



Lancashire criminal justice area

Report of the joint inspection

by

**HMIC
HMCP
HMICA
HMI Probation**

Published June 2008

Copies of this report may be obtained from:

HMICA Central Support Team,
8th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 020 7217 4355
Fax: 020 7217 4357

Or via our website at: www.hmica.gov.uk

Contents

Chief Inspector's foreword

Section 1	
Introduction	1
Lancashire: the local area	1
Lancashire Criminal Justice Board	3
Scope of inspection	5
Methodology	5
Report structure	5
Context of this inspection	5
Section 2	
Executive summary	7
Lancashire Criminal Justice Board	7
Leadership and partnership	7
Delivery of successful justice – domestic violence	8
Community engagement	9
Section 3	
Inspection findings	11
Leadership and partnership	11
Section 4	
Delivery of successful justice – domestic violence	17
Section 5	
Community engagement	23
Annex	
List of those who assisted the inspection	26

Chief Inspector's foreword

On behalf of the Criminal Justice Chief Inspectors, I am pleased to publish this joint report on the inspection of the Lancashire criminal justice area. This inspection is the second of two pilots of a new framework and methodology for joint inspections of criminal justice areas, building on the lessons of 12 previous joint area inspections. This shows the continuing commitment of the criminal justice inspectorates to working more closely together to help delivery of successful justice and public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS).

The criminal justice inspectorates have, for some time, been placing greater emphasis on the effectiveness of relationships between those organisations that they are responsible for inspecting. In particular, they evaluate how successful those agencies have been in improving performance through co-operation, within a framework which recognises the inter-dependencies of the CJS, whilst respecting the separate and independent role of the agencies themselves.

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) formally came into existence on 1 April 2003 and operate on a non-statutory basis. They represented a new way of doing business within the CJS, through better co-ordinated and more cohesive working arrangements. With the advent of the new Public Service Agreement (PSA) Delivery Agreement 24, which was announced just as this inspection was being completed, there will be even greater focus on LCJBs as agents of delivery within the CJS.

As the role of the LCJBs develops, so the inspection processes will likewise need careful and ongoing development. The pilot joint inspections are the subject of rigorous evaluation to ensure that there is a continuous improvement in our processes, and to ensure that we continue to offer insight to the inspected bodies to help them improve service delivery.

The framework used for this inspection has been developed and implemented following a review of previous inspections. It focuses on three objectives:

- leadership and partnership
- delivery of successful justice
- community engagement.

Within this framework we address issues of corporate governance arrangements and the strategies and policies of the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board. The second part of the framework is aimed particularly at inspecting a specific strand of work to see how effective partnership working is in delivering successful justice. For this inspection, the strand chosen was domestic violence.

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection set out by the Office of Public Service Reform and examined issues, so far as practical, from a user perspective. Our intention is that this report will inform the people of Lancashire about how effectively the local CJS works, by highlighting the strengths of inter-agency working and identifying where further improvements can be made. It will also inform the policies, strategies and delivery of the wider criminal justice community.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chief Officers and staff of the criminal justice agencies in Lancashire for the considerable assistance rendered by them during the course of this inspection. I would also like to thank those other users of the CJS who were able to give us their views and experiences during this inspection.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Bloomfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Eddie Bloomfield

HM Chief Inspector of Court Administration

June 2008

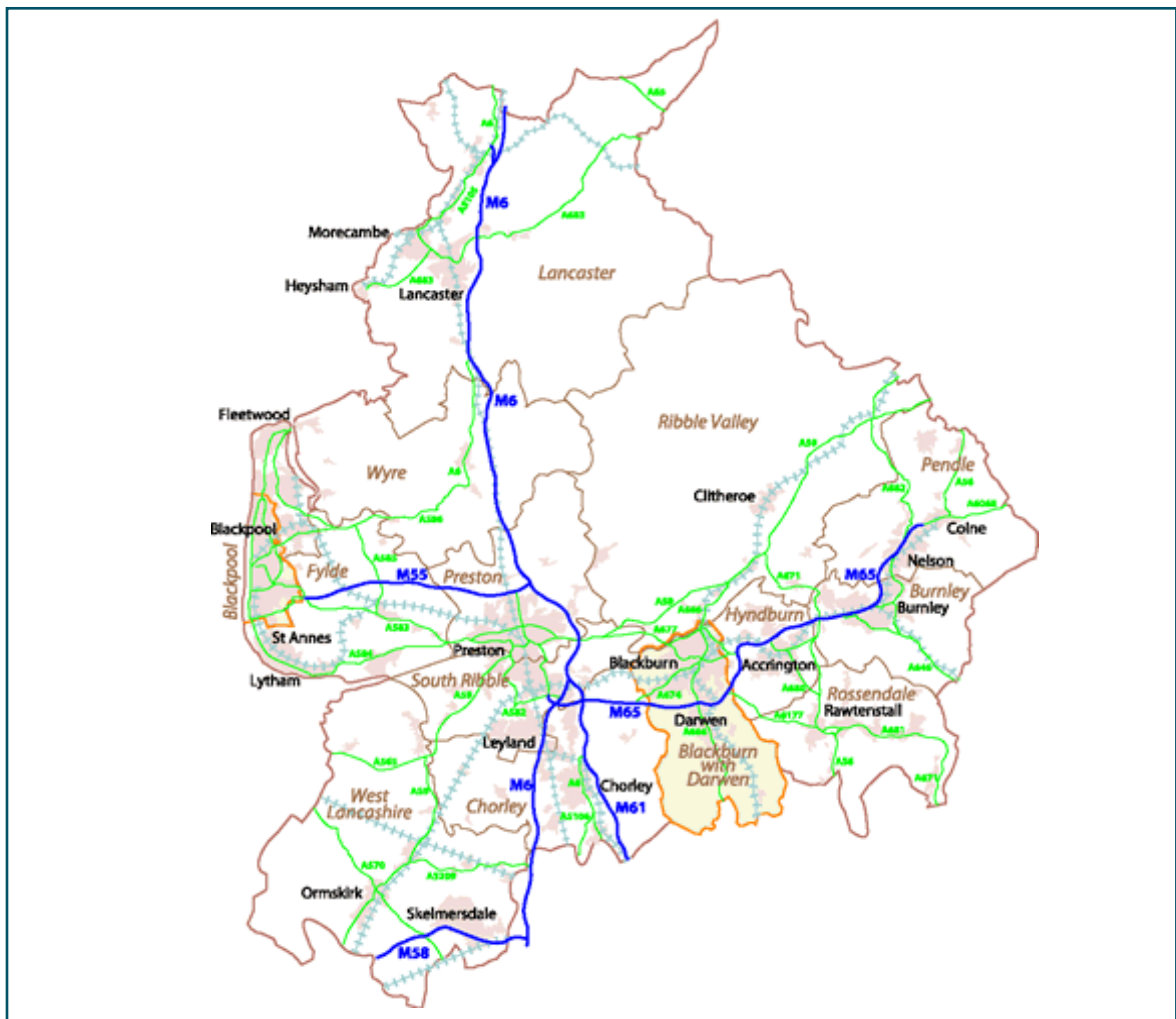
Section 1

Introduction

Lancashire: the local area

1.1 Lancashire is a county in the North West of England bounded to the west by the Irish Sea. It comprises 12 local county districts and the two unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, covers an area of 3,075 sq. km and has a population of over 1.4 million people. A further eight million people live within 50km of the county in one of Europe's most densely populated areas. It has a strong economic base underpinned by long urban and industrial traditions. With a £20bn per annum economy, and home to more than 39,000 businesses, Lancashire is one of the largest sub-regions in Britain in respect of its contribution to national output. Within the North West alone, Lancashire provides for about a fifth of the region's total economic production of goods and services, its contribution being second only to that of Greater Manchester.¹ According to Office for National Statistics estimates, the resident black and minority ethnic (BME) population is 9% of the total population compared with 11% of the population across England.

Figure 1: Lancashire criminal justice area



¹ Source: 2007, Lancashire Profile, Lancashire County Council

- 1.2 Crime has continued to fall in Lancashire. According to police recorded crime records, there were more than 135,800 criminal offences in Lancashire in 2006/07 (Figure 2), equivalent to 94 offences per 1,000 resident population, compared to 141,450 in 2005/06 or 98 offences per 1,000 resident population. Overall, total recorded crime within Lancashire fell by about 4% between 2005/06 and 2006/07 against a reduction of 2% in England and Wales. Figure 2 summarises the number of recorded offences by type.

Figure 2: Number of recorded offences by type (2006/07)

Recorded Crime by Offence Group, Lancashire, 2006/07					
	Lancashire		England and Wales	% change 2005/06-2006/07	
	No.	Rate ¹	Rate ²	Lancashire	England and Wales
Violence against the person	26,791	19	19	-7	1
Sexual offences	1,461	1	1	-3	-7
Robbery	1,014	1	2	-1	3
Burglary	14,531	10	12	-1	-4
Offences against vehicles ²	16,552	12	14	2	-4
Other theft offences	28,584	20	22	-3	-4
Fraud and forgery	3,976	3	4	-28	-14
Criminal damage	37,804	26	22	-6	0
Drugs offences	3,301	2	4	2	9
Other offences	1,823	1	1	5	0
Total	135,837	94	100	-4	-2
Notes ¹ Rate per 1,000 population					
² Includes theft of a motor vehicle, theft from a motor vehicle, aggravated vehicle taking and interfering with a motor vehicle.					
Source Home Office – Crime in England and Wales, 2006/07					

- 1.3 The criminal justice agencies are structured as follows:

- The Lancashire Constabulary is organised into six divisions: Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, Central and Pennine.
- The Crown Prosecution Service in Lancashire has offices at Burnley, Blackpool, Lancaster and Preston.
- Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) in Lancashire has recently merged with Cumbria to create one Area. In Lancashire there are Crown Courts at Burnley and Preston (also sitting at Sessions House in Preston, Lancaster Castle, and Barrow) and Magistrates' courts at Accrington, Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Chorley, Fleetwood, Lancaster, Leyland, Ormskirk, Preston, Rawtenstall and Reedley.
- There are six prisons in the Area: Her Majesty's Prison Preston is a local prison accepting all adult male prisoners from Crown Courts and magistrates' courts serving Lancashire and Cumbria. Other prisons are Garth, Lancaster Castle, Wymott and Kirkham. Lancaster Farms is a shared Young Offender and juvenile site.
- There are three Youth Offending Teams: Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.
- The National Probation Service for Lancashire is based in Preston with probation centres at Accrington, Burnley, Blackburn, Blackpool, Chorley, Skelmersdale, Fleetwood, Morecombe, Lancaster, Nelson, Rawtenstall, Preston and Leyland.

Lancashire Criminal Justice Board

1.4 The Government has established 42 Criminal Justice Areas. Each has a Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). The Lancashire LCJB was established in April 2003 to improve the local delivery of criminal justice and increase public confidence in the justice delivered in Lancashire.

1.5 Lancashire LCJB consists of:

- The Chief Crown Prosecutor for Lancashire (Chair)
- The Chief Constable and the Acting Assistant Chief Constable from the Lancashire Constabulary
- The Area Director for HM Courts Service (Cumbria and Lancashire)
- The Governor of HMP Preston
- The Chief Officer of the National Probation Service (Lancashire Area)
- The Head of Service for the Lancashire Youth Offending Team representing the three Youth Offending Teams in operation in Lancashire
- The Chief Executive of Victim Support in Lancashire
- The Chair of the Strategic Crime Reduction Board (Lancashire)
- The Director of Public Health for the North Lancashire Primary Care Trust
- The Business Manager for the Legal Service Commission in the North West Region

All Board members have equal voting rights. Dedicated performance, administration and communication management posts support the work of the Board. A fourth post of diversity and equality officer is currently vacant and under review.

1.6 All Criminal Justice Boards are charged with establishing and delivering, at a local level, targets to support the achievement of national objectives that are designed to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The national targets, which are drawn from the Ministerial Public Service Agreements (PSAs), include:

- Improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.25 million by 2007/08. To support delivery of the national target, each LCJB has a target to increase the number of offences brought to justice. For Lancashire this figure is 46,011.
- Increase the level of public confidence that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) is effective in bringing people who have committed a crime to justice from a baseline of 39% for the year ending March 2003. Each LCJB has set individual targets for improving levels of confidence in the CJS in their Area. Lancashire's target is 45% for the year ending 31 March 2008.
- Reduce the proportion of ineffective trials to 15% in the Crown Court, and 19.5% in the Magistrates' Courts, by the end of March 2008.
- Achieve a fines payment rate of 85% for 2007/08.
- To not exceed 71 days average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders
- Achieve an average of 35 working days from the date of a failure to comply with a community penalty, to the resolution of the case; and to resolve 60% of breaches within 25 working days of the breach.
- To notify the police of 90% of defendant fail to appear warrants within one working day of issue, and 100% within three working days.

- 1.7 Lancashire’s performance against these targets is shown in Figure 3. This uses the latest published data from the Office for Criminal Justice Reform. Data provided by the LCJB for December 2007 is also shown for comparison.

Figure 3: Lancashire performance against PSA targets

Target area	Target	Quarter ending March 2007	Quarter ending June 2007	LCJB data for month of December 2007
Offences brought to justice	46,011	49,527	49,083	48,583
Public confidence	45%	38	39	No new data
Ineffective trials	15% in Crown Court	11.7	15.5	12.8
	19.5% in magistrates’ court	18.2	19.3	17
Fine payment rate	85%	84	91	96
Persistent young offenders	Arrest to sentence within 71 days	68	57	51
Fail to appear notification timeliness	90% within one day	96	95	96
	100% within three days	99	100	100
Community penalties – average time to resolve breach	Breach resolved within 35 days	55	42	48
	60% breach resolved within 25 working days	30	49	51

- 1.8 Just before this inspection, a new PSA Delivery Agreement for criminal justice (PSA 24) was announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. There will be five new indicators, which the Board will be required to consider in its next planning cycle. These are:
- Indicator 1: Effectiveness and efficiency of the CJS in bringing offences to justice
 - Indicator 2: Public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS
 - Indicator 3: Experience of the CJS for victims and witnesses
 - Indicator 4: Understanding and addressing race disproportionality at key stages in the CJS
 - Indicator 5: Recovery of criminal assets

Scope of inspection

- 1.9 The inspection was a joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI), and HM Inspectorate of Probation. This was the fourteenth in a series of joint Area inspections, and the second of two inspections to pilot a revised framework and methodology.

- 1.10 Inspectors looked at how well the criminal justice agencies in Lancashire worked together, and with their partners, to deliver key outcomes. The LCJB is the partnership/governance structure within which the criminal justice agencies work together. In particular, Inspectors looked at the leadership and workings of the LCJB; how effectively the criminal justice agencies were working together to deliver effective justice in domestic violence cases and how well they engaged with the community in order to increase public confidence in the CJS.
- 1.11 Although much inter-agency work in the Area, including domestic violence, is carried out under the auspices of the Strategic Crime Reduction Board (SCRB) and through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), these bodies were not directly inspected because they are not within the remit of the five criminal justice inspectorates.

Methodology

- 1.12 A range of briefing materials, including a self-assessment, management information, protocols and records of meetings, were examined prior to a two-week on-site period during November 2007, where Inspectors attended a meeting of the Criminal Justice Board and interviewed its members. A series of other interviews, and focus group sessions, were conducted with key members of staff from the criminal justice agencies in Lancashire, and with external stakeholders. Questionnaires were also used to gain the opinions of a wider range of stakeholders. Inspectors also observed a number of court sessions at the Area's specialist domestic violence courts (SDVC) and held a focus group of female survivors of domestic violence to gain a user perspective of the CJS.
- 1.13 The Chief Inspectors are grateful to all those who gave their time to the inspection, whether in preparation of documentation or by making themselves available for interview. A list of sources outside the criminal justice agencies, from which we received comment, is set out in the Annex.

Report structure

- 1.14 An executive summary presents the main findings of the joint inspection at the outset of the report, including the Area's Key Performance Results, with particular emphasis on the quantifiable progress in meeting the government's targets for the CJS. The main body of the report sets out the detailed findings of the inspection in relation to the topics inspected.
- 1.15 We identify strengths and aspects for improvement and make recommendations to address areas that we consider merit the highest priority by the LCJB and criminal justice partners.

Context of this inspection

- 1.16 This inspection was the second Area inspection to pilot a new framework and methodology. In addition, there are other contextual issues for this inspection.
- 1.17 In common with other Areas, there is a lack of common geographical boundaries between the criminal justice agencies in Lancashire. HMCS, for example, has recently changed structure, and Lancashire has merged with Cumbria into a combined Area. This means that the HMCS Area Director now sits on two Criminal Justice Boards. There are three Youth Offending Teams in Lancashire represented on the LCJB by the Head of Service from Lancashire YOT. Similarly, the Governor of HMP Preston represents all the prisons in the Area. The Legal Service Commission, sitting as an associate member of the LCJB, also works with four other Criminal Justice Boards in the North West Region.

- 1.18 A Strategic Crime Reduction Board (SCRB) and 14 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) also operate in Lancashire to their own government remits. This reflects the complex local government structures that exist in Lancashire, with 12 local council districts and two unitary authorities.
- 1.19 At the time of the inspection, the Area had one fully accredited Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) in Accrington. Whilst other courts in the Area were following the same model, they had yet to receive national accreditation. In this report SDVC is used to refer to all courts in the Area that follow the model.
- 1.20 The Area had recently been selected as a Beacon Area, along with nine other LCJBs in England and Wales. Beacon Areas are expected to deliver a number of key national projects, including Conditional Cautioning and Simple, Speedy, Summary Justice in the Magistrates' Courts (CJSSS), implementation of the national Witness Charter and enhanced IT support for case progression, as well as plans for greater engagement with local communities. Lancashire had been a pilot site for Conditional Cautioning.
- 1.21 The context in which LCJBs operate should be remembered. They are not statutory bodies and cannot hold member agencies to account. Thus they have to rely on negotiation and influencing key stakeholders in order to achieve their delivery aims. Funding for LCJBs is awarded annually by government grant, which can make planning for the long term difficult. LCJBs are also reliant on the goodwill of the constituent agencies to provide resourcing for projects where needed. However, at a time when agencies are often required to make efficiency savings, it is often difficult for Chief Officers to find the resources, whether human, financial or physical, required to effectively support cross-agency initiatives without affecting their ability to deliver their own services.

Section 2

Executive summary

Lancashire Criminal Justice Board

- 2.1 The LCJB was formed in 2003. The current chair took over in April 2007 and there have been no changes to the membership structure since that time. An extended membership includes Victim Support, the Chair of the Strategic Crime Reduction Board, the Director of Public Health for the North Lancashire Primary Care Trust, who attends meetings quarterly, and a representative from the Legal Services Commission. The OCJR Performance Advisor for Lancashire also attends most Board meetings. This extended structure facilitates inter-agency working and provides an external perspective to the Board.
- 2.2 Membership is complicated by members who are representative of several agencies working in the Area. It is not clear whether they are able to commit their agency resources without further consultation and whether they are representing their colleagues fully and/or providing feedback. This applies to Youth Offending Teams and HM prisons in the Area. Some members of staff from both agencies expressed feeling removed from the LCJB.
- 2.3 The Board has a support team of three full-time staff including an administrator, Performance Manager and Communications Officer. A fourth post, Race and Diversity Officer, is currently vacant and consideration is being given to whether this role is necessary in order for the LCJB to fill its equality and diversity remit.

Leadership and partnership

- 2.4 Inspectors found that there is a 'can-do' attitude in Lancashire, exemplified by Chief Officers, that culminates in consistently good performance across most LCJB targets and provides a catalyst for taking on new initiatives and supporting innovation. There are examples of successful inter-agency working as evidenced by excellent performance in a number of areas including offences brought to justice (OBTJ) and the effective implementation of Conditional Cautioning.
- 2.5 The Board has defined six priorities for 2007-2008 which have been usefully documented in a public leaflet. The strategy for the achievement of these priorities takes the form of delivery plans that are produced and owned by sub-groups of the LCJB. Different members of the LCJB chair each sub-group and they, along with responsible officers from each agency, have delegated authority to make key decisions. Inspectors were concerned that the delivery plans are inconsistent in quality, contain some gaps and do not always adequately detail actions, risks or review dates or cross-reference to other documents. It is therefore difficult to see how they can be used effectively to ensure that objectives are being met and that areas of crossover in the work of the sub-groups are identified, or how the Board can meet its terms of reference commitment to review actions in the Delivery Plans on a monthly basis.

- 2.6 There are several examples of the sharing of good practice with other Areas. These are most often based around the confidence agenda – for example, Lancashire have adopted the ‘You be the Judge’ event held in Greater Manchester, and have helped Cumbria develop ‘Question Time’ based on the experience in Lancashire. While there are other opportunities for the sharing of good practice, such as meetings of LCJB chairs and Performance Officers, there may be opportunities to exploit the sharing of ideas with other Boards in the operational arena too, and the LCJB should remain alert to these possibilities.
- 2.7 More can be done to provide information to key stakeholders and staff within individual agencies about the ongoing work of the LCJB, for example, by ensuring mailing lists are inclusive of all stakeholder groups, making use of available technology for sharing information and the wider distribution of sub-group minutes. The Board has recognised the need to promote the work of the LCJB within its component agencies, following the results of a staff survey, and has established an Internal Communications Group to help achieve this.
- 2.8 An annual review day in January provides an opportunity for the Board members to review the structures that support the Board, and changes are made to group structures where necessary. However, there is a risk that some areas of work may be lost as a result of such changes. For example:
- superseding the Case Management Group by a focused CJSSS group means that there is no longer a strategic forum at the LCJB level for Crown Court case management issues; and
 - the loss of some consultation opportunities with local stakeholders by the inactivity of the Core Consultation Coordination Group.
- 2.9 Although there are examples of good multi-agency training taking place, the need for co-ordination has only recently been recognised and as a result there are potentially training needs and issues that have not yet been identified.

Delivery of successful justice – domestic violence

- 2.10 The Lancashire Domestic Violence Partnership (LDVP) is an inter-agency forum, co-ordinated by Lancashire County Council. It involves the criminal justice agencies along with other statutory and voluntary organisations in Lancashire. The LDVP leads on domestic violence initiatives in Lancashire with a dedicated Project Team charged with the implementation of SDVCs. The Project Team brings together the police, prosecution, probation and the courts. The reporting and accountability lines of the LDVP to the LCJB and the Lancashire SCRB are ambiguous. Inspectors found contradictory information in documentation and in the understanding of how the structures worked.
- 2.11 The Area has received national accreditation for one SDVC at Accrington. Other dedicated domestic violence courts are in operation at Preston, Blackpool, Leyland, Ormskirk and Burnley. The LCJB has funded a temporary Project Manager to bring these remaining domestic violence courts to the required standards for accreditation. This includes the implementation of a number of recommendations made by the SDVC Project Team during their own unannounced inspections. Inspectors commend this initiative and are satisfied that this work will result in improvements in the experience for those affected by domestic violence in Lancashire. The Board should keep this under review.
- 2.12 Inspectors were told that where Multi-Agency Partnership Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings take place, these work well. However, the majority of domestic violence cases are assessed as medium to low risk of serious harm to the public and therefore are not subject to this process. At the time of the inspection, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) were in place

across most of the county with full implementation planned by the end of 2007. Inspectors found that relevant criminal justice agencies are clearly committed to MARACs and we heard some positive feedback about these arrangements. However, it is too early in the implementation process to evaluate the success of this provision.

- 2.13 At its November 2007 meeting, the Board signed off the Lancashire Domestic Violence Courts' Protocol, which formalises the arrangements for handling domestic violence cases in Lancashire. The protocol is useful but limited and needs to be updated to reflect recent developments, including the implementation of MARAC, MAPPA and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) and the role of the Prison Service. Further protocols are being developed to formalise the exchange of information between agencies and local arrangements for each of the SDVC locations.

Community engagement

- 2.14 There is some excellent work being done through public events such as 'You be the Judge' and 'Question Time', and use of the media to promote the work of criminal justice agencies in Lancashire. However, despite this work, and a lot of good single-agency activity that is taking place, performance against the public confidence target remains poor. Inspectors do accept that short-term and/or national issues affect public confidence.
- 2.15 Some staff and stakeholder groups contacted during the inspection were not fully aware of the work of the LCJB and did not know about a number of key community engagement events that were taking place. This makes staff and stakeholders understanding of how they fit into the CJS priorities more difficult and overlooks an opportunity to publicise events through personal and professional networks.
- 2.16 The LCJB is not directly represented as a member of Local Strategic Partnerships, although some of its members attend these meetings in other capacities. With the new focus under PSA 24, the Board should assure itself that opportunities are taken to promote the work of the Board, influence the local agenda and public opinion, and to undertake wide-reaching and meaningful consultation through existing networks. Further, where attendees are from single agencies, the Board should be satisfied that the collective views of criminal justice agencies are adequately represented.

Recommendation 1

That the Board improve its effectiveness by:

- ensuring that delivery plans are comprehensive, SMART and appropriately monitored; and:
- assuring itself that strategic decisions are made in the appropriate forum.

Recommendation 2

That the Board improve public confidence in the local criminal justice system and strengthen its planning to reflect community priorities, by developing a co-ordinated approach to community engagement with local people and groups from all sections of the community.

Section 3

Inspection findings

Leadership and partnership

- 3.1 This section of the report deals with how effectively the Lancashire LCJB is led, and how far partnership working has been successfully implemented. The standard defined in the framework is:

The behaviour, actions and visibility of all chief officers promote and inspire staff to achieve Area and National objectives. The Board identifies and engages with its strategic partners.

- 3.2 Inspectors were encouraged by the positive attitude that exists in Lancashire to taking on new initiatives and to be at the forefront of developing national policies. Good progress had already been made against a number of projects that form part of the Beacon programme including Conditional Cautioning, CJSSS and work being done on community engagement, which resulted in Lancashire being accepted as one of ten nationally recognised Beacon sites.
- 3.3 Lancashire LCJB has clear priorities that are agreed at an annual review day by the Board members. Priority setting is facilitated by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) and provides an opportunity to review performance against the previous year's objectives and the structures in place to aid delivery. The priorities are adopted from nationally set priorities, supported by OCJR delivery targets. These are broad and do not focus the LCJB's work on local concerns, as consultation with key stakeholders and community groups does not form part of this planning cycle. It is encouraging that recent community engagement events have attempted to capture concerns raised and there is an intention to use this feedback to inform future planning. There is also recognition of the need to align LCJB priorities to those of the SCRB and CDRPs.
- 3.4 A number of sub-groups exist to support the work of the Board, each chaired by a member of the Board. There is good staff involvement from all agencies in the sub-groups and they have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation. The key sub-groups for the delivery of the Board's priorities are: Public Confidence; Victims and Witnesses; Narrowing the Justice Gap; Enforcement; and Prolific Offenders. A temporary CJSSS group is also in place having replaced the Criminal Case Management sub-group earlier in the year. There are also sub-groups for Race and Diversity and IT in addition to forums that engage with the defence community and judiciary. We were pleased to see Terms of Reference for all sub-groups and that they each followed a similar format. However, we heard from various sources, and read in minutes, that some groups were unclear about what they should be doing, indicating that the Terms of Reference were not being put to best use. We also noted that some of the Terms of Reference were out of date and had not been updated following changes in membership.
- 3.5 Sub-groups recognise that performance is an important element of their functioning and involve the Performance Manager in meetings in order to facilitate this.
- 3.6 Most of the sub-group action plans do not make reference to communication. The Board should assure itself that all its groups engage effectively with staff and stakeholders in order to keep them informed of developments and drive improvements.

- 3.7 The Board relies on its sub-groups to produce the more detailed delivery plans needed for the achievement of its priorities and to report back quarterly on progress against targets. However, as there is currently no national requirement for plans to be in a particular form, it is left to each sub-group chair to decide how detailed these plans should be and how they will be used to manage actions. This results in inconsistency in the plans, some of which contain a good level of detail, such as that produced by the Public Confidence sub-group (which includes detailed actions, responsibilities, review dates and risks to delivery). Other plans do not have an appropriate level of detail, nor do they cross-reference other relevant documents. Inspectors feel these are not fit for purpose because:
- The sub-groups are the key delivery mechanism for the Board's achievement of its priorities in Lancashire. It is reasonable therefore to expect that the detailed strategy for the achievement of the Board's aims and priorities will be visible in the sub-groups' plans.
 - The Board, in its Terms of Reference, states that it will review sub-group actions at its monthly meetings. It is difficult to see how this could be done effectively without documents detailing the actions and progress they should be looking for.
 - Areas of crossover between ongoing work of the sub-groups can not be easily identified or appropriately addressed, potentially resulting in duplication of effort or gaps in delivery. For example, due to pressing timescales, the Board delegated responsibility to three of its members to progress work in relation to Beacon. The group meets in advance of LCJB meetings to make decisions on behalf of the rest of the Board (e.g. to decide which national projects to undertake in addition to the core elements of Beacon). This group does not have terms of reference and so it is not clear how its responsibilities fit with work already being done by the Board's existing sub-groups. Whilst Inspectors recognise that there will be links into the work of the sub-groups chaired by those on the Beacon planning group, the impact on, and contribution of, other sub-groups, and their chairs, to the process is not so visible. As a result, opportunities for equitable understanding and challenge for all Board members is limited.
- 3.8 The Board needs to assure itself that there are opportunities for all its officers to contribute to strategic decisions, take ownership of decisions that are made and drive change. There are clearly tensions between the perspectives of different Board members on this issue. One person interviewed told us that "[The Board] *trust others to deliver, but do not know what they are doing*" and felt there was a need for the Board to take more ownership and reach consensus rather than individual members taking an issue away to their agency to deal with. We also heard that some Board members "*are concerned about how things are going, but they don't want to challenge*" although this was refuted by some Chief Officers, who felt that members would challenge each other if they felt strongly about an issue. Inspectors suggest that the LCJB ensures that members are given every opportunity to challenge when necessary. A recommendation has been made to address both this and the weaknesses in the Board's delivery plans.
- 3.9 The annual review day in January provides an opportunity to review the structures that support the Board and changes are made to group structures where necessary. However, the Board cannot assure itself that focus is maintained on all areas of work as a result of these changes. The Case Management Group that dealt with case issues across Crown Courts and magistrates' courts was superseded by the CJSSS Magistrates' Court Strategic Programme Board. As a result there is currently no identified strategic forum for dealing with other case issues outside the Terms of Reference of this group. The inactivity of the Core Consultation Group, that last met in September 2006, has resulted in a break in consultation with stakeholder groups.

- 3.10 The Board has also taken the opportunity presented by the departure of its Race and Diversity Manager in May 2007 to review the structures in place to meet its obligations under the equality and diversity agenda. At the time of the inspection consideration was still being given to the outcome of the review and the decision as to whether it was necessary to fill this position. This was complicated further by the additional requirements placed on the Area as a result of its Beacon status. Inspectors found that the Equality and Diversity sub-group was lacking direction whilst waiting for the outcome of the review and currently had no defined priorities to work to. The group was also about to lose its chair, which would impact further.
- 3.11 Inspectors were consistently told that agencies work together to resolve performance issues in Lancashire, and we saw several instances of this happening. These include the resolution of issues around breach of community penalty proceedings, agreements reached on an inter-agency domestic violence protocol and joint work done around the management of community penalty breach warrants. Other examples of successful inter-agency working include the excellent performance in the number of offences brought to justice, the introduction of case progression protocols and the effective implementation of Conditional Cautioning.
- 3.12 The Board is working to overcome the complexities of local structures within criminal justice agencies, local councils and health trusts in Lancashire. This is achieved in part through an extended Board membership that includes the Chair of the Strategic Crime Reduction Board, the Director of Public Health for the North Lancashire Primary Care Trust, who attends meetings quarterly, and representatives from the Legal Services Commission. The OCJR Performance Advisor for Lancashire also attends most Board meetings. This extended structure facilitates interagency working and provides an external perspective to the Board. Several members of the LCJB also sit on the SCRB and have taken steps to build relationships and ensure effective communication between these different groups.
- 3.13 Membership of the Board is complicated by members who are representative of several agencies working in the Area. There are three Youth Offending Teams in Lancashire but it has been agreed that the Head of Service from the Lancashire YOT should represent the views of, and feedback to, her peers in Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen YOTs. However, interviewed managers in YOTs that were not directly represented described feedback from the LCJB as ‘sporadic’ with a lack of strategic information about what was happening. As a result there was a feeling of being removed from the LCJB. Lancashire prisons are represented by the Governor of HMP Preston. Inspectors spoke to prison governors at three out of five other prisons in the Area individually to ascertain their awareness of the Board’s strategy and ability to contribute to developments in the Area and were told that they rarely have direct contact with LCJB and that there was little feedback from the Board. There was also limited awareness of joint community events. In both of these examples, it is not clear whether the LCJB representatives from these agencies are able to commit their agency resources without further consultation or whether they are representing their colleagues fully. Inspectors have asked the Board to ensure that all prisons and YOTs are engaged with the Board and provided with opportunities to input into its work.

- 3.14 Inspectors were pleased to see that the Public Confidence sub-group had conducted a staff survey across all criminal justice agencies to ascertain the level of awareness of the work of the LCJB. Plans were in place to repeat this exercise following new processes put in place by the newly formed Internal Communications Group. Although good progress has been made more can be done to provide information to key stakeholders and staff within individual agencies about the ongoing work of the Board. For example:
- wider and consistent distribution of sub-group minutes
 - extended distribution of the LCJB newsletter and priorities leaflet
 - ensuring that the Board’s website is kept up to date and informative.
- 3.15 Managers in one agency told Inspectors that the messages from the Board are communicated but staff would not necessarily know, or need to know, where they came from. Other interviews identified that there were members of single-agency consultative groups who did not know about the work of the Board and they did not all see the LCJB newsletter. There were also gaps identified in the awareness of community engagement events amongst staff, stakeholders and voluntary organisations with whom Inspectors came into contact during the inspection. Further, we found that although there were links into the work of Strategic Partnerships, for example as led by Lancashire County Council, the LCJB is not a recognised member. The Board needs to give due consideration to how it can effectively engage with this and other forums in Lancashire in order to raise its profile, improve its ability to influence the local agenda and to maximize opportunities for community consultation. Section 5 of this report provides further analysis of inspection findings relating to community engagement.
- 3.16 Obtaining and sharing good practice with other LCJBs is limited and informal, through performance and communication networks and where Chief Officers are members of more than one Board. Inspectors found a single example of initiatives that had been adopted from elsewhere, namely in the implementation of ‘You be the Judge’ events originally introduced in Greater Manchester. Closer relationships were established with the Cumbria LCJB when there were plans to merge the two Criminal Justice Areas. However, these had been discontinued since the decision not to go ahead with the merger was made.
- 3.17 Although there are examples of where good multi-agency training is taking place, the need for co-ordination has only recently been recognised and as a result there are potentially training needs and issues that have not been identified. Specific examples are addressed in Section 4 of this report relating to domestic violence.

Strengths

- There are examples of successful inter-agency working as evidenced by excellent performance in the number of offences brought to justice and the effective implementation of Conditional Cautioning.
- The LCJB priorities are supported by sub-groups, each chaired by a member of the Board.
- Extended Board membership including representation from Victim Support, the Legal Services Commission, Primary Care Trusts and OCJR, facilitates inter-agency working and gives an external perspective.
- A staff survey has been carried out to test awareness of the Board, resulting in the setting up of an Internal Communications Group.

Areas for improvement

- Consultation with stakeholders and community groups is not fed into the planning cycle or linked to new projects.
- Sub-group action plans are inconsistent in quality and do not always detail, or cross-reference, actions, risks or review dates. Communication from the groups is also inconsistent.

Significant issues are addressed through recommendations on page 9 of this report.

Section 4

Delivery of successful justice – domestic violence

- 4.1 This section of the report deals with how well the agencies in Lancashire work together to deliver successful justice. The inspection looked specifically at domestic violence as a means to ascertain this. The standard defined in the framework is:

The Area takes a strategic approach to domestic violence and has a coherent strategy involving CJS agencies and other organisations clearly outlining that approach.

- 4.2 Inspectors accept that Lancashire LCJB has limited input into the Domestic Violence Strategy as the Lancashire Domestic Violence Partnership (LDVP), governs this work. The LDVP has representation from Lancashire’s criminal justice agencies who are given the necessary powers to make decisions. Domestic violence is not a priority for the LCJB other than as part of the Victims and Witness subgroup’s wider aim “*to make the needs of victims and witnesses central to the criminal justice process with better facilities and support available*” and therefore there is no delivery plan or expectation that the LCJB should give more focus to domestic violence than any other area of its business. It does, however, maintain an overview of the work and provides support through expertise, influence and provision of resources when necessary, for example in funding a temporary co-ordinator to review the operation of SDVCs. Inspectors are satisfied, as far as possible within the scope of the inspection (we did not inspect the LDVP or SCRIB), that strategic arrangements for directing interagency working for domestic violence are in place.

- 4.3 Domestic violence is defined by the government as:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”.

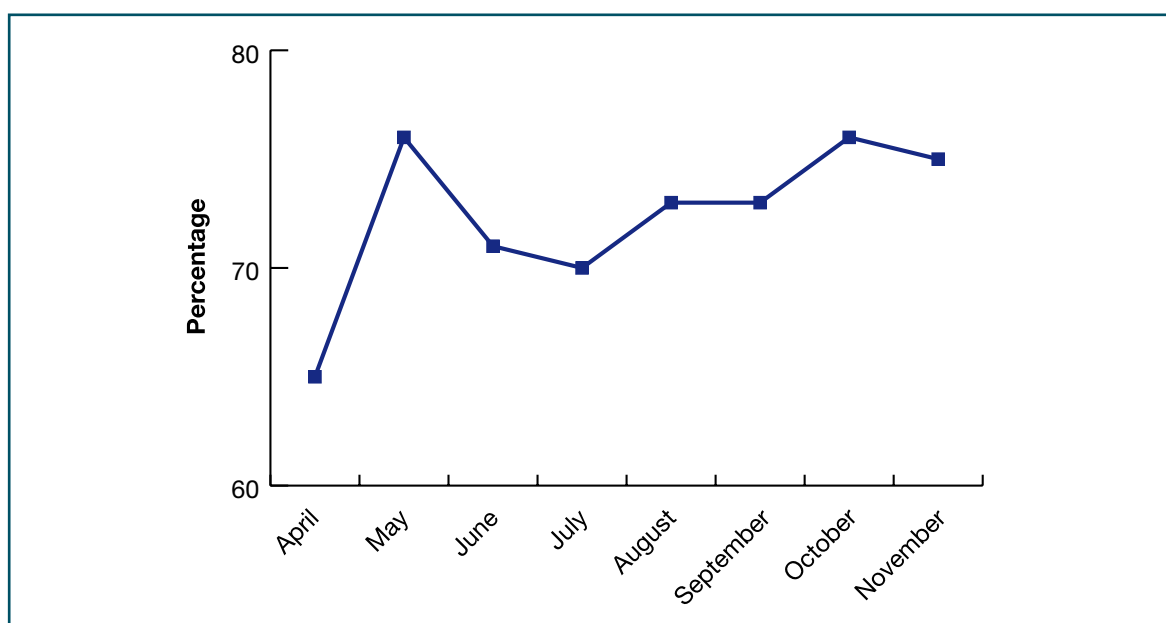
Whilst all other agencies adhere to this definition, the Lancashire Police work to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition, which includes a specific definition of ‘adults’ as being aged 18 or over. This presents a challenge for the Area in the identification of cases subject to SDVC protocols and in the analysis of performance data with regard to Domestic Violence cases involving defendants who are under the age of 18. Inspectors were pleased to find that the LCJB is aware of this and steps have been taken to help overcome these difficulties by identifying and treating appropriate cases as Domestic Violence subject to agreed protocols whilst statistically being counted as youth cases. However, the inter-agency domestic violence protocol does not specifically address this issue. There are also ongoing attempts to balance Police and CPS data before its inclusion in the local Multi-Agency Data Exchange (MADE) system that is used by the LDVP for analysis of DV performance.

- 4.4 The LDVPs target for the successful prosecution of 65% of domestic violence cases, measured on CPS data, has been exceeded since May 2007, with an ongoing upward trend (see Figure 4.) Performance data is used by the Domestic Violence Project Team to identify where improvements are necessary as well as where good practice can be shared.

Figure 4: Successful outcomes in domestic violence cases (LDVP target 65%)



2007	Number of cases	Number successful	% successful
April	177	115	65
May	236	179	76
June	223	159	71
July	209	146	70
August	267	194	73
September	266	195	73
October	280	213	76
November	317	237	75
Total	1,975	1,438	73






Figure 5: Successful outcomes in domestic violence cases as a percentage of all cases





4.5 A domestic violence protocol was first introduced in Lancashire in 2005 when dedicated domestic violence courts were established in the Area. This was prior to the national SDVC initiative. The protocol was revised in March 2007 but the sign off had been delayed by eight months whilst agreement was reached on the wording around the production of Probation Service reports. The Board formally signed off the Lancashire Domestic Violence Courts' Protocol at its November 2007 meeting.

4.6 The protocol states the arrangements for handling domestic violence cases in Lancashire including the responsibilities of the police, courts, CPS, Probation Service and Victim Support. It documents procedures prior to and including the court hearing. However, it does not include:

- reference to the MARAC and MAPPA meetings 
- the role of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) 
- reference to the responsibilities of the prisons, for example with relation to early release of prisoners.

- 4.7 The protocol is due for review in six months' time, but a more expeditious review may be in order to ensure that all components of the national SDVC guidance are incorporated and that this guides the production of the planned local protocols.
- 4.8 A further review of the protocol would also provide opportunity to give consideration to the role of HM prisons in domestic violence cases, particularly in managing the impact on victims, witnesses and their families of the early release of prisoners.
- 4.9 The cost of domestic violence to the criminal justice system in Lancashire is nearly one-quarter its budget for violent crime, a total of £27,648,000 per year. The largest single component is that of the police, calculated at £13,319,252. Other costs include: prosecution, magistrates' and Crown Courts, probation, prison, legal representation, other defence costs, jury service, and criminal injuries compensation administration². In recognition of this, and the additional costs to society through social, health, and loss of work days, etc, the Home Office has established a national task force to implement SDVCs across the country. These are based on 11 core principles, which are:
- multi-agency partnerships with protocols 
 - MARAC and MAPPA arrangements
 - identification and monitoring of cases 
 - independent accredited support for complainants – through an IDVA service
 - trained and dedicated criminal justice staff 
 - suitable court listing arrangements 
 - equality and diversity issues addressed
 - data collection and monitoring 
 - suitable facilities at court
 - children's services
 - community-based perpetrator programmes.
- 4.10 The Area has received national accreditation from the Home Office task force, for one SDVC at Accrington, which has been assessed as delivering the 11 SDVC components to the required standards. Other dedicated domestic violence courts have been established at Ormskirk, Leyland, Preston, Burnley, Lancaster, Blackpool and Fleetwood, and it is hoped that some of these courts will receive accreditation during the next planned visit of the task force in February 2008. Domestic Abuse co-ordinators from the relevant local authority act as project managers for the SDVCs. Local operational groups are in place in SDVC areas, chaired by HMCS staff. Each operational group has been asked to produce local operational protocols aligned to the LDVP.
- 4.11 Inspectors were pleased to see that the Area had taken the initiative to carry out its own unannounced inspections of domestic violence courts, to establish where improvements need to be made in order to reach the standards required for accreditation. These inspections, led by HMCS and CPS, have resulted in a number of specific recommendations, including: the need for further training; the reinforcement of procedural guidance; and the need to prevent cases non-domestic abuse cases from being transferred into the domestic violence courts. Many of these issues were still in evidence during court observations undertaken as part of this inspection, suggesting that improvements have still to be made. The recent secondment of a SDVC co-ordinator from the CPS (funded by the LCJB), and work of the CPS and HMCS domestic violence leads, is key to the continued identification of operational issues and their resolution through the local operational teams.

² Source: 2007, Safer Lancashire (The Community Safer Partnership website)

- 4.12 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) support the assessment and management of the most serious sexual and violent offenders. They promote information sharing primarily between the police, probation and prison services, but also with social care, health, housing and education services that have a duty to co-operate with MAPPA. Victims' needs are required to be represented in MAPPA, with measures put into place to manage the risks posed to victims if necessary. However, as the majority of domestic violence cases are assessed as medium to low risk of causing serious harm to the public, additional resources and support are generally not made available to victims. Inspectors therefore found little empirical evidence of what was happening with MAPPA in domestic violence cases in Lancashire, although we were told that where meetings took place they were working well.
- 4.13 In addition to arrangements under MAPPA, multi-agency risk assessment conferences are a national initiative to manage the risk faced by victims of domestic violence from the perpetrator. Like MAPPA, the role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing between agencies to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. At the time of our inspection MARACs were in place across most of the county with full implementation planned by the end of 2007. There has been a commitment by appropriate criminal justice agencies to MARACs, for example the Probation Service has committed to Senior Probation Officers attending the meetings despite no additional resources being provided to meet the need. It is too early in the implementation process to evaluate the success of MARAC provision but the local domestic violence forums have welcomed this 'new co-operative culture', finding MARACs to be very helpful and positive.
- 4.14 Lancashire Probation Service has ensured that its offender managers have basic domestic violence awareness training and are trained to supervise domestic violence cases, write specialist court reports and deliver the pre-programme work for its perpetrator programmes. In order to address long waiting lists for attendance on perpetrator programmes, additional resources have been allocated by the Probation Service to double the number of courses to 12 per week. This has effectively halved the waiting time for a sentenced offender to start the programme from 12 to 6 weeks, although long waiting lists still exist. The programmes take place at different times of the day and during weekends, to maximise opportunities for attendance.
- 4.15 According to the Home Office Task Force for SDVCs, the majority of domestic violence cases that are reported are between heterosexual couples where the woman is the victim and the man is the perpetrator. It usually involves systematic physical violence although there are variations including culturally specific abuse (e.g. female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called 'honour-based' crimes); abuse amongst lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities; and abuse against men perpetrated by women. Therefore, in SDVCs it is essential that those agencies involved have an awareness of the complexities of domestic violence cases, are trained to respond accordingly and that systems and services are in place to meet individual needs. Work has been done in Lancashire to ensure that magistrates, prosecutors, legal advisors and police officers are trained appropriately to deal with domestic violence cases and each agency is able to identify who amongst its personnel have received training and are continuing to address outstanding training needs. 
- 4.16 There are examples of good practice in all agencies to identify and address training needs, for example; the police at Burnley use posters to educate officers to attend pre-charge advice sessions equipped with all the necessary information; quarterly CPS domestic violence specialist meetings are held, including attendance by the police if there are issues to resolve; and HMCS organised a DV training event for the judiciary (including magistrates and District Judges). Local Domestic Violence Forums also provide training events attended by criminal justice agency staff. In addition, training needs are identified as a result of the local inspections of Domestic Violence Courts. 

4.17 Inspectors spoke to a number of survivors of domestic violence as part of the inspection. While there was some positive feedback about treatment by staff who had received domestic violence training, some had had less positive experiences. These included:

- a Police Officer insensitively threatening a survivor with arrest if she did not attend court
- a survivor being made to sit directly next to her abuser in court, albeit separated by a screen
- lack of accessibility to information for a non-English speaker to explain what was happening in her case
- a survivor being denied the use of a separate entrance into a court building despite this having been agreed in advance.

These specific instances of poor treatment suggest that there remain some staff training issues for the care of vulnerable victims and witnesses. Communication was also identified as a particular issue: several survivors stated it was difficult to get an update on the progress of their case from the police/Witness Care Units (WCUs) and others found out what was happening in their case from the defendant or other family members. Some of the participants in the focus group were anxious to ask questions about the workings of the criminal justice system but did not know where to direct their questions. The Area should ensure that feedback is being sought from victims in order to make improvements.

4.18 The Area has demonstrated a commitment to extending IDVA provision across Lancashire. In 2006/07, three Home Office grants of £20,000 were awarded to Blackpool, Blackburn and Rossendale to part fund IDVAs to support victims of domestic violence through the CJS. Additional funding for IDVA posts was obtained from local sources to provide for a second IDVA in Blackpool and part-time posts in Preston, Leyland and Chorley. At the time of the inspection, Lancashire had recently received confirmation of further funding awarded for 2007/08.

4.19 Retraction clinics have been implemented by the police in Lancashire as an innovative solution to encouraging survivors of domestic violence to reconsider the retraction of statements. In Blackpool, IDVAs also attend these clinics to provide specialist support and encouragement to the victim and Inspectors were told that this is proving successful in reducing the number of retractions made. At the time of the inspection, the retraction clinic initiative had not been evaluated from a user perspective, and it is not clear whether they are positively providing protection and support to survivors of domestic violence.

4.20 There are good relationships developing with the voluntary sector, through organisations such as 'SALS Place', to provide support for survivors of domestic violence. There is also good support provided to women with partners attending perpetrator programmes through the Probation Service. Female survivors, who participated in the focus group, were appreciative of the support that they received in this way. Provision for male survivors is more limited, although Inspectors recognise that there is a very low demand. Some IDVA and voluntary services offer support to men, but generally they are referred to a national telephone help line or to the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Strengths

- There are examples of innovative working including the introduction of a number of protocols and the implementation of retraction clinics.
- Area-wide inspections of SDVCs take place to ensure compliance with national and local domestic violence protocols.
- The LCJB supports the work of LDVP through provision of funding and resources where necessary.
- Steps have been taken to overcome difficulties presented by the differing definitions of domestic violence used by the police and other criminal justice agencies nationally.

Areas for improvement

- There are occasions where victims' needs are not identified or adequately provided for highlighting staff training needs.

Section 5

Community engagement

- 5.1 This section of the report deals with how effectively the Lancashire LCJB is engaging with the community served by the criminal justice agencies. The standard for this section of the inspection is:

The Area is engaging effectively and positively with the communities it serves, and confidence is improving.

- 5.2 At the time of the inspection LCJBs were measured on their effectiveness in increasing public confidence in the criminal justice system through the British Crime Survey³. The inspection considered the wider question of how effectively Lancashire criminal justice agencies engaged with the community in order to promote the criminal justice agencies and potentially increase the levels of public confidence. The new PSA 24 indicator for public confidence will be measured at a national level and states that “*LCJBs will be expected to produce and deliver clear plans for improvements in community engagement*”.⁴ This part of the inspection is therefore timely for the Board, and Inspectors hope that the recommendation made will help them fulfil their obligations under this indicator.
- 5.3 Inspectors were pleased to be able to attend a ‘You be the Judge’ event whilst in Lancashire and found that the event was well run, and well received by those who attended. There are also a number of other regular LCJB-led events taking place in Lancashire, including ‘Question Time’, and positive engagement with the media through television and radio interviews. Such events are excellent examples of community engagement and provide opportunities to inform the community about the work of the Board and its constituent agencies.
- 5.4 However, despite this work, and a lot of good single agency activity that is taking place, performance against the public confidence target remains poor. The latest available data at the time of the inspection showed current performance at 38.9% (June 2007) against a target of 45%. Inspectors accept that short-term and/or national issues affect public confidence, which are outside the control of the Area and recognise concerted efforts that are being made in Lancashire to improve public confidence.
- 5.5 The LCJB has a comprehensive communication strategy, which recognises that: “*Effective communication is critical if public confidence is to be improved*”. The strategy has clear aims and objectives and is underpinned by a detailed public confidence delivery plan owned by the Public Confidence sub-group. Clearly a lot of work has been done in trying to improve public confidence. However, there are still improvements that can be made that may help to minimize the impact of negative media coverage. These include improved co-ordination of single-agency community engagement events and enhanced communication with both existing and new contacts.
- 5.6 Some staff and stakeholder groups contacted during the inspection were not fully aware of the work of the LCJB and did not know about a number of key community engagement events that were taking place.

³ The measure is defined as: “*Proportion of those questioned in the British Crime Survey expressing confidence in the CJS bringing offenders to justice, across Local Criminal Justice Board areas*”.

⁴ PSA Delivery Agreement 24, page 11

- 5.7 It is apparent that further work needs to be done to ensure that all staff are aware of the role of the Board and are able to support and promote its work through their own networks. Some members of staff we spoke to were unaware of the community events that were happening. It is commendable that the Area undertook a review of LCJB internal communications during the early part of 2007 and following this has established an internal communications group to address the review findings and to ensure that messages are conveyed to staff in all the criminal justice agencies. The group is chaired by the LCJB's Consultation and Communication Officer and sits as a sub-group of the Public Confidence sub-group. Inspectors question whether this adequately allows messages from the LCJB's other sub-groups to be communicated effectively or restricts internal communication to matters pertaining to the confidence agenda.
- 5.8 Inspectors also found that members of a single-agency consultative group did not receive copies of the LCJB newsletter or have an understanding of the role of the LCJB in Lancashire despite being involved in various inter-agency forums. A mailing list of approximately 1,000 names of community groups and key contacts is held by the LCJB. The contacts are sent copies of the twice-yearly LCJB newsletter but this needs to be reviewed to ensure that any gaps in the distribution of information are addressed. Benefits may also be gleaned by links with the equality and diversity sub-group to ensure that all sectors of the community are reached.
- 5.9 Historically, there had been limited co-ordination of individual agency community engagement events in Lancashire, although this had begun to happen through the Public Confidence sub-group. Various single-agency events taking place during Inside Justice week, for example, had been publicised centrally by the LCJB and feedback about these events has since been published on the Lancashire LCJB website. There have also been a number of radio phone-ins involving all key agencies and press-releases to publicise initiatives.
- 5.10 Inspectors were concerned to find that the LCJB's core consultation group, consisting of local community leaders, had not met since September 2006 although written contact had been maintained. It is understood that the discontinuance was due to poor attendance and the expectation that the new Question Time events would provide an alternative forum for this group. However, the LCJB has identified a continuing need for consultation group meetings and has recently written to members to ascertain if they wish to remain on the group and to identify any gaps in representation that need to be filled.
- 5.11 Regular community engagement events are evaluated and comments are used to improve future activities. Data on attendees' age, gender and ethnicity profiles is collected and used to make improvements.
- 5.12 Inspectors also note that public documents produced by the Board state that copies are available in alternative languages on request. However, as this is stated in English only, access to information by non-English speakers is restricted. If this provision is to be made, then the Area needs to ensure that it is appropriately signposted.
- 5.13 There is no single community engagement manager and most events fall to separate agencies to lead on with support from the LCJB Consultation and Communication Officer where resources allow. Inspectors noted that a review considering the role of the Equality and Diversity Officer identified that *"although some agencies have internal mechanisms for undertaking community engagement activities, there was no overall plan for the Board on community engagement. It was felt that this was an urgent piece of work"*. This should be taken forward in order to enable the LCJB to consolidate activity to better meet the needs of the community it serves.

5.14 As noted in Section 3, the LCJB is not directly represented as a member of Local Strategic Partnerships. Although some LCJB members attend partnership meetings in other capacities, and are therefore able to share information on behalf of and with the Board, the lack of formal recognition of the LCJB as part of these groups poses a risk that:

- the LCJB is not able to contribute, and deliver, the county's priorities
- the LCJB does not take full advantage of community consultation activities undertaken by the strategic partnerships.

Strengths

- There are some excellent community engagement events set up in the Area, funded by the Board.
- There is a coherent Communication Strategy and comprehensive public confidence delivery plan. The Board has established good relationships with the local media to deliver appropriate messages.

Areas for improvement

- There is a risk that opportunities to influence the local agenda and to raise the Board's profile are missed, as the LCJB is not directly represented on (and therefore cannot proactively contribute to) the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Not all staff or key stakeholders are engaged with the Board or kept up to date about what is happening.

Significant issues are addressed through recommendations on page 9 of this report.

Annex

List of those who assisted in this inspection

HHJ David Hale, Liaison Judge for this inspection

Blackpool & Fylde Jewish Community

Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust

Chorley Borough Council

Courts Board (Cumbria & Lancashire)

Fylde Community Safety Partnership

Fylde Local Strategic Partnership

Government Office for the North West

Independent Advisory Group (Lancashire Constabulary)

Lancashire Care NHS Trust

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Crime and Disorder Partnerships

Lancashire Domestic Violence Forums

Lancashire Domestic Violence Partnership

Lancashire Drug Action Team

Lancashire Neighbourhood Watch Group

Lancashire Specialist Domestic Violence Court Project Management Board

Legal Services Commission, Lancashire

Magistrates in the Community, Lancashire

Nacro, Lancashire

Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Public Protection Unit Eastern & Pennine Division

Race Equality Council, Lancashire

Rock FM

South Ribble Borough Council

Women's Aid

and staff from the Criminal Justice Agencies