



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>15 August 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>SPA Corporate Benchmarking Update</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Amanda Coulthard, Head of Strategy and Performance</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Yes –</b> <b>1. Benchmarking Questionnaire to Police Oversight Bodies</b> <b>2. Overview of Benchmarking Responses</b>

**PURPOSE**

To provide Members with an update on benchmarking activity within SPA Corporate, presenting an overview of activities undertaken and a summary analysis following an initial data exchange with other oversight and public bodies. This paper also provides details of the next steps being taken and areas of focus for the 2024-25.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In line with the Authority's [Corporate Strategy 2023-2026](#), a programme of benchmarking and knowledge exchange is currently underway within SPA Corporate, seeking insights from similar oversight and public bodies.
- 1.2. This activity supports the Authority's overall approach to continuous improvement and commitment to achieving Best Value and has been led by the Performance and Impact Lead and the wider Performance Working Group.
- 1.3. Commencing in June 2023, the first year has focused on establishing an overall benchmarking approach and a network of comparative organisations, with a series of meetings held to engage with other police authorities and similar bodies across the UK. The team has also completed an initial data exchange with all participants, compiling the overall dataset and agreeing the principles for comparisons.
- 1.4. This work is ongoing, with the first phases naturally raising additional questions and areas of interest that will be further explored during 2024-25. This paper outlines achievements to date and next steps.

## 2. ESTABLISHING OUR BENCHMARKING NETWORK

- 2.1. The first step in the process was identifying appropriate organisations to be involved. This included an initial desktop review of police oversight bodies within the UK to understand those that have similar functions and responsibilities to SPA Corporate. When identifying suitable organisations, from publicly available data in the first instance, the following details were considered:
  - Key functions and responsibilities
  - Overall headcount
  - Overall budget
  - Type and size of police force / other operations overseen
- 2.2. The aim of this initial step was to identify organisations that are comparable to SPA Corporate, recognising that no other body will be a perfect comparison but will have enough similarity to allow sharing of practice and insights. This part of the process was therefore not about excluding organisations on account of any differences, but instead about understanding the similarities and differences that exist.

- 2.3. It was also recognised that involving non-police oversight organisations, regulators and public bodies could be beneficial. It was therefore decided that a phased approach would be taken to the benchmarking programme, with Phase 1 focused on other police oversight bodies, and Phase 2 involving non-police organisations. Phase 1 was subsequently launched in July 2023 and Phase 2 in September 2023, with organisations contacted to secure their involvement and gather initial information.
- 2.4. Online surveys were used to gather initial information from organisations for each phase. As part of the communication the SPA Corporate response to each survey was provided, evidencing our open and transparent approach to the exercise from the start. An example is provided as Appendix 1 to this paper.
- 2.5. The Phase 1 survey was closed in October 2023 with a total of 15 participants in the benchmarking exercise confirmed. This represents around one third of all police oversight bodies in the UK and Ireland. The confirmed participants are:
- Scottish Police Authority
  - British Transport Police Authority
  - Irish Policing Authority
  - Northern Ireland Policing Board
  - Avon & Somerset OPCC
  - Cambridge & Peterborough OPCC
  - Cheshire OPCC
  - Devon, Cornwall & Scilly OPCC
  - Durham & Darlington OPCC
  - Dyfed Powys OPCC
  - Gloucestershire OPCC
  - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
  - Lincolnshire OPCC
  - Thames Valley OPCC
  - Wiltshire & Swindon OPCC
- 2.6. An additional three responses were received for the Phase 2 survey:
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
  - Risk Management Authority
  - Scottish Legal Aid Board

### **3. MOST SIMILAR GROUPS**

- 3.1. The assignment of most similar groups (MSGs) can be helpful for benchmarking and comparative analysis, as it is based on identifying similar organisations by considering key characteristics, therefore making comparisons more informed and appropriate. The initial questionnaires described above were designed to gather relevant information in relation to these key characteristics, therefore enabling MSG analysis to be carried out.

