

How to guide:

Crime Management system

What is the J4A ‘How to’ series?

The guide is part of a series of products developed by J4A to communicate lessons learned from projects and pilots, to provide stakeholders with guidance on how to adapt and replicate the initiative in their own context.

Who is this ‘How to’ guide for?

Influencers and decision makers in the justice sector (police, prisons, judiciary and civil society).

Reference tools

Accompanying reference tools are available at www.j4a-nigeria.org or by request from info@j4a-nigeria.org

This Guide should be read in conjunction with the How To Guides on Divisional Intelligence Units and Intelligence Led Policing (ILP).

The problem

- Currently in Nigeria most crimes are reported to police by the victim attending their local police station. A major area of concern for the community is how victims are treated when at the police station.
- The Crime Diary often does not contain sufficient information about the victim or the offence to support an in-depth investigation.
- Policing has been driven by the necessity to respond to calls from the public but there is now a more urgent need to be proactive against crime and criminals.
- If police are to be effective in preventing and detecting crime, they must understand the nature, causes and locations where crime and other incidents most frequently occur, and record it in a way that can be properly analysed.
- Police have a confession-based approach to resolving crime.
- Investigators routinely conduct investigations looking for evidence to establish guilt rather than evidence to establish the facts of the case.

Background

Traditionally the Nigerian Police Force at Divisional level provides a reactive policing approach to how they address crime investigation and crime management. It is important to realise the levels and types of crimes that occur have a significant effect on the safety, and feelings of safety, not just on those directly victimised but on the whole community. The investigation of crimes and activities to detect crime are core responsibilities of any Police Force. It is essential that Divisions use their resources effectively and that the processes they adopt for the investigation and management of crime are clear. Without this, citizens will rapidly lose confidence in police that will lead to many crimes remaining unreported.

The importance of a professional and thorough investigation into an allegation of crime cannot be overstated. Public confidence in police can often hinge on the way crimes are investigated and not simply the result of investigations. If the police have not treated the victim with respect or are judged to have carried out a poor investigation, the public will often judge all police officers in the same manner. An effective crime reporting, recording, investigation and monitoring process will enhance the image and reputation of the Division.

What You Can Do

A victim centred approach with a thorough, professional and timely investigation into a complaint of crime is essential if police are to retain the confidence of the community and

maintain the support of victims and witnesses. Investigating Police Officers should be properly trained with the necessary investigative skills to carry out investigations and methodically record all relevant details of their investigation. Investigations must be properly supervised and the victim regularly updated on progress and the subsequent outcome of the investigation. Crime investigation must be centred on the search for the truth and not centred on evidence solely to prove guilt.

Crime Recording

As in any part of service delivery, the reporting, recording and investigation of crimes will not be effective unless every part of the process is supervised and managed well. The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) should ensure:

- The office at a police station that is used by the public for reporting crime should be a calm environment and without excessive noise from police radios or too many officers present. Ideally it will have a separate area where crimes and other confidential matters can be discussed without being overheard
- That all crimes are recorded in the Crime Reporting Register and that the Register is being properly supervised.
- Opportunities are taken to sensitise citizens about the improved crime procedures and to encourage more reporting, including the use of media releases.

Crime Intelligence

If police are to be effective in preventing and detecting crime, they must understand the nature, causes and locations where crime and other incidents most frequently occur, and record it in a way that can be properly analysed. This together with the details of all persons arrested for committing offences can then be used to identify crime patterns, crime 'hot spot' locations and also people suspected of crime, by cross-referencing information from other sources. This is set out in more detail in the separate How to Guide on Divisional Intelligence Units.

Crime Management

It is essential that Divisions use their resources effectively and that the processes they adopt for the investigation and management of crime are clear. Without this, citizens will rapidly lose confidence in police that will lead to many crimes remaining unreported.

All crimes must receive a thorough investigation to ensure victim satisfaction and justice and also to increase the numbers of successful prosecutions through the courts. The police have a responsibility to ensure that all lines of enquiry in relation to a crime are conducted diligently and expeditiously.

All officers should conduct thorough impartial investigations treating people with empathy and respect regardless of gender or social status relying on human rights legislation to ensure investigations are lawful, proportionate and necessary. This will ensure that all investigators are contributing to the ethos of community policing demonstrating to the community the NPF's ability to ensure all victims no matter their background will receive justice, which will promote public confidence in policing.

