning toolkit. John Viggers advised that the manager's toolkit was launched in February at the IRRV Conference. So far, we have received positive feedback on both toolkits. DWP are currently working with Risk Solutions on a Communications Toolkit and will be looking to SOG to QA the product.
- 7.2 Credit Reference Agencies. Work will start shortly.
- 7.3 Voice Risk Analysis. DWP have started to receive results and evaluation following the JCP pilot which is now beginning. It identifies both high and low risk cases correctly and has also received favorable feedback from customers. A full update will be given on all projects at the F and E Strategy Delivery Board in April. The prospect of a Phase 2 is also under discussion.
- 7.4 Welfare Reform Act. The Regulations were laid on 27 February in Parliament with the implementation date of 7 April 08. Guidance is planned for publication on 3 March (HB Direct) and 5 March (in an F Circular). The working Group was disbanded after the new procedures had been agreed.

DWP are looking at the use of cautions through the delegation of functions so that the lead organisation will be able to issue a caution on behalf of another body.

Action point Feb 6: Graham Dove to update SOG at a future meeting.

Form FPA6. A 2-page version of the form was sent to SOG members prior to the meeting. They suggested that with minor changes the form can be condensed to one page.

Action point Feb 7: A copy of the revised form will be sent to Graham Dove for further action.

- 7.5 SSFA AOs. Circular G3/2008 was sent to LAs, also letters to the AOs listed on the database. The note produced for SOG is to clarify the issues that have been raised. The aim is to send this out to LAs as a circular.
- 7.6 Paragraph 11 – has been changed to reflect the fact that two AOs may be required because some larger LAs may need more than 1.
- 7.7 The LA representatives said that they are not surprised at the feedback from the LAs. The Bulletin did not say that more than 1 AO may be required, how many times per year AO powers are used, and most of all did not reflect the discussions with SOG. It is a bit blunt, therefore needs to address this. Other areas to be addressed were:
 - Para 4: suggest that this paragraph be deleted;

- Para 5: this should be moved nearer to the end of the paper, as an alternative;
- Para 7: The LA representatives agreed that LAs should be able to call on additional trained staff when required, therefore this should be reflected in the paragraph. They also suggested that details of who manages/controls the database and a named contact should be added here;
- Para 13: this paragraph could be moved to earlier up in the bulletin.
- LA representatives also agreed with the proposal from John Viggers that the database for LA AOs appointed under s109 & s110 SSAA 1992 need no longer be maintained.

Action point Feb 8: DWP to re-word the circular and then pass to Steve Carey prior to publication.

8.0 AOB

8.1 LA representatives commented on the recommendations from the Audit Office Report on fraud.

Action Point Feb 9: LA representatives were asked to send their comments to Ian Gibbins for further action

8.2 Personal Disclosure re Witnesses: Graham Dove stated that a bulletin with the advice agreed at the last meeting would be going out shortly.

8.3 Joint Working: The LA representatives commented that where there is joint working re prosecutions they are not being notified when PD change the charges. For example cautions are being issued in joint prosecution cases without joint reference back to the LA.

Action point Feb 10: Graham Dove was asked to follow this up.

8.4 Joint Boards: The LA representatives asked, if LAs do not get a result at the Joint Boards, where can the problem be escalated? Ian Gibbins said this will be discussed at an upcoming joint board meeting. He recognizes that it is not part of the workplan at present, but it is under consideration.

Action point Feb 11: Ian Gibbins will keep SOG, POG, and the LA SG up to date on developments.

8.5 Circulation of minutes from POG and SOG meetings. Graham Dove raised the issue following the request for copies of the minutes from the Joint Boards. Cathy Payne said that a new external website will be live soon in which the minutes can be placed.

8.5 Compliance workshop. John Viggers said that currently there is a FIS rep working in his team who will soon be taking this forward.

Close.