The Evolution of Benchmarking: Scotland's Journey

Police Strategy Forum June 2024

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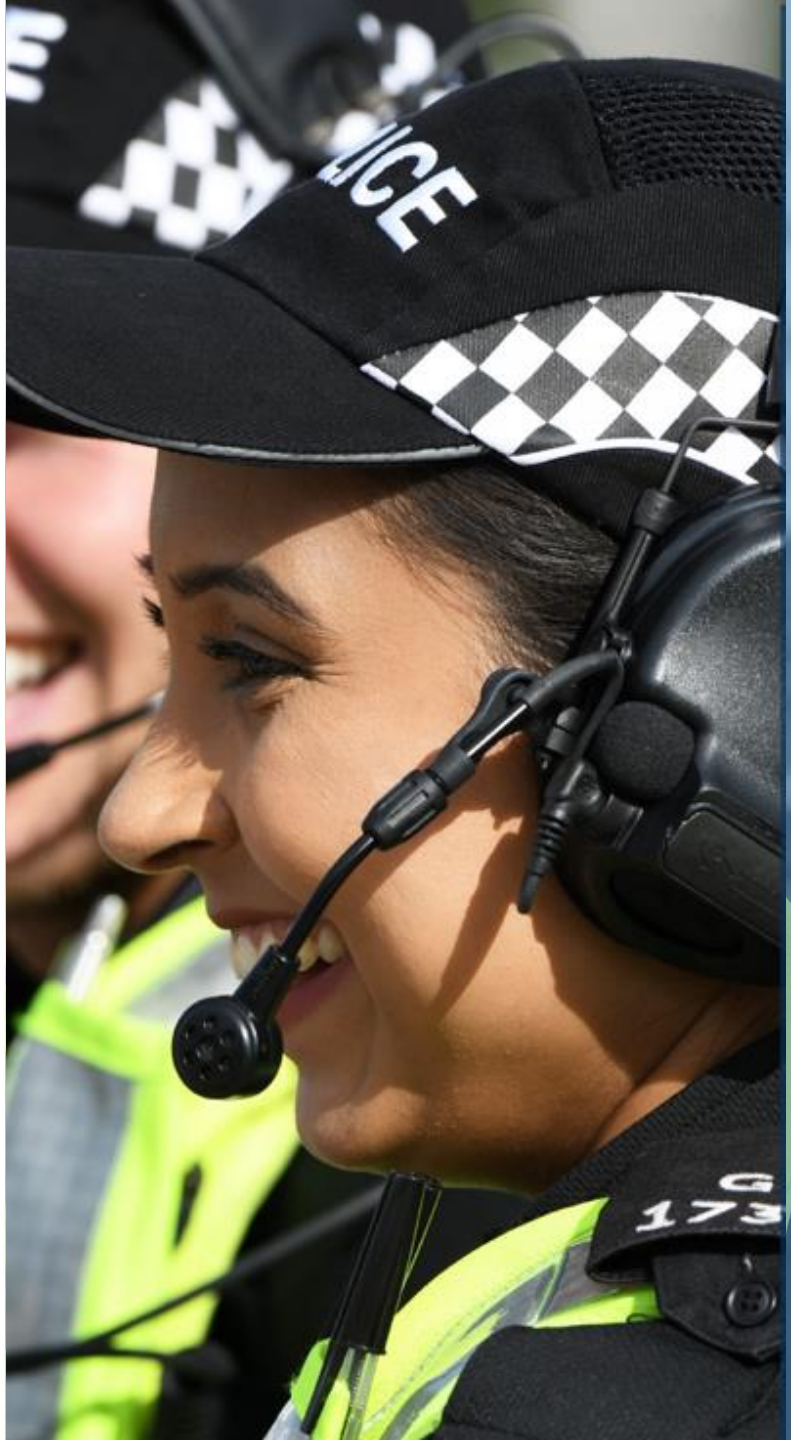
Policing in Scotland

