

Blackstone's

Senior Investigating Officers' Handbook

Fourth Edition

Tony Cook

Consultant Editor

Andy Tattersall

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1.1 Introduction

Fictional portrayals of lead or senior detectives traditionally depict them as shrewd and calculating individuals, able to solve cases and outwit criminals almost single-handedly. In reality this does not reflect the true complexities facing the leader of a serious and complex crime investigation, especially as the emphasis has swung from a ‘search for the proof’ to a ‘search for the truth’.¹ This has led to highly consistent success rates in the UK, with the national average annual detection rate for serious crimes such as homicide remaining at or above the 85 per cent mark.²

In the UK police, a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) is usually in command of a dedicated team of specialist trained and accredited officers, including staff and experts from a Major/Serious Crime Unit/Division. More often they have at their disposal experienced and trained professional staff. Metaphorically speaking, the SIO role can be compared to that of a musical conductor who similarly has to unify performers, set the tempo, give clear instructions, listen critically and shape the product of their ensemble.

A contemporary SIO, however, no longer has the luxury of being able to solely focus upon and prepare for solving and dealing with homicides. The role has evolved, with a gradual move towards responsibility for investigating a much wider selection of serious and complex criminality, such as organised crime, child sexual exploitation (CSE), modern slavery and suspicious missing persons, especially those involving vulnerable people such as children and young persons. The criminal exploitation of the internet and digital communication technology by offenders across the globe has changed the way in which serious offences are now committed and in turn added to skills and knowledge of the modern-day SIO that are required.

Leading complex crime investigations places extremely high personal and professional expectations and demands upon an individual, and the role is undoubtedly one of the most challenging in law enforcement. SIOs can be held to account by judicial processes, politicians, Police and Crime Commissioners, intrusive internal and external review mechanisms, the media and, not least of all, victims, their families, friends and communities. They are also answerable to bodies such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), the Coroner, Serious Case and Domestic Homicide Review panels and their own organisation and team. When things go wrong, they become the most obvious ‘PTB’ (person to blame); and when they go right, plenty of praise and recognition is rightly heaped upon them. SIOs are wholly responsible for the performance of their team and their own actions and decisions during an investigation and well beyond, particularly

¹ P Taylor and R Chaplain (eds), *Crimes Detected in England and Wales 2010/11*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 11/11, London, Home Office.

² Also cited in A Sanders and R Young, ‘From Suspect to Trial’, in M Maguire, R Morgan and R Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, 5th edn (Oxford University Press, 2012), 953–89.

1.2 Challenges for the SIO

when there are 'cold case' teams examining unsolved cases. High expectations are placed upon those who occupy the position, especially from victims who place an enormous amount of moral obligation, hope and trust in the SIO.

The UK Government and College of Policing are justifiably proud of how the Professionalising Investigative Process (PIP) has led to significant advancements in SIO skills and training. Cumulative learning derived from studies of investigative success and failure, together with established structures, national occupational standards and continuous professional development and training have been introduced for those entrusted with the task of managing investigations into serious crime. Guidance on roles, responsibilities, good practice and procedures have been produced alongside a mechanism for implementation and delivery through the process of national accreditation. This is now what drives, delivers and maintains the SIO skills framework with a combination of ongoing professional training and expertise.

Being an SIO is not the easiest of career moves, nor is it for the faint-hearted. It is, however, by far the most satisfying and rewarding role in law enforcement. This first chapter seeks to outline some of the requirements, skills and attributes for the role, together with some useful pointers and topics for consideration.

Not everyone who is in police service has the temperament, personality, perseverance or skills to be an effective Homicide Squad Commander. The supervision and management of an investigative unit, specifically as a Homicide Squad Commander, requires a drastically different approach than the strict patrol-oriented paramilitary model, which does not allow for any input from the subordinates or variations at the point of execution.³

1.2 Challenges for the SIO

There can be nothing more important for a civilised society than ensuring the safety and security of its citizens. When details of incidents such as those involving horrific acts of cruelty and offending such as the murder or sexual exploitation of young children and vulnerable people emerge, the focus of attention is on the investigation and the hope and expectation of achieving justice for victims, their families and outraged communities. This responsibility has to be balanced against the constant political pressure to reduce costs and find huge financial savings, and yet continue to achieve the lowest UK crime rates for decades.