- 3.2. Rather than identify one set of MSGs for future comparisons, a series of thematic clusters of MSGs will be used when focusing on specific topics. For example those who indicated that they work with a non-executive Board will be engaged for future governance comparisons, with a different set being used for work around complaints or conduct matters.

#### **4. INITIAL DATA EXCHANGE**

- 4.1. Using the online surveys, a combination of qualitative and quantitative information has been received from participants, including detailed written responses providing context and insights into each organisation's responsibilities and set up. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the responses received, split by policing oversight bodies and other organisations. This table focuses on statutory responsibilities, core functions and governance arrangements.
- 4.2. Other data such as staffing levels and budget information have been used by the Strategy and Performance Team to calculate ratios and percentages to give further insight into how these compare across participating organisations, as shown in Appendix 2.
- 4.3. With this initial analysis it appears SPA Corporate are one of the leading bodies in terms of staff to force ratios and efficiency against overall policing spend, however we will undertake further analysis and work with comparable organisations to gather a more detailed understanding of the different responsibilities and functions carried out by each organisation.
- 4.4. As an example, the Irish Policing Authority figures look closest to ours, however it can be seen in Appendix 2 that we are responsible for a range of additional functions not delivered by the Authority in Ireland, including being the employer of all police officers and staff, managing complaints and conduct issues in relation to senior officers, and providing independent custody visiting.
- 4.5. A number of outliers are also immediately apparent from the analysis, such as the staffing levels for some OPCCs. It is recognised that OPCCs generally carry out additional functions such as victim care and community support services, which is mentioned in the written responses from both Durham and Darlington and Lincolnshire OPCCs, while Greater Manchester's Combined Authority covers fire and rescue as well as policing and crime.

- 4.6. To improve our initial analysis a set of follow up questions will be used to gather additional details and clarification from our network of organisations, leading to discussions with those most relevant.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 5.1. Considerable progress has been made to date with our approach to SPA Corporate benchmarking, with a good sized network of participants established, relationships built with those in similar roles elsewhere, analysis carried out to identify our most similar groups in a range of areas, and a substantial amount of information already exchanged between organisations from across the UK and Ireland. It is recognised that this is the first time this has been attempted and that progressing to this stage in the first year is a significant achievement.
- 5.2. From the initial data gathering and analysis, a number of areas were identified as suitable for deeper dives and follow up questions for members of the network. An initial priority have been agreed and is detailed below, both of which link to areas for improvement from our recent HMICS review:
- **Board and committee effectiveness:** to involve discussions with relevant organisations from Phases 1 and 2 and a potential peer review process. In particular we are interested in how other organisations involve partners in the assessment of committee effectiveness, as well as finding out more about others' wider committee effectiveness approach.
  - **Governance and oversight:** a mapping and understanding of the governance structure and responsibilities of the board and committees in each organisation.
- 5.3. In addition to these exercises, we will continue to pursue additional organisations to join the network for both policing and non-policing sectors. This is included in the Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no specific financial implications associated with this paper.

## 7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no specific personnel implications associated with this paper.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. There are no specific legal implications associated with this paper.

**9. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are no specific reputational implications associated with this paper.

**10. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are no specific social implications associated with this paper.

**11. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

11.1. There are no specific community impact implications associated with this paper.

**12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1. There are no specific equalities implications associated with this paper.