Police Scotland

Scottish Police Authority

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

Police Investigations & Review Commissioner



Our most useful comparisons

Over time

- Trend analysis
- Quarterly, year on year, 5-year mean
- Impact of strategies and change projects

Internal

- Local variation
- Impact of pilot projects
- Sharing learning and good practice

External

- Wider context and perspective
- Identifying good practice
- New ideas and innovation

Background

- May 2020, Committee proposed a multi-agency benchmarking working group
- Benchmarking Short Life Working Group formed in July 2020 supported by:
  - College of Policing
  - HMICS
  - National Police Chief's Council's Performance Management Co-ordination Committee
  - Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services
- Aiming to deliver:
  - An optimal set of external data sources and measures for benchmarking
  - A proposed lead agency for the collation of data and other roles and responsibilities
  - A proposed reporting frequency, format and arrangements for data quality assurance
  - A proposed supporting insight and analysis mechanism to support taking learning from the presented data

Guiding Principles

The framework is a tool to identify best practice and improvement activity in policing

The selection of metrics to be benchmarked should be evidence based and robust

Context must be applied to inform meaningful analysis and insight

The benchmarking framework will evolve over time (refreshed annually) as new areas of interest are identified

Use of data for benchmarking purposes must not knowingly create perverse incentives or lead to negative behaviours

No assumptions will be made on other forces' performance

Benchmarking Tiers

6 data quality dimensions:

- Completeness
- Uniqueness
- Timeliness
- Consistency
- Validity
- Accuracy

Tier	Explanation	Sharing Status
A1	Data that is deemed of the highest quality and is comparable. Qualitative Benchmarking (i.e. best practice).	External
A2	Data/information that is deemed of a high quality but is not allowed to be shared externally.	Internal – *Data/information* External – *Insights/Learning*
B	Data that has small differences in comparability and/or small caveats (i.e. missing a division).	External
C	Large differences in comparability and/or data concerns. However, the data in this Tier can be used to help drive qualitative benchmarking for the subject area.	Internal
D	Aspirational data/information, data that does not exist or extremely differing comparability and/or large data concerns.	N/A

Most Similar Groups

- Variables recommended by HMICFRS to compile MSGs:
  - Percentage of ACORN 5 households – "Hard-Pressed" neighbourhoods
  - Percentage of terraced households
  - Output Area population density
  - Percentage of single parent households
  - Long-term unemployed per worker

- Other variables also considered, including:
  - Number of police officers / staff
  - Annual budget
  - Force area
  - Population size
  - 999/101 call demand

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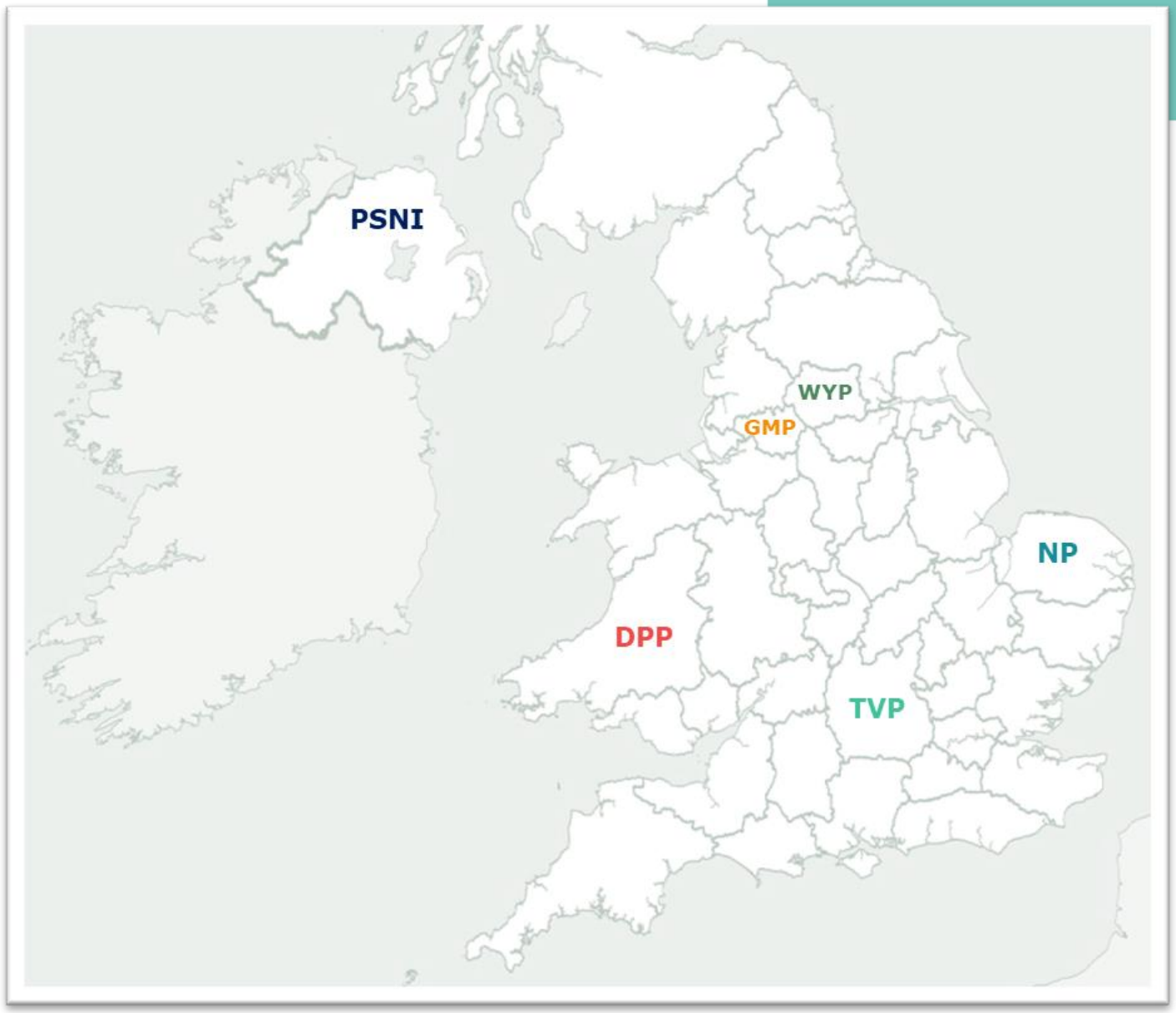
Our Most Similar Groups

- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- West Yorkshire Police
- Greater Manchester Police
- Norfolk Police
- Thames Valley Police
- Dyfed Powys Police



Benchmarking Measures

- **44** strategic measures of progress
- Designed around the 5 strategic outcomes of our Joint Strategy for Policing
- Initial focus on publicly accessible data:
  - Office of National Statistics
  - Home Office
  - Force websites
  - Police and Crime Commissioners
  - National Crime Agency
  - Police Oracle
- Engagement with the APCC, NPCC and College of Policing on accessing datasets

Challenges – Available Data

- For our most similar groups:
  - Complete datasets for **12** of the 44 measures
  - Partial datasets for **14**
  - Incomplete datasets for the remaining **18**

- Direct contact with the six MSG forces to access additional information.
  - Two forces have provided additional data by email
  - Two have committed to doing this
  - Two forces have not yet responded

Challenges – Like With Like?

- Key differences:
  - Crime groupings and definitions
  - National Crime Recording Standards - crime / incident counting rules
  - Legislation and Common Law
- Where possible, reasonable judgements made in applying adjustments to the source data
- Any differences, limitations and adjustments clearly noted alongside comparisons, internally and publicly

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Our Journey

May 2020
Authority asks for multi-agency group to explore options

July 2020
Benchmarking SLWG chaired by College of Policing first meets

September 2021
Guiding principles and benchmarking tiers agreed

March 2022
Assignment of Most Similar Groups and agreement of measures

June 2022
Refreshed performance framework with additional benchmarking to Committee

May 2023
Compiling measures against publicly accessible data

October 2023
Requests sent to most similar groups for missing data

March 2024
Conclusion of SLWG and approval of all outputs by Committee

April 2024
Benchmarking fully embedded in 2024-25 Performance & Assurance Framework

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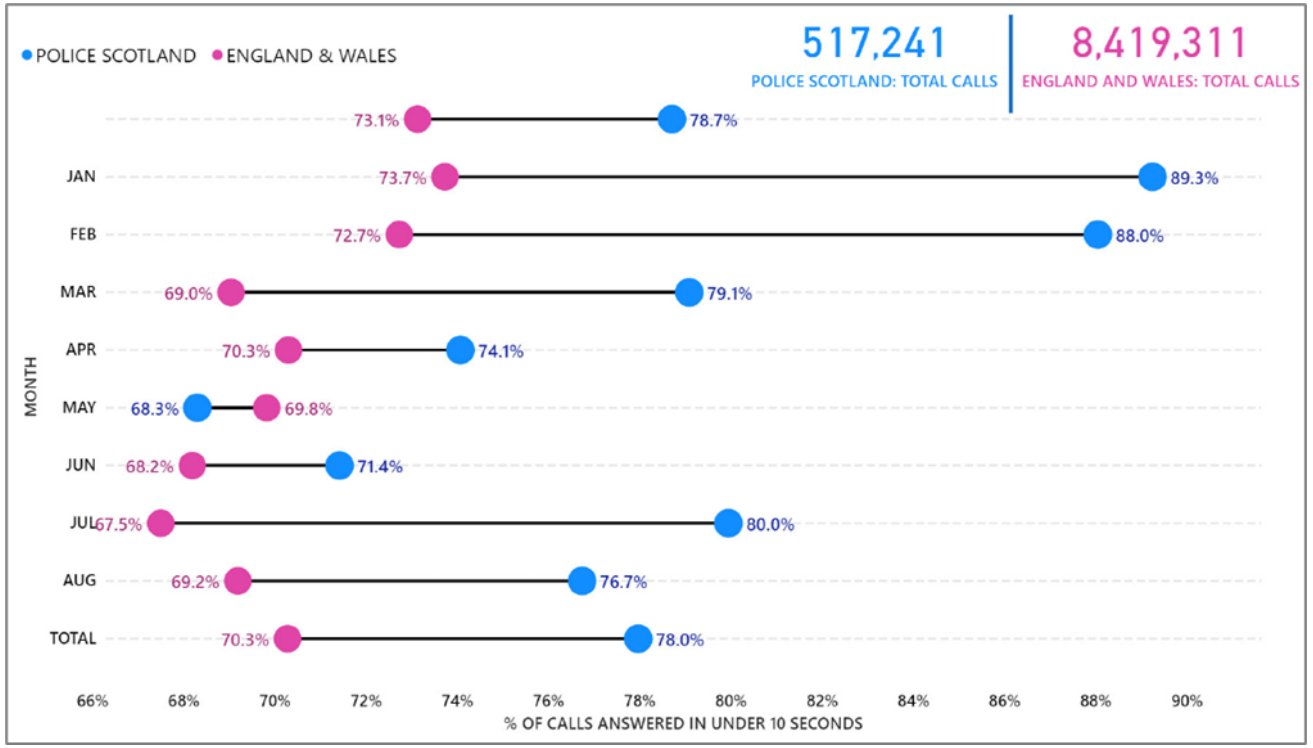
Benefits

- Identifying differences and exploring reasons
- Taking account of learning and best practice from elsewhere
- Richer insights into our performance and recognition of the positives
- Additional assurance for our Members
- Accessible comparisons for the communities we serve
- Greater openness and transparency – links to public trust and confidence



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Thank you

Lesley Carnegie
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Scottish Police Authority

Full benchmarking paper available at:
https://www.spa.police.uk/what-we-do/governance-meetings/policing-performance-committee/12-march-2024/