There is nowadays a much wider range and variety of cases and investigations an SIO has to take charge of. Some were never originally included as part of the PIP3 accreditation process and others traditionally were never considered to be police matters. The following list indicates those an SIO may encounter:

³ V J Geberth, 'Homicide Unit and its Commander' (2011) 59(11) *Practical Homicide Investigation, Law & Order Magazine*.

Chapter 1: Role of the SIO

- Serious and organised crime⁴
- Linked series serious crimes
- Suspicious and unexplained deaths
- Crimes in action (eg kidnap, abduction, extortion, serial/mass/spree killings)
- Suspicious and high-risk missing person enquiries and ‘no body’ murders
- Honour killings
- Increased suicide rates (ie amongst sex offenders)
- Serious case and Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Gang-related criminality such as CSE, firearms and drugs
- Violence and public protection
- SUDC/SUDI deaths (sudden unexpected deaths of children and infants)
- Child sexual abuse and serious sexual offences, eg CSE
- Human (including children) commercial trafficking and modern-day slavery, servitude and forced labour
- Cybercrime
- Economic crime, financial investigations, proceeds of crime and identity theft
- Article 2 deaths and corporate manslaughter
- Prison-related deaths and those in healthcare settings
- Threats from extremism and terrorism
- Mass fatality atrocities, accidents and civil emergencies
- Historic (cold) cases and those involving public figures and celebrities
- Foreign and transnational offenders.

Crimes that aren’t quickly or easily solved usually pose more of a challenge, particularly if the case is high profile. A long-running undetected case, such as homicide, soon attracts attention, internally and externally. Borrowed, temporary or shared resources under collaborative agreements may be recalled or redeployed despite the fact that there could be numerous important outstanding lines of enquiry. This is when an SIO can benefit most from having good support and advice to provide reassurance they are getting the best out of their resources and that the enquiry is still heading in the right direction.

1.2.1 Consequences of unsolved crimes

The performance and capabilities of an SIO are significant when considering the consequences of unresolved crimes such as homicide and serious sexual offences. Apart from reputational risk (personal/organisational) and financial cost implications, unresolved cases hinder the healing process for victims, families and

⁴ Serious crime as defined in s 93(4) of the Police Act 1997 is: (a) conduct which involves the use of violence, results in financial gain or is conducted by a large number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose; or (b) an offence for which a person who has attained the age of 21 years and has no previous convictions could reasonably be expected to be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three years or more.

1.2 Challenges for the SIO

local communities and allow offenders to commit further crimes and create further victims.

Increased fear and loss of public trust and confidence can lead to reluctance of people coming forward to report crimes and assist investigations. This fear is heightened in communities that are blighted by fear (caused, for example, by organised crime gangs and drugs, guns and ‘turf-war’ type criminality). In such cases unsolved cases become a self-fulfilling prophecy due to lack of confidence in law enforcement and the judicial system.

Each case begins with a level of solvability and probability of success. Most murder cases, for example, are relatively straightforward, with the majority (up to 70 per cent) being ‘self-solvers’ rather than ‘whodunits’.⁵ Others can be more difficult or seemingly impossible (such as those where there are no witnesses, no intelligence nor forensic evidence and no suspects) and are a greater test for the SIO.

1.2.2 High-profile cases

Some cases attain high-profile status, and if not solved may frequently reappear in the public spotlight, even though relatively old or historical. This occurs for a variety of reasons, such as public and media interest, scrutiny, complexity or simple high-profile notoriety. Some UK and European examples are the Stephen Lawrence case (1993); Moors murderers (Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, 1965); Yorkshire Ripper (Peter Sutcliffe, 1981); Hillsborough football stadium disaster (1989); Madeleine McCann, missing child investigation in Portugal (2007); and the Claudia Lawrence missing person/murder enquiry in York (2009). There are lots of others that for one reason or another have blighted communities. Such cases are the supreme test of any law enforcement agency (and SIO), as decisions made and outcomes are frequently reviewed, queried and re-analysed.

This means the performance of the SIO and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system have a long-lasting effect on the general public, either positively or negatively, and this cannot be understated.

1.2.3 Joint and linked series crimes

Linked series homicides and other serious offences pose specific challenges, particularly in relation to a joint command and control structure of what are separate but linked investigations. For example, information sharing, communication flows and shared intelligence management functions between forces, regions or agencies (that might have different powers or jurisdictions) will require a sophisticated approach, plus linking up data and managing joint investigative strategies such as family liaison and TIE (trace/interview/eliminate) enquiries.

⁵ M Innes, ‘The Process Structures of Police Homicide Investigations’ (2002) 42 *British Journal of Criminology* 669–88.

Chapter 1: Role of the SIO

In determining whether to link offences, an early consideration is the accurate evaluation of the interrelation between offences and offenders. Similarities between victims, crime scenes and modus operandi need careful examination, together with the linking up of data and good communication flows.

SIOs are advised to seek help and support from the National Crime Agency (NCA) Specialist Operations (telephone: 0845 000 5463) as soon as they suspect a link between crimes. A number of their services, such as comparative case analysis and behavioural investigative advice, can help guide judgements on the identification of commonalities and linkage.

KEY POINT

If there are multiple victims and offences, it is certain to be deemed a serious and complex criminal investigation. It is also likely to be designated a critical incident or 'crime in action', for which most chief officers would appoint a senior and experienced SIO to take the lead with support from an accredited PIP 4 SIO and NCA National SIO Adviser plus supporting team.

1.3 SIO Role and Key Skills

The *Murder Investigation Manual* or 'MIM' states:

An SIO is the lead investigator in cases of homicide, stranger rape, kidnap or other investigations. This requires the SIO to:

- Perform the role of officer in charge of an investigation as described in the Code of Practice under Part II of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.
- Develop and implement the investigative strategy.
- Develop the information management and decision-making systems for the investigation.
- Manage the resources allocated to the investigation.
- Be accountable to chief officers for the conduct of the investigation.

The role of the SIO in a homicide investigation is potentially one of the most complex and challenging positions within the police service. It combines two elements—the role of investigator and the role of manager, each of which must be performed to the highest standards.⁶

The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) sets out duties for the SIO (and all investigators involved in the case), not simply in relation to disclosure, but also in respect of the investigation itself. Section 23 refers to the treatment and retention of material and information generated during such an

⁶ ACPO, *Murder Investigation Manual* (NCPE, 2006), 25–6.

investigation, and subs 23(1)(a) contains a requirement for the police to carry out an investigation.⁷ It states:

that where a criminal investigation is conducted all reasonable steps are taken for the purposes of the investigation and, in particular all reasonable lines of enquiry are pursued.

Part II of the CPIA Code of Practice defines the 'officer in charge of an investigation' and what their role is within the Act:

The *officer in charge of an investigation* is the officer responsible for directing a criminal investigation. S/he is also responsible for ensuring that proper procedures are in place for recording information, and retaining records of information and other material, in the investigation.

1.3.1 Key skill areas

According to a police research paper,⁸ the SIO role requires a combination of three different categories of skills. These come under the following headings:

- (1) Investigative ability
- (2) Professional knowledge
- (3) Management skills.

These can be expanded upon in the following way:

Investigative ability

- Investigative competence (eg formulating lines of enquiry, hypotheses building, problem solving and decision making)
- Ability to appraise, analyse, retain and recall salient facts and information (including interpreting and assimilating information, challenging assumptions, checking for accuracy and relevance)
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Strategic and tactical awareness (eg understanding the bigger picture)
- Innovation and creativity
- High standard of communication skills (verbal and written, such as recording decisions in a policy file and laying out investigative strategies)
- Keen powers of observation
- Sharp mental agility and self-belief
- Ability to remain calm, cope under pressure and multi-task

⁷ A disclosure policy should be included in the SIO's policy file *stating* that, for example, all used material will be served on the defence; all unused material connected to the investigation will be treated as 'unused material' and only included on the MG6C form if considered relevant to the case.

⁸ N Smith and C Flanagan, 'The Effective Detective: Identifying the Skills of an Effective SIO' (2000), Home Office Police Research Series, Paper 122.

Chapter 1: Role of the SIO

- Nerve, strength of character, composure and confidence
- Time management skills
- Ability to prioritise and remain resilient when managing competing demands, including coping with multiple simultaneous complex responsibilities

Professional knowledge

- Legal frameworks, powers and procedures, case law, rules of evidence, definitions (eg the terms ‘reasonable suspicion’ and ‘reasonable grounds to believe’), Codes of Practice (eg Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, 2015—see Chapter 11.2).
- ‘Well read’ by continuously developing and improving/expanding knowledge, using numerous sources such as Home Office circulars and statistics, internal and national policies and reviews, legal databases eg Police National Legal Database (PNLD), police journals, conferences and seminars, National Police Library at College of Policing and the intranet/internet.
- Knowledge of national guidelines, best practice guidance, and learning points (eg via POLKA⁹ communities and College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice¹⁰), strategic debrief reports, National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) position statements, IPCC and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) recommendations and nationally disseminated good practice.
- Knowledge of forensic procedures and techniques, eg DNA17 and familial DNA (fDNA), investigative and technological advances, crime scene search tactics and examination, body recovery and pathology principles, procedures relating to exhibit recovery and processing, specialisms, experts and national assets (eg NCA) that might be available.
- Understanding of terminology, eg in the medico-legal world when communicating with professionals, pathologists, doctors and scientists, and understanding their language and interpreting findings; or understanding frequently used organisational acronyms.
- Operational knowledge, such as Major Incident Room (MIR) procedures and HOLMES, eg TIE actions, Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) guidelines, covert and overt proactive tactics, investigative strategies, digital and social media opportunities, how to conduct CSE investigations, and knowledge of cybercrime.
- Awareness of wider community, safeguarding issues and national strategic threat levels (ie the ‘bigger picture’).

Leadership and management skills

(Covered in Chapter 2)

⁹ POLKA is the Police Online Knowledge Area provided by the College of Policing. One of their communities is aimed at supporting SIOs entitled ‘Major Crime Investigation’ (see <<https://polka.pnn.police.uk/communities/home>>).

¹⁰ Authorised Professional Practice (APP), <<http://www.app.college.police.uk/>>.

1.4 Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP)

KEY POINTS

- ‘Creative thinking’ involves looking at problems from different perspectives and questioning assumptions to produce innovative ideas.
- Bright ideas often come at odd times (off duty or out of working hours, eg middle of the night) and are sometimes triggered by unrelated activities or events. It is useful to have at the ready a means of recording them to aid memory.
- SIOs always remain students and must continuously invest in their own skills and knowledge, seizing every opportunity to (re)train and develop. Training others, mentoring, coaching, providing inputs to courses and attending training events and seminars will improve personal learning and development.

1.3.2 MIRSAP requirements

The Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures, or MIRSAP manual¹¹ outlines the roles and responsibilities of the SIO relating to the functions of the Major Incident Room (MIR). These are standardised to ensure that in linked or series cases there are similar practices across forces.

Checklist—MIRSAP SIO requirements

- Responsibility for investigation of the crime
- Ensuring an incident room with appropriate resources is created.
- Regular assessment of work levels to maintain appropriate staffing.
- Setting timescales for review and progress of actions and documents.
- Logging all decisions in a policy file against signature.
- Reading and making decisions on filing of documents.
- Determining and communicating current lines of enquiry.
- Setting parameters, eg TIEs, SOE (sequence of events), scene(s), house-to-house (H-2-H), witness statements and personal descriptive forms (PDF), unidentified nominal and vehicle policies.

1.4 Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP)

PIP is aimed at ensuring investigators and SIOs remain competent to practise by the registration of their skills and competency at both national and local levels, which is built on and maintained through continued professional development (CPD). PIP

¹¹ ACPO, *MIRSAP Manual* (NCPE, 2005), 18–20.

Chapter 1: Role of the SIO

has been in place for a number of years and continued through the transition from the NPIA to the College of Policing and development of Approved Professional Practice (APP), together with the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). The national policing crime business area (CBA) portfolio for standards, competencies and training (SCT) identifies the levels required to investigate the range of criminal offences dealt with by the police service. It implements the original objectives of PIP to establish a professional approach to the development and maintenance of the skills required by investigators at all levels.

The various PIP levels are:

- Priority and volume crime investigations—PIP level 1.
- Serious and complex investigations—PIP level 2.
- Major investigations—PIP level 3.
- Strategic management of highly complex investigations—PIP level 4.

There are plenty of useful training programmes that can be incorporated into an SIO's PIP training and CPD. Much will depend on the individual and what skills or knowledge gaps are identified.

KEY POINT

The College of Policing defines CPD as a range of learning activities through which policing professionals maintain or enhance their capacity to practise legally, safely, ethically and effectively. They recommend that full-time staff should undertake a minimum of 35 hours of CPD activity per year.

1.5 Preparing for the Role

Calls or requests for Senior Investigating Officers often come at unusual times or during unsociable hours, particularly when 'on call'. These are moments when they need to be well prepared and ready to hit the ground running. An acronym to remember is AYR:

<p>A Are Y You R Ready?</p>

SIOs may have to remain on duty for a considerable time, particularly in the early stages of an enquiry. Working long hours without sufficient rest and food, together with pressure and time constraints, do not help when having to make critical decisions. Therefore an SIO has to be well prepared and ready for the challenge that lies ahead and able to manage themselves effectively in order to

1.5 Preparing for the Role

successfully perform the role. Having some basic kit and accessories in a 'grab bag/case' or similar to hand is a good place to start.

Checklist—SIO's basic tool kit

- Reliable and accurate watch/timepiece.
- 'Casebook' or work/note/day book (and spare) with reliable writing implements to record information, sketches, notes, details and decisions (or digital equivalent).
- Fresh policy file (and spare).
- Official identification (for self) and personal business cards.
- Weatherproof clipboard (or similar) to rest on with sufficient writing/drawing paper.
- Useful forms/documents (eg paper management system, list of actions; raised, blank actions, officer debriefing sheets, major incident (MI) write-up sheets, message and H-2-H forms, aides-memoires and checklists).
- Communication devices (eg mobile phone plus charger, radio, tablet, laptop).
- Useful contact numbers (eg supervisory staff, Crime Scene Investigator (CSI), Pathologist, Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and radio channels).
- Foul weather gear (eg waterproof/warm protective clothing and suitable footwear, hat/gloves).
- Personal protection equipment (PPE).
- Standby refreshments (food and drink).
- Maps (eg digital mapping or satellite navigation system).
- Flashlight and batteries.
- Crime-scene barrier tape, scene logbooks, exhibit bags/labels, permanent markers for use on tamper-proof bags.
- Digital camera (with charged batteries plus memory card).
- Forensic suit/mask/gloves/overshoes.
- Suitable transportation (eg vehicle filled with fuel and window notice to identify to whom it belongs).
- Money/loose change/credit/debit cards for emergencies.
- Personal comfort and welfare necessities and supplies (eg spectacles, medicines).

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- Addresses of, directions to and access codes for buildings and details of parking facilities.
- Overnight bag plus details for booking short-notice overnight accommodation.
- Blackstone's *The SIOs' Handbook*.

KEY POINTS

- Practical clothing or dress worn for cold or wet outdoor scenes may be unsuitable for more formal duties later on, eg when conducting briefings, meeting victims' relatives or during media interviews. It is wise to have a suitable change of clothing available.
- Some SIOs may have to cover and travel across large geographical areas and prior planning for suitable overnight accommodation may be required to avoid fatigue and make a quick turnaround. Good transport and parking facilities, hot food, and secure and discreet facilities (to make/receive phone calls) are essential for being suitably refreshed and ready to return the next day.

1.6 Recognising Diversity

Part of the role involves ensuring investigations take full account of any matters appertaining to race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, culture, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality or place of abode. There is no place for personal prejudices, discriminatory behaviour or stereotyping of any sort and it is particularly important that assumptions are not influenced by any prejudice or bias. Full account must be taken of vulnerable persons, whether that vulnerability is the result of learning difficulties, trauma or any other circumstances.

Communication breakdowns can occur if there are perceptions of alienation, distrust or negativity that can result in a loss of confidence in the investigation. This ultimately leads to a loss of public assistance and non-receptiveness. The SIO must remain cognisant of this potential and manage the requirement in a Community Impact Assessment document (CIA) and policy file. There must be a clear strategy on how to communicate with hard-to-reach and minority groups in order to maintain confidence and build and sustain relationships. Community focus and the benefits of equality and diversity in operational delivery are major components of most policing strategies and of importance to community and race relations.¹²

The Equality Act 2010 (EA) consolidated discrimination legislation and contained new measures to strengthen protection against discrimination, stipulat-

¹² See ACPO, *Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy for the Police Service* (Home Office, January 2010).

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ing protected characteristics in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The SIO in their leadership role must remain committed to managing diversity and ensure it is demonstrably part of an enquiry team's culture and philosophy. Positive action must be taken against any inappropriate and illegal language or behaviour at all times, with adequate mechanisms to monitor compliance with the legislation.

1.7 Ethical Standards and Integrity

An SIO retains the ultimate responsibility for ensuring a criminal investigation is conducted to the highest degree of moral and ethical standards. Lack of professional behaviour and standards adversely affect reputations as well as leading to potential miscarriages of justice. Public trust and confidence depends on honesty, transparency and integrity. Statutory regulations such as the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and bodies such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) provide the public with ways of challenging inappropriate investigative activities and actions, and the CPIA puts a legal requirement on ensuring evidence is captured that points away as well as towards any possible suspect.

A concept known as 'tunnel vision' or 'closed mind syndrome' must be avoided at all costs. This occurs when there is a determined focus on a theory or an individual (or individuals) at the exclusion of other possibilities. Narrow-minded approaches do not bode well for the integrity of investigations and attract criticism. The effects can also produce miscarriages of justice, corruption, incompetence, and expensive court and human costs. The concept of the 'investigative mindset' helps significantly avoid this (see Chapter 3).

External leaks of information can pose a problem on major and sensitive enquiries, particularly when there is extensive public and media interest. This must be prevented or investigated if it happens, as it can lead to serious complications much later. Close monitoring must be applied with strong standard setting, guidance and direction from the SIO and their management team for all those who are necessarily exposed to, perceived 'at risk' with, or in receipt or possession of information that must be treated with the strictest confidentiality. This has become more of a problem since the increase in usage of digital media devices such as smartphones that have powerful cameras and fast, easy access to social media sites and the internet (see also Chapter 10).

Misguided concepts based upon notions of 'noble cause corruption' must never be allowed. There cannot be any cutting of corners and it is ultimately the SIO who is held accountable in a court of law or public inquiry. While creativity and innovation among entrepreneurial investigators is to be encouraged, deception of any kind that breaches the law must not. This is different from finding legal and practical solutions to problems that is a core skill of all crime investigators.

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The framework offered by the law (eg PACE, HRA, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), CPIA 1996, EA and Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)) create rigid boundaries for ethical practice. Compliance with the legislation provides SIOs and their investigators with a degree of protection from ill-founded allegations of dishonesty, unfairness or discrimination. This is illustrated in what is known as the ‘integrity paradigm’:

INTEGRITY PARADIGM

Right method Right result	Right method Wrong result
Wrong method Right result	Wrong method Wrong result

During serious crime investigations, investigators are usually under much closer supervision through regular briefings and a highly controlled administrative system (ie HOLMES). All activity is tasked, allocated, monitored, reviewed and supervised with a far greater degree of scrutiny. This should produce a robust and almost inquisitorial system. These integrated administrative controls are in place to ensure compliance with legislation, correct guidelines and procedures.

1.7.1 Code of Ethics

In 2014 the College of Policing issued a ‘Code of Ethics’¹³ as a code of practice under s 39A of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by s 124 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014). It outlines principles and standards of professional behaviour for police in England and Wales. These principles are intended to inform every decision and action across the police service and apply to everyone in the profession of policing. They also add: ‘those with leadership roles have additional expectations placed upon them to lead by example’.

The Code of Ethics promotes the use of the National Decision Model (NDM) to embed its principles at the centre of decision making (see Chapter 3).

The code outlines ten standards of professional behaviour under the following headings:

1. Honesty and integrity
2. Authority, respect and courtesy
3. Equality and diversity
4. Use of force

¹³ College of Policing, ‘Code of Ethics: Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales’ (April 2014),

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5. Orders and instructions
6. Duties and responsibilities
7. Confidentiality
8. Fitness for work
9. Conduct
10. Challenging and reporting improper behaviour

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