The elements of a good investigation and crime management are many, but key features are:

- The attendance at, and a search of, the scene of the crime for evidence
- The identification of all potential witnesses, their full details recorded and where appropriate a full statement of evidence obtained
- The detention, as soon as possible, of any known suspect(s) and a thorough search of their homes for any evidence

- A full and detailed interview of the suspect(s) and not simply concentrating on obtaining an admission of guilt
- The progress of all investigations are reviewed with the IPO every seven days and an entry made in the Register, and on the case file, about the status of the investigation
- Complainant / Victims are informed by the IPO of the progress / result of the investigation within 14 days of the report and regular updates provided if the investigation continues. This will also be recorded in the Register.
- Crime Files contain all the required documents to support the evidential needs of the investigation.

Training and Development

An **Investigations Skills** Course and supporting manual have been designed by the J4A programme to enhance investigative skills within the Nigeria Police Force. Guidance contained in the manual provides a reference to support all investigators and ensure that investigations will contribute to the ethos of community policing demonstrating to the community the NPF's ability to ensure all victims receive justice, which will promote public confidence in policing. *The course is available within the Resource Tools section.*

What You Can Do

Crime Recording

Improve the Charge Room Office to make it a welcoming environment to the community when calling at the police station. Ensure that it is clean and tidy and that there are no distractions. Only officers involved in working in the charge room should be present and staff must treat every member of the public with dignity and respect. Charge Room staff should be aware that this first contact with the public is of vital importance and can build confidence and reassurance that their concerns will be dealt with in a professional and diligent manner.

The key skills required by Charge Room staff are:

- Giving respect
- Listening carefully
- Respecting confidentiality (use of private interview room)

- Understanding different views and perceptions
- Acknowledging cultural or religious differences
- Showing empathy and consideration
- Understanding concerns and fears

The Division should, if available, introduce the new Crime Register. This requires J4A to be contacted by email as set out earlier in this Guide. This register will expand on information recorded and will enhance service delivery through providing an improved method of recording the information regarding a crime. The information recorded about each crime in the register will ensure that adequate information is available to investigators indeed they are given a carbon copy of the entry which forms part of the investigation papers. The Divisional Intelligence Unit can quickly access the information required for completion of intelligence records.

If the Crime Register is not available then continue to use the Crime Diary. The drawback of this register is that it is more difficult to extract crime and management information. The Diary is a lower cost option.

Crime Management and Investigation Skills Training

The Investigations Skills Course should be adopted and integrated into each NPF State training and development programme for investigators.

The public prosecution service partners should be informed of the new investigation techniques being adopted that will provide substantial assistance to improving the prosecution process.

What You Can Achieve

- Implement effective crime recording method
- Recording of detailed information to support investigators
- Introduction of call back system to keep victims informed of progress of investigation
- Enhanced public confidence to report crime to police
- Recording of important intelligence to support Investigations and the Divisional intelligence unit
- Implement intelligence led policing approach to policing in the community
- Improve police crime analysis through increased knowledge of crime patterns and trends to allow sharing with partner agencies
- Best use of resources to respond to crimes in the community
- Improve service delivery regarding prevention and detection of crime
- Increased accountability to the community
- Develop a partnership approach with the community and other LEAs to respond to community safety issues through sharing intelligence and crime analysis
- New professional and standardized approach to investigations
- Victim centred approach to investigations, including victim support
- Improved skill and knowledge of investigators to conduct investigations and achieving best evidence
- Improved quality of investigations and likelihood of securing prosecutions
- Increase public confidence in police and willingness to report crime to police
- Enhance the image and reputation of the Nigerian Police Force

“The new methods are proving to be very effective and have assisted NPF investigators tremendously. The training has been much more effective from what was previously been available, providing valuable knowledge and will assist the investigators to improve on their approach to investigations.”

CSP Ahmed Bello, State Intelligence Branch, Kano State.

Crime Management: Steps for implementation

Crime Recording

1. A meeting with the DPO and Senior Management team should be held to discuss the environmental improvements required and new method of recording crime.
2. An agreed plan to improve and maintain the environment of the CRO should be implemented and supervised to ensure compliance.
3. Adoption of the new crime register with improved data recording should be agreed.
4. A set of instructions of completion of the crime register should be provided.
5. A designated training officer should be appointed to conduct workshops with CRO staff on their roles and responsibilities when conducting their duties including completion of the new register.
6. Continued supervision of the CRO Staff should be undertaken on a continuous basis to ensure compliance and commend good work.
7. Inform community of new crime recording system.
8. Members of the community reporting to the station should be encouraged to provide feedback on the service provided and where necessary a response provided by the DPO.

