



Meeting	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	17 January 2023
Location	Video-conference
Title of Paper	Internal Audit Reports
Presented By	John McNellis, Head of Finance, Audit and Risk Elizabeth Young, Azets
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Appendix A: Organisational Learning

PURPOSE

To present the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) with the internal audit report on organisational learning.

The paper is presented in line with the corporate governance framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) terms of reference and is submitted for consultation.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Internal Audit plan for 2022/23 was approved by the SPA Board in February 2022.
- 1.2 A change to the scope for the organisational learning audit was endorsed by the ARAC in November. Instead of reviewing existing arrangements as originally envisaged, Azets supported management by assessing what is already in place, identify gaps and/or areas for improvement, and develop an action plan to be taken forward. This change required an increased number of days (from 30 to 55).
- 1.3 The internal audit function is managed within SPA corporate to provide assurance over the policing service and ultimately to provide an annual opinion on the systems of internal control.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1 Organisational learning (full report at Appendix A)

a. Background:

- Organisational learning is the process by which an organisation improves itself over time through gaining experience, using that experience to create knowledge, and transferring that knowledge within the organisation.
- The internal audit was an advisory-style type review, reflecting the relative infancy of work in this area, and lack of pre-existing, defined processes for organisational learning.
- The scope of the audit focused on arrangements within Police Scotland only.

b. Internal audit findings:

- There is a range of organisational learning activity taking place across Police Scotland focused strongly on the identification of learning.
- A variety of different activities are taking place such as debriefs, lessons learned exercises, post-implementation reviews and third party and internal scrutiny reports that provide rich sources of learning.
- Supporting processes for the subsequent retention and transfer of that knowledge are relatively less well developed with a lack of alignment and inconsistency between the approaches adopted.

- Elements articulated within Police Scotland's outline organisational learning framework, developed to underpin the BJC Case for further work, already exist in some form within the organisation.
- Police Scotland should prioritise the recommendations relating to the implementation of actions arising from organisational learning, making use of existing governance pathways and systems where possible.

c. Summary of recommendations:

- As noted on page 3 of the report, Police Scotland agree with the findings and recommendations identified within this report and are seeking transformation funding to procure professional services to assist with the implementation of their organisational learning framework and structure.
- While a decision is awaited, Police Scotland will scope how to progress with the implementation with the tools and resources available. Progress updates will be included, via existing improvement recommendation reporting, provided to the ARAC quarterly.

d. SPA conclusions:

- The review provides a baseline assessment and recommendations to support implementation of organisational learning methodology across Police Scotland.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications from this report, however, the implementation of some actions are likely to require financial resources.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific personnel implications associated with this paper. The vetting internal audit review has implications on the police workforce as outlined.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper, however there are potential reputational implications associated with the pace and effectiveness of addressing management actions arising from internal audit reports.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no community impact implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the internal audit report on organisational learning.



Scottish Police Authority

Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Organisational Learning

September 2022



Scottish Police Authority

Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Organisational Learning

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Executive Summary

There is a range of organisational learning activity taking place across Police Scotland within numerous business areas. In general, our work has shown the organisation to focus most strongly on the identification of learning. We found there to be a variety of different activities taking place such as debriefs, lessons learned exercises, post-implementation reviews and third party and internal scrutiny reports that provide rich sources of learning.

We found the supporting processes for the subsequent retention and transfer of that knowledge to be relatively less well developed, however. We also reviewed current practices within six business areas and found that there is a lack of alignment and inconsistency between the approaches adopted by those business areas, and a duplication of effort in developing practice.

Furthermore, all of the business areas that we reviewed handled organisational learning that was also relevant to other business areas i.e., there was a need for another area of the organisation to take action to facilitate the necessary organisational learning. Their ability to influence the necessary change however was found to be limited. This emphasises the need to strengthen the processes and controls that ensure effective knowledge retention and transfer takes place.

In recognising this, Police Scotland developed a Business Justification Case in May 2022 to create an organisational learning function that would include a central co-ordination role. We have found that all of the elements articulated within Police Scotland's outline organisational learning framework, developed to underpin the Business Justification Case for further work, already exist in some form within the organisation. We have commented on the specific elements we have identified throughout this report and produced an action plan to support Police Scotland in further developing its organisational learning arrangements, that builds on those existing structures.

We recommend that Police Scotland prioritise the recommendations relating to the implementation of actions arising from organisational learning, making use of existing governance pathways and systems where possible. This should enable the greatest benefit to be realised upfront, with greater work required to support the introduction of an organisational learning library and a longer-term cost/benefit trade off.

Background and scope

Organisational learning is the process by which an organisation improves itself over time through gaining experience, using that experience to create knowledge, and transferring that knowledge within the organisation. The Police Scotland response to COVID-19, Operation Talla, included the establishment of a Recovery and Continuous Improvement Group with the intention that this should be developed into a permanent function that included organisational learning within its remit.

In September 2020 the Police Scotland Risk, Assurance and Inspection (RAI) function carried out a review of arrangements for organisational learning across the organisation. Its objectives included mapping existing sources of organisational learning, identifying existing good practice and making recommendations to support the implementation of an Organisational Learning Framework. The review identified some areas in which

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approaches to organisational learning were established or in development, but no structured approach to coordinating knowledge transfer across divisions and functions.

In May 2022, the ACC Professionalism & Assurance approved a Business Justification Case to procure professional services to support options evaluation and for the creation of an organisational learning function.

In accordance with the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan, we have developed a baseline of existing organisational learning activity and produced an action plan to support future development. This includes an assessment of organisational learning structures already in place or in development within the organisation, and their suitability for wider implementation.

The 2020 RAI review aimed to take a broad view of practice across the organisation. Responses were gathered from 34 business areas and divisions within Local Policing, Crime & Operations, Corporate Services Division, and People and Professionalism.

Based on this work, we identified those business areas that appeared to have structured arrangements encompassing elements, of the principal activities of organisational learning that could be built upon when developing an organisation-wide approach. Those business areas were:

- Strategy and Analysis Directorate;
- Governance, Audit, and Assurance;
- Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit;
- Specialist Crime Division;
- Information Management;
- Professional Standards Department; and
- Scottish Multi-Agency Resilience Training and Exercise Unit (SMARTEU).

This work involved workshops, review of evidence and interviews with individuals currently involved in organisational learning activity across Police Scotland to identify areas of good practice and understand how those can be best replicated.

The audit was undertaken “advisory-style” in nature to reflect the relative infancy of work in this area, and lack of pre-existing, defined processes for Organisational Learning. The scope of the audit was focused on arrangements within Police Scotland only.

Management Response

Management have provided one overarching response to the recommendations identified within this report as follows:

Police Scotland agree with the findings and recommendations identified within this report. There is work ongoing to secure Scottish Government transformation funding to procure professional services to assist with the implementation of our Organisational Learning framework and structure.

While we await this decision, we will scope how to progress with the implementation with the tools and resources available to us.

This activity will be led by Chief Superintendent Governance, Audit and Assurance and we will report back on progress through our existing quarterly updates. The timescale is a checkpoint where we will have a confirmed position about additional funding and an opportunity to make some interim progress with options for implementation.

Owner – Chief Superintendent Governance, Audit and Assurance

Due date - 30 September 2023

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all staff consulted during this review for their assistance and co-operation.

Organisational learning framework

Risk, Assurance and Inspection review and subsequent Business Justification Case

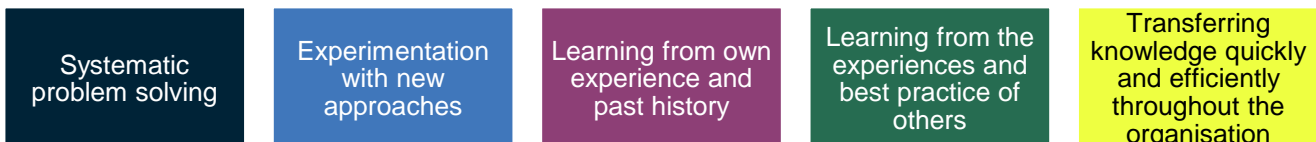
Organisational Learning in a policing context is an active area of research, and organisational learning approaches are a key component of improving, innovating and implementing Evidence Based Practice in Policing.

In September 2020 the Police Scotland Risk, Assurance and Inspection (RAI) function carried out a review of arrangements for organisational learning across the organisation. The RAI review received commentary from business areas in relation to a variety of strategies, business processes, initiatives and activities. These reflected the business areas' current understanding of the scope of activity relevant to "organisational learning". The key findings from that review included "*a lack of governance structure, no clear stated commitment to organisational learning contained within corporate plans and documents, a clear lack of a controlled system in relation to the collation, testing, effective retention and dissemination of learning*".

In order to progress the recommendations identified by the 2020 RAI review, the ACC Professionalism and Assurance approved a Business Justification Case (BJC) in May 2022 to procure professional services to "*support the evaluation of the possible options, which will in turn outline the key deliverables to support the creation of an Organisational Learning (OL) function*".

We understand that these services have not yet been secured pending the output of this review, and that our findings will form the basis of early work for the successful bidder.

Police Scotland's proposed framework for organisational learning articulates that the key characteristics of a "learning organisation" are:



These are underpinned by three "pillars" of learning representing different means of gaining knowledge.

The proposed framework sets out a process by which the framework is expected to operate. We have included the summary of this draft process in this report at Appendix A.

Azets observations

Police Scotland has articulated a vision of an organisational learning framework; however it has not yet been rolled out or implemented across the organisation. We found that organisational learning arrangements that are currently operating within particular divisions or business areas did not necessarily follow this model.

We examined the extent to which the arrangements we reviewed had aspects in common with the proposed model, but also took a wider approach of considering activities and processes that aligned with the more general concepts used in organisational learning literature:

- creation or identification of knowledge;
- retention of knowledge and corporate memory; and
- the transfer of knowledge efficiently across the organisation.

Though the BJC sets out key characteristics and principles of organisational learning, we found in our work that Police Scotland does not presently have an agreed definition that is shared across the organisation. The various learning activities considered throughout our review included:

- Structured debriefs, undertaken with the aim of identifying issues at risk of reoccurrence in the future and suggestions for improvement in operational practice;
- Post-implementation reviews that assess the extent to which the objectives of an initiative or exercise have been delivered, which present the opportunity to examine root causes of success or failure;
- Recommendations raised through third-party reviews e.g.:
 - Reviews undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), which has a remit to scrutinise the “state, effectiveness and efficiency” of SPA and Police Scotland
 - Investigations undertaken by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC), which investigates incidents involving the Police, and reviews complaint handling processes
- Processes of analysis using information captured in the course of operations, which can be used to compare different approaches towards a given area of activity and draw conclusions on their relative effectiveness.

One key feature of each of these processes is that they include an element of quality review and governance before any output is finalised. This helps to ensure that any recommendations arising are of high quality and are agreed by the relevant subject matter experts, providing comfort as to their usefulness.

The Strategy and Analysis Directorate (comprising Strategy, Insight and Engagement and the Analysis and Performance Unit) is the core corporate support for Police Scotland to provide detailed analysis, insights, strategy and plans the enable delivery of services across the country. The key areas such as demand and productivity, analysis, research and insights are all used to inform both the strategic direction of the organisation and a range of policing decisions. While some outputs from the service can support organisational learning, others are designed to enable and support the strategic direction and decision making of the service.

More generally, we found that individual business areas’ perception of organisational learning activity tended to align with their areas of responsibility. For example, operational areas referred to reflective processes such as debriefs and linked this with training, whereas areas with a focus on scrutiny and assurance tended to regard organisational learning as a process of identifying and implementing improvement recommendations. An effective organisational learning framework relies on a shared understanding of the activities that could potentially represent a source of learning and focus proportionately on those most likely to provide the greatest value. As such, it is important for Police Scotland to articulate the organisational learning activities that are likely to fall within the remit of the framework.

Recommendation 1: *Police Scotland should agree a definition of organisational learning and articulate the key activities that are expected to fall within its scope.*

This should be clear as to the approach to organisational learning, how this is collated across the organisation and disseminated to relevant personnel. In particular, the definition should clearly communicate the arrangements for sharing and disseminating organisational learning outwith the business area in which it has been identified.

This definition, and the supporting example learning activities, should give consideration to proportionality in order that the learning intended to be captured is of sufficient significance and quality.

Whilst there is no current overarching structure for organisational learning in place, we applied the definitions of organisational learning set out in the proposed framework to the areas covered within our review, with the intention of identifying structured or formal processes to carry out the key organisational learning activities within the scope of that business area. We have mapped our findings in this regard at Appendix C.

Our principal observations arising from this exercise are:

- There is no single area within the organisation that can demonstrate all of the elements of an organisational learning framework, although many have informal arrangements;
- Two business areas (OCCTU, SMARTEU) have an existing, formal framework which they use to administer Organisational Learning, however there are variable approaches to the sharing of information both internally and with partner agencies.
- The business areas with the strongest arrangements for the governance and implementation of organisational learning are those concerned with assurance.

All of the business areas that generated organisational learning internally through reflection on past activity and practice, as opposed to through independent scrutiny, noted obstacles to implementing actions to embed that learning. This appears to be a function of the governance pathways available to the business. We consider this issue in greater detail under *Stage 3 – Transfer*.

Co-ordination and oversight

The BJC sets out an ambition to implement a centralised structure for the administration of organisational learning. All seven of the areas we reviewed had some elements of process or governance structure that related to organisational learning, in the sense that there were processes (whether formal or customary) for the identification, retention and transfer of knowledge.

Whilst we welcome the introduction of greater co-ordination and consistency of activity, the introduction of a central function carries with it the risk that some of these existing functions will be duplicated. This is particularly a potential issue where the processes involved are part of business-as-usual activity, or where there are existing governance processes for the assessment and implementation of organisational learning outcomes.

Recommendation 2: *As the organisational learning framework is developed, Police Scotland should ensure that any additional systems, processes or structures introduced complement rather than duplicate existing arrangements. This will mean that some existing processes within business areas should be replaced with centralised corporate processes.*

We understand that Police Scotland intend to carry out an exercise documenting organisational learning activities occurring within business areas that should include an assessment of whether those activities, elements of those activities, or specific responsibilities would duplicate processes designed to underpin an organisational learning framework.

The draft organisational learning process (see Appendix A) includes a process step for carrying out this assessment. If this model is adopted, it should define clear criteria and mechanisms for the escalation and delegation of tasking relating to organisational learning.

Stage 1 – Identification

The outline framework set out in the BJC defines a “three pillar” model for the identification of organisational learning. These pillars relate to three distinct areas of activity, which we have considered according to the following definitions. These definitions are not exhaustive and should be updated and refined as any organisational learning framework is developed.

- **Pillar 1: Local Organisational Learning Capture** encompasses reflective activity undertaken within the business area, with the aim of identifying potential improvements. This includes “lessons learned” exercises and structured debriefs in which individuals or groups consider the outcomes produced by their work in relation to their objectives.
- **Pillar 2: Evidence Based Practice** includes structured exercises to compare two or more different approaches to dealing with a task or issue, with the aim of producing results that can, through rigorous analysis, produce evidence to support the effectiveness of those approaches.
- **Pillar 3: Learning from Scrutiny and Review** encompasses recommendations arising from independent or third-party consideration of activity with the aim of assessing its effectiveness.

We found that each of these pillars described the organisational learning activity undertaken by at least one of the business areas under review.

We also found that the core activity of the business area tended to align with a particular learning pillar. Operational areas tended to emphasise local capture of learning through reflective exercises, typically a structured debrief process carried out over specific past instances of activity. Conversely, our review of assurance areas (GAA and PSD) found learning to be mainly identified either through scrutiny processes or liaison with external scrutiny and assurance providers. We also reviewed Strategy, Insight and Innovation who have a remit that encompasses various aspects of evidence-based practice, which includes carrying out analysis of operational data and feeding this back to other areas of the organisation, aligning them predominantly with pillar 2.

The proposed framework for organisational learning identifies a range of potential learning sources (see Appendix B) that comprises a mix of:

- **Business areas** such as Strategy and Analysis Directorate and SMARTEU;
- **Processes** such as Strategic Threat Assessment; and

Pillar 1 – Local Organisational Learning Capture – SMARTEU

Formal debriefing following an exercise is a core component of SMARTEU organisational learning processes. The debrief process is conducted according to a standard agenda, supported by a set of guidance for the conduct and capture of debriefs, culminating in the production of a report in a standardised format. All debriefs have an explicitly identified sponsor, however the debrief itself may be carried out by a designated facilitator.

The results of the process are compiled to align with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles.

Identified learning is submitted to an externally managed system termed Joint Organisational Learning (JOL). Within Police Scotland, learning and any resultant actions are shared with the Sponsor.

- **Information** such as results of internal and external scrutiny.

It is not immediately apparent how Police Scotland would identify learning from each of these sources and how this would then be fed into an organisational learning framework. Combined with a lack of clarity as to what constitutes organisational learning (see *recommendation 1*), this creates a risk of introducing excessive complexity into the organisational learning framework.

When designing effective processes, it is important to clearly identify the inputs and outputs, alongside the expected pathways, and to clearly align these to the three pillars that underpin the proposed organisational learning framework.

Recommendation 3: *Police Scotland should carry out a mapping exercise with the objective of identifying the specific processes, carried out within divisions and functions, which produce outputs that are considered to be organisational learning within the scope of the framework.*

This will support the organisation in determining which business areas produce organisational learning under each pillar. In turn, Police Scotland can then determine a set of criteria by which can be used to guide assessment and filtering processes for the selection of learning requiring further action.

Consistency across business areas

When implementing a common organisational learning framework across Police Scotland, there will also be a need to introduce greater consistency across business areas within the processes through which organisational learning is identified. This is most relevant in relation to any actions arising that will be centrally tracked and co-ordinated (see Stage 3) and may be implemented by a different business area than was responsible for their generation.

It will be important for actions to have:

- An articulation of the action needed to be taken, as well as the desired outcome from its implementation;
- A 'risk rating' or other indicator that objectively reflects its significance; and
- An agreed owner and planned due date;

Recommendation 4: *Police Scotland should create a template for documenting actions that enables consistent and clear recording across business areas. This should be supported by guidance that explains its use, in particular for the assignation of risk ratings.*

The action tracking template should then be embedded into existing organisational learning activities as identified per recommendation 1.

Stage 2 – Retention

Once learning is identified, an organisational learning framework must include arrangements for that learning to

Operation Urram

A specific lesson capture session was undertaken during the planning phase of Operation Urram. This collated instances of learning from a number of different sources, including: the review of previous recommendations arising from other Police Scotland Operations relating to major events, workshops with Planning Inspectors, and engagement with other Forces with experience of policing major events.

Potentially relevant recommendations were categorised and risk assessed in the context of Operation Urram. The initial exercise produced 42 recommendations which were carried forward into the planning of the Operation.

Though the exercise made use of recommendations and outputs arising from the conduct of similar operations, there was no single location which held this information – instead the planning team was required to identify comparative events and then determine where those outputs were held.

Similarly, Operation Urram itself produced a number of outputs which contain recommendations for the conduct of similar operations in the future. As the planning team and responsible officers return to their original roles or move onto other operations, we understand that this information has been turned over to the Audit and Assurance Team in the absence of a specific repository.

be retained in a manner that does not rely on a particular individual. This is sometimes referred to as a “corporate memory”. The essential aspect of retention is that “learning the lesson” creates persistent change within the organisation.

All of the areas reviewed produced documentation that could be considered organisational learning. Generally, these took the form of reports that include conclusions, outcomes or recommendations.

In order to address the risk that learning is lost, most of the areas we reviewed expressed a need for a means to retain the outputs of organisational learning processes in such a way that the information can be referred to in the future. We noted a distinction between two categories of retained learning:

- Findings / recommendations that are embedded through the implementation of a change within the relevant processes or working practices. The effectiveness of the organisational learning is defined by the action taken and does not rely on the retention of associated documentation. We have considered learning of this type in the next section “Transfer of Learning” and consider this to be the likely source for the majority of impactful organisational learning.
- Findings / recommendations that apply to specific situations or infrequent events, where immediate action is not taken as a result of the learning. This organisational learning is only effective if that information is available to other individuals who may have need of it in the future. We expect this to be a less significant source of organisational learning, on the understanding that the most significant learning would be likely to result in a change to current processes.

An example of information of the second type would be recommendations relating to the planning and delivery of policing operations around large events such as Operation Urram (see sidebar).

Current systems

Of the areas we reviewed only two made use of information repositories that were distinct from action tracking and assurance mechanisms, both of which are external to Police Scotland. These were SMARTEU, which makes use of Joint Organisational Learning (JOL), and the Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit

(OCCTU), which makes use of a UK-wide shared organisational learning system for CT policing termed Counter Terrorism Organisational Learning System (CT OLS).

Strategy and Analysis Directorate hold a range of information that informs strategy, service and decision making. Elements of this information may enhance organisational learning, however, its use is also clearly defined in terms of strategy, planning and informing policing services.

Both JOL and CT OLS are systems built to support organisational learning processes that involve the transfer of information between organisations, as opposed to development within a single organisation with a single collective governance structure. This means that it must account for the situation where one organisation identifies learning that other participating organisations may choose to implement change. This level of flexibility may not be desirable for an organisational learning system implemented within a single organisation.

The existing outline organisational learning framework makes reference to an Organisational Learning Library but does not make clear whether this refers to storing or archiving information that goes beyond the learning identified and action taken, or is independent of the means to track and obtain assurances over the implementation of those actions.

Recommendation 5: *Police Scotland should determine whether to implement an organisational learning library that operates independently of any action tracking. If such a repository is implemented, Police Scotland should ensure there are criteria that should be satisfied before storing information. This should consider:*

- *its significance (to exclude trivial matters);*
- *the likelihood of future use; and*
- *its potential relevance, expressed in terms of the scenarios or processes in which it could or should be used (such as major events planning).*

Alternatively, Police Scotland may decide to implement a model that assumes that organisational learning inherently leads to action and builds corporate memory through means such as the update of policies, procedure documents, and SOPs. This may also be complemented by ensuring that there are effective documentation management regimes in place within business areas for the storage of their organisational learning outputs.

Searchability and availability

Both JOL and the CT OLS are information repositories that provide a means for information to be stored and accessed. In order to support this use, they are designed such that:

- The repository is searchable so that relevant information can be readily and quickly identified. This means that any information added to the repository must be catalogued and described. Otherwise, information that is relevant may not be locatable.

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- The repository is intended to be comprehensive, meaning that all potentially relevant information is accessible from a single location, or as few locations as possible to minimise the administrative burden of accessing the information.
- There are arrangements to ensure that individuals with need of the information are aware that the repository exists.

For both systems, there is an underpinning process that clearly defines the scope of information to be retained, and the format in which it is to be stored. Governance and approval arrangements for the addition of information to the system are also defined.

Each of the systems is explicitly designed to be searchable, such that information arising from past occurrences can be applied to other instances. If Police Scotland elects to introduce such a repository, it should introduce arrangements to ensure that the information it obtains remains relevant and accessible. This may have resourcing implications, and may duplicate effort already undertaken within business areas to build and maintain information repositories such as shared network drives, intranet pages, etc.

Recommendation 6: *Information added to the repository should be articulated and recorded in such a way that it lends itself to analysis. The design of these arrangements should include an assessment of the likely needs of individuals making use of the repository. This may comprise:*

- *Categorisation of learning by nature of activity or operational area*
- *Assignment of keywords to support searching and visibility of information*

CT OLS and wider implementation

In the course of our review, we found that the CT OLD processes operated by OCCTU were generally regarded as the most developed organisational learning processes within Police Scotland.

SCD has previously attempted to generalise the organisational learning approach used by OCCTU and implement this across SCD more widely. Limited progress has been made in this regard. We explored the reasons for this and identified the following of relevance to any wider implementation of an organisational learning framework:

- **Resourcing:** as a component of OCCTU, CT OLD is underpinned by dedicated resource and staffing. This includes dedicated CT Learning and Development staff who coordinate, manage and deliver organisational learning as related to Counter-Terrorism, as well as National Training Programmes and the coordination and mobilisation of specialist CT cadres. SCD has more limited resources to dedicate to the processes.
- **Scalability:** CT OLD processes are underpinned by a dedicated electronic system that is not administered by Police Scotland. This leads to practical difficulties with expanding the scope of information that it contains, combined with issues segregating information with specific handling requirements from information that can be made available to officers generally.

Recommendation 7: *Organisational learning systems must be supported by adequate resource. Police Scotland should consider the resource requirements for:*

- *Administration of any system used, such as adding new information;*
- *Maintenance and update of the information held, where applicable; and*
- *Supporting users of the system both in its use and in locating relevant information.*

Resource requirements should be established at an early stage when considering the introduction of a dedicated, organisation-wide repository. This should include the extent to which the organisational learning processes supplement or replace activity already taking place within functions to avoid duplication (see recommendation 2).

Stage 3 – Transfer

Related to the idea of retention of learning is the concept of learning transfer. We considered this aspect of

Implementing Learning – SCD

In the course of our work documenting existing organisational learning processes, we investigated the extent to which there were specific governance structures in place in each of the areas reviewed to oversee the implementation of actions or recommendations arising from OL activity. We specifically focused on governance pathways to support the implementation of action outside the business area which identified the learning. We found that this existed in a formal sense only for business areas specifically concerned with assurance – Governance, Audit, and Assurance; Professional Standards; and Information Management.

We asked other business areas to comment on their experience of attempting to implement actions in other business areas, and the governance pathway used to do so. Only SCD identified a pathway which they considered effective, and that only for local policing. This is as a consequence of senior officers within the SCD management structure being embedded within local policing divisions. This provides an avenue for OL identified by SCD to be fed into the Local Policing management structure in a manner which supports its implementation.

organisational learning in terms of the ability of a business area that identifies learning to effect change across the organisation as a whole. In an organisation as large as Police Scotland, we expected that this would require agreement and coordination across business areas, and some means of gaining assurance that agreed changes are implemented and embedded in practice.

We observed that there was no consistent organisation-wide understanding of what it means for learning to be transferred or embedded. Throughout our discussions, some areas referred to this as the production of information that could be retained in a repository and referred to in the future (as discussed in the previous section), whilst others referred to processes of implementing recommendations or actions.

All of the areas which we reviewed handled organisational learning relevant to other business areas, in the sense that there was a need for another area of the organisation to take action or otherwise embed the identified learning within their processes and procedures.

GAA and PSD explicitly have a remit to provide assurance over the implementation of recommendations arising from scrutiny (which are a form of organisational learning aligned with Pillar 3) across broad areas of the organisation. These business areas are both resourced and empowered to request updates on progress and have clear reporting lines and escalation pathways into the organisation's governance structures if these are not implemented. The IT system used by PSD, 4Action, is designed for tracking the implementation of recommendations.

Of the non-assurance areas we reviewed, the majority did not have access to any formal assurance process with which they

could determine whether recommendations arising from their own organisational learning work had been implemented.

Governance Pathways

CT OLD is headed up by a national governance group, which has implemented an assurance process in relation to organisational learning recommendations. This group has a pathway into the ACC Governance Group if escalation is required.

SCD is able to make use of its management structure, which includes Superintendents located within Local Policing divisions. This provides an avenue for the delegation of organisational learning recommendations and actions to these areas.

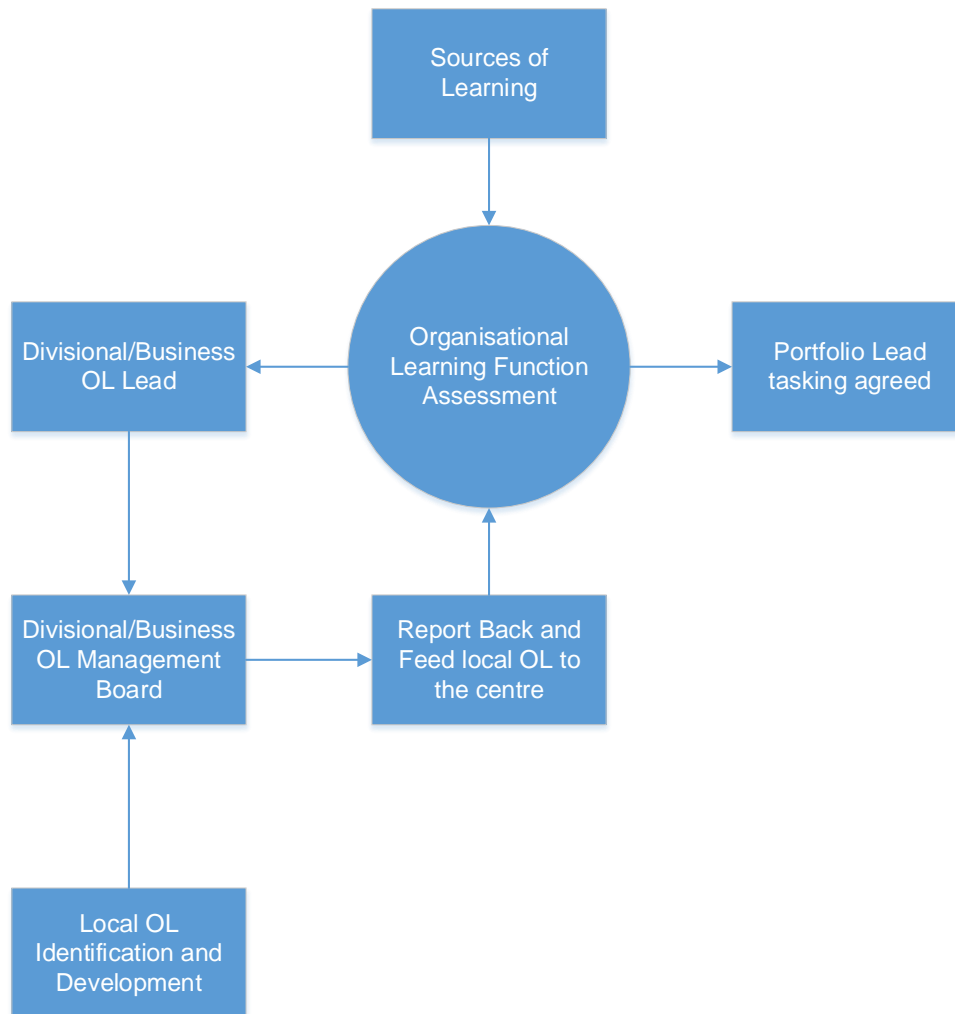
An OL framework should provide a clear governance pathway for referral, implementation, and assurance over organisational learning recommendations.

Strategy, Insight and Innovation and SMARTEU primarily make recommendations or otherwise communicate organisational learning directly to the business areas concerned. Thereafter, that business area's internal governance takes responsibility for any action. Accordingly there is a risk that organisational learning is lost or not acted upon if it is not regarded as a priority by the business area.

Recommendation 8: *The organisational learning function must be underpinned by an assurance process that ensures that recommendations and actions arising from organisational learning activity are implemented and embedded effectively.*

Police Scotland should consider making use of existing processes to achieve this, for example by expanding the remit of existing assurance processes within GAA and PSD including the use of supporting systems such as 4Action.

Appendix A – Draft OL process



Step 1 – Learning is identified from the 3 pillars and submitted to the Organisational Learning Function for assessment. If the learning clearly links to a Portfolio Lead such as PPU for example, there will be engagement with them their decision on whether action is required or if no action is necessary then it is archive in OL Library to retain corporate knowledge.

Step 2 – If learning is a force wide matter – distributed to OL Leads for Action. In the Metropolitan Police this is the divisional Support Superintendent or business area equivalent. If learning is a local issue it is passed to relevant OL Lead(s) for action.

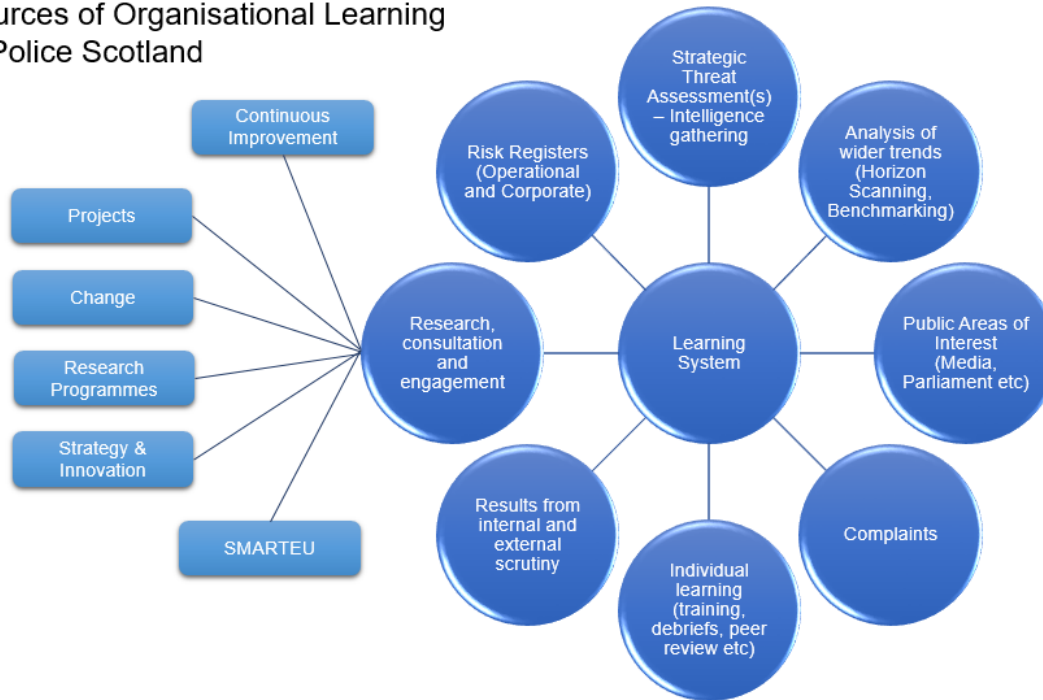
Step 3 – OL Leads discuss at monthly OL Board which could be a bespoke OL meeting or covered within monthly SMT level. Here learning is actioned, implement, managed and tested to ensure it is effective.

Step 4 – Local OL Leads report back to Organisational Learning function on action taken. Organisational Learning function record, track and report on performance and manage OL Library.

Appendix B – Sources of learning

The below diagram was included in the RAI review of Organisational Learning, conducted in September 2020, as a summary of potential sources of organisational learning. The same diagram was subsequently used in an internal Organisational Learning Briefing pack and the Business Justification Case.

Sources of Organisational Learning
in Police Scotland



Appendix C – Summary of business area processes

	Stage 1 – Identification			Stage 2 – Retention		Stage 3 – Transfer	
	Pillar 1 – Local Learning Capture (Reflective)	Pillar 2 – Evidence Based Practice	Pillar 3 – Scrutiny and Review	Learning Repository in place	Learning is Categorised and Prioritised	Assurance process over implementation	Governance structure to oversee learning
SMARTEU		JOL and own prior reports		JOL	Externally Managed		
Strategy and Analysis			In place	Yes, but unstructured at present. Development of an online knowledge hub underway at time of audit	Analysis and insights are categorised within the directorate	Analysis and insights are developed and presented in accordance with best practice	Analysis and insights are considered through existing service governance
Governance, Audit, and Assurance				Prior Scrutiny Findings			
PSD				Prior Scrutiny Findings		4Action	
Information Management				Prior Scrutiny Findings		4Action	
Operation Urram		Prior Event Debriefs	Gold Group			For duration of Operation	
OCCTU	Structured Debrief Process	National OL Resource		National OL Resource		ACC Group CT OLS	
SCD	Structured Debrief Process			Yes, but Limited Resource			Cross divisional management

Key

	All elements of activity or process in place
	Some elements of activity or process in place
	No elements of activity in place, or significant gaps

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