**13. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

13.1. There are no specific environmental implications associated with this paper.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

**Appendix 1 – Benchmarking Questionnaire to Police Oversight Bodies, SPA Corporate Responses**

Question	Type of response field
<b>Your Organisation</b>	
Name of your organisation	Scottish Police Authority
Link to your website	<a href="https://www.spa.police.uk/">https://www.spa.police.uk/</a>
Link to your current Corporate Strategy / Business Plan or equivalent	<a href="https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/spa-corporate-strategy-2023-2026/">https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/spa-corporate-strategy-2023-2026/</a>
Overall headcount (FTEs)	604.55
Overall annual budget	£49.7m
Please add any notes around your headcount and/or budget that you think are important for comparison purposes.	These figures include Forensic Services, which sits within the SPA. Excluding Forensics, the SPA Corporate budget is £5.2m and headcount is currently 46.
<b>Core Functions</b>	
Which of the following is your organisation responsible for? Please tick all that apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Scrutiny of police performance</li> <li>✓ Being the legal employer of all police officers and staff</li> <li>✓ Recruiting senior officers</li> <li>✓ Complaints about senior officers</li> <li>✓ Conduct issues related to senior officers</li> <li>✓ Overseeing police force’s complaints and conduct arrangements</li> <li>✓ Independent custody visiting</li> <li>✓ Forensic services</li> </ul>

**OFFICIAL**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Type of response field</b>
If you are responsible for certain functions in relation to senior officers, please advise which ranks are defined as "senior".	Assistant Chief Constable and above (ACCs, DCCs and Chief Constable).
Please provide details of any other <b>statutory responsibilities</b> that your organisation delivers that you feel are not covered here.	<p>The Authority's main statutory functions as set out in Section 2 of the Act are to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• maintain the Police Service of Scotland</li><li>• promote the statutory policing principles</li><li>• promote and support continuous improvement in the policing of Scotland</li><li>• keep the policing of Scotland under review</li><li>• hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of Scotland.</li></ul> <p>The Authority must also provide forensic services to Police Service of Scotland, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner, and the Lord Advocate and Procurators Fiscal. Scottish Ministers determine the strategic police priorities that the Authority and Police Service of Scotland are expected to deliver upon.</p> <p>The Authority has a statutory duty to produce a strategic police plan. In doing so, it must involve the Chief Constable and make arrangements for obtaining the views on what the plan should contain from persons it considers likely to have an interest in policing.</p> <p>The Authority will be responsible for scrutinising the Annual Police Plan produced by the Chief Constable, which must describe how the arrangements for policing in that year will contribute towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Authority's strategic plan.</p> <p>The Authority must produce an annual report which shall include an assessment of the Authority's performance throughout the reporting year in carrying out its functions as well as an assessment of Police Service of Scotland's performance throughout the reporting year in the policing of Scotland.</p>



**OFFICIAL**

Question	Type of response field
Please provide details of any other <b>core functions</b> that your organisation provides that you feel are not yet covered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommending the appointment of the Chief Constable (subject to final approval of Scottish Ministers)</li> <li>• Appointing Deputy and Assistant Chief Constables</li> <li>• Handling complaint and conduct processes for senior police officers (the rank of ACC and above)</li> <li>• Employing staff (in Police Service of Scotland, Forensic Services, and the corporate support to the Authority)</li> </ul>
Please provide details of any <b>direct service delivery</b> that your organisation provides to the public.	The Authority runs the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, made up of volunteer visitors who carry out unannounced checks of custody facilities across Scotland.
Please provide any further details that you think are relevant.	<p>The Scottish Police Authority (the Authority) (or, in Gaelic, Ùghdarras Poilis na h-Alba) is a body corporate established by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (the Act). It came into operation on 1 April 2013, along with the Police Service of Scotland, and its core functions are defined by the Act.</p> <p><a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/contents</a></p>
<b>Your Board</b>	
Do you work with a non-executive Board?	Yes
How many Board Member places are there on your Board?	15
How are your Board Members appointed?	They are publicly appointed by Scottish Ministers. A member's term of appointment typically extends to four years, however appointments can be further extended up to a maximum of eight years in total.
Please provide any further details that you think are relevant.	Appointments are part-time and attract a remuneration of £309 per day for a time commitment of six days per month.