Crime Management

1. The Commissioner of Police in each state should meet with the State Senior Management Team and develop a policy to integrate the Investigation Skills Course into the State Training and Development Plan.
2. The Commissioner of Police should identify trainers to receive training on delivery of the course.
3. A training venue and materials should be made available to facilitate the delivery of the training.
4. All investigators attached to DCB, JWC and state investigation departments should be assigned to attend the Investigations Skills Course.
5. DPO and Officers I/c of investigation departments should ensure that the investigations skills are incorporated into all investigations.
6. Supervision procedures should be introduced to ensure that investigations are conducted diligently and expeditiously. Ensuring an impartial approach is taken to establish the truth.
7. Investigators should maintain a record of the actions taken for each investigation to provide transparency on the conduct of the investigation.
8. Partner agencies in the prosecution of offences should be informed of the introduction of the new procedures.
9. Recognition of the attaining of the new investigation skills should be identified on each officers HR personal file or professional development portfolio.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1:

The introduction of the new crime register requires in house training and continued supervision to ensure that officers are completing the register as required.

Lesson 2:

Officers with senior service can find difficulty with adopting the new concept of the 'first contact' engagement with the public, continued supervision may be required.

Lesson 3:

The concept of keeping the victim informed has proven difficult to integrate into the culture of Divisions and requires continued supervision.

Lesson 4:

The CRO should be given daily responsibility for the maintenance of the crime register. The DPO or 2 I/C should supervise on weekly basis to ensure that the register

completed correctly and that reported crimes have been dealt with or allocated for investigation. They should also ensure that victims are being kept informed within 14 days of receipt of the report.

Lesson 5:

In the NPF intelligence is power and there is reluctance for officers to share the intelligence. There is a culture of officers passing intelligence directly to the DPO to impress the DPO.

Lesson 6:

The DPO should acknowledge that it is good practice to pass all intelligence to the DIU.

Lesson 7:

The role of an investigator can be complex and demanding and requires officers to have the necessary skills to fulfil this role. It is important that the DPO conducts assessment of officer skills to identify suitable officers to be appointed to investigation offices.

Lesson 8:

It has been found that there is a considerable difference in the abilities of officers attached to investigation offices. Many officers do not enjoy this role and have been transferred in against their will and have either found it difficult or have been reluctant to undertake the training or new procedures.

Lesson 9:

DPO should consider enforcing a tenure of office of at least 3-5 years to ensure that officers who receive the additional training remain in post to make best use of their skills and experience.

Lesson 10:

It is important that trainees attending the Investigation Skills Course should at the start of the course be provided with course materials and manuals and allowed to retain the manuals for future reference.

Lesson 11:

Maintaining an investigations log that contains details of actions and decisions has proven difficult, however this is an important tool to provide accountability and transparency of the investigation. Supervisors should ensure that this procedure is undertaken during the conduct of the investigation.

Lesson 12:

The importance of adopting a victim centred approach to all investigations cannot be underestimated. Good treatment of victims has proven central to the building of public confidence in policing. Through adopting this approach victims will be encouraged to report crimes to police.

Lesson 13:

Prosecutors who have worked with investigators who have integrated the new investigations techniques and procedures have found that the quality of case files has improved and assist in improving prosecution standards.

Improvements

The new procedures allow officers to record more detailed and fuller information on reported crimes assisting investigators during the conduct of their investigations through providing additional information of the offence and details of the suspect.

Citizens are now more comfortable reporting crimes to police and are now being fully informed of progress on their reported crime.

Investigators attached to the DCB and JWC now have improved knowledge on the management and conduct of investigations.

All investigations are conducted with a victim centred approach ensuring the victim is provided care and support during and after the investigation.

Investigators now conduct more thorough crime scene investigations maximizing the potential to gather evidence in support of establishing the facts of the crime.

Victims are now only interviewed once alleviating the stress of having to continually recall the facts of the case.

The conduct of interviews are planned and undertaken in an impartial manner to ensure that the investigator seeks to establish the facts of the case rather than to secure a confession.

The improved standard of evidence contained in case files has greatly assisted prosecutors to advance cases through the courts.

Contact

The Justice for All (J4A) Programme is funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by the British Council.

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