**OFFICIAL**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Type of response field</b>
<b>Police force(s) overseen</b>	
Name(s) of police force(s) overseen.	Police Scotland
Geographical areas covered.	Responsible for policing across the whole of Scotland, some 28,168 square miles, covering a range of urban, rural, island and remote communities.
Total resident population of areas covered.	5,436,600
Total number of Police Officers in force(s) overseen.	16,584.52
Total number of Police Staff in force(s) overseen.	5,859.62
Total annual budget of police force(s) overseen.	£1,278.5m
Please provide any further details that you think are relevant.	
<b>Key contact for benchmarking exercise</b>	
Contact name	Lesley Carnegie
Job title	Performance and Impact Lead
Email address	<a href="mailto:lesley.carnegie@spa.police.uk">lesley.carnegie@spa.police.uk</a>
Are you happy for your responses to be shared with other participating organisations?	Yes
Are you happy for your contact details to be shared with other participating organisations?	Yes

Appendix 2 – Overview of Benchmarking Responses

Police Oversight Organisations (Force overseen)	Employer of police officers & staff	Recruiting senior officers	Complaints about senior officers	Conduct issues of senior officers	Oversee complaints and conduct processes	ICVS	Ranks defined as senior	Non-exec Board	staff per 10,000 Police Officers	budget per staff member £m	budget as % of force budget
Scottish Police Authority (Police Scotland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ACC and above	Yes	27.7	0.11	0.4%
Avon and Somerset OPCC (Avon and Somerset)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	No	90.9	0.36	2.2%
British Transport Police Authority (British Transport Police)	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		ACC and above	Yes	40.9	0.21	0.7%
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough OPCC (Cambridgeshire Constabulary)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	Yes	92.1	0.08	0.7%
Cheshire OPCC (Cheshire)		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Chief Constable	No	54.2	0.08	0.4%
Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly OPCC (Devon and Cornwall)		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Chief Constable	No	88.2	0.07	0.6%

**OFFICIAL**

Police Oversight Organisations (Force overseen)	Employer of police officers & staff	Recruiting senior officers	Complaints about senior officers	Conduct issues of senior officers	Oversee complaints and conduct processes	ICVS	Ranks defined as senior	Non-exec Board	staff per 10,000 Police Officers	budget per staff member £m	budget as % of force budget
Durham and Darlington OPCC (Durham Constabulary)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	Yes	314.3	0.12	3.4%
Dyfed Powys OPCC (Dyfed-Powys Police)		Yes	Yes			Yes	Chief Constable	Yes	134.9	0.13	1.8%
Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Greater Manchester Police)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	No	57.6	0.96	4.5%
Irish Policing Authority (Garda Síochána)		Yes			Yes		Superintendent and above	Yes	26.0	0.09	0.2%
Lincolnshire OPCC (Lincolnshire Police)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	No	173.5	0.57	8.0%
Northern Ireland Policing Board (Police Service of Northern Ireland)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ACC and above	Yes	89.6	0.10	0.7%

**OFFICIAL**

Police Oversight Organisations (Force overseen)	Employer of police officers & staff	Recruiting senior officers	Complaints about senior officers	Conduct issues of senior officers	Oversee complaints and conduct processes	ICVS	Ranks defined as senior	Non-exec Board	staff per 10,000 Police Officers	budget per staff member £m	budget as % of force budget
Thames Valley OPCC (Thames Valley)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Chief Constable	No	84.0	0.27	2.0%
Wiltshire and Swindon OPCC (Wiltshire Police)		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Chief Constable and Chief Officer Group	No	317.2	0.06	1.6%

Other Non-Police Regulatory Organisations	Scrutiny of operational performance	Employer duties (recruitment, absence etc)	Complaints management	Personnel conduct issues	Public performance reporting	Best Value assessment	Governance	Info Mgmt	Use of Audit Scotland BV guide	Non-exec Board
Scottish Police Authority	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Risk Management Authority	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scottish Legal Aid Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes