

ISSUE 1 - 2025

The Investigator

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Achievements of a dedicated analyst**

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11th National Analyst's Annual Conference

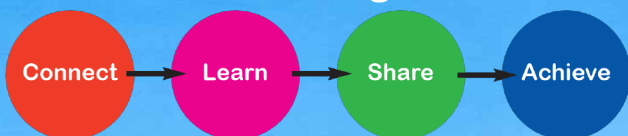
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Welcome to the latest issue of our new look magazine that aims to highlight latest thinking and best practice in the world of criminal investigation.

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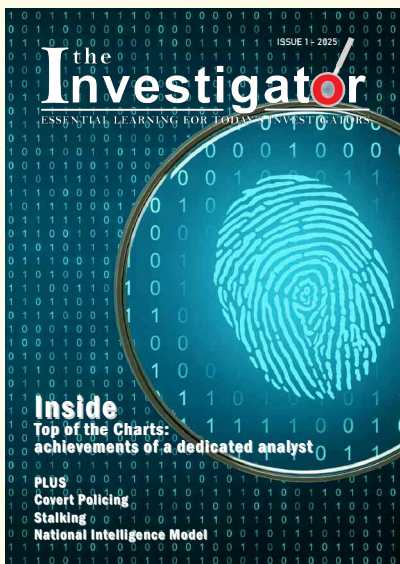
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Top of the Charts

Alexis Cran, a Principal Analyst at Police Scotland has been at the forefront of efforts to professionalise the role of the analyst over the past 30 years. She is considered a trailblazer for this work and is as proud to be an analyst today as she was three decades ago. We asked Alexis to look back over her remarkable career and share some of her highlights.

How did you become an analyst?

I started as a station assistant with Strathclyde Police in 1986 and then later trained to be one of the first civilian HOLMES indexers and after working on a major investigation in Ayr.

I was asked if I would be interested in a secondment to the Intel Unit staffed by a Sgt and Police Officer to help transfer the intelligence cards to a computer. I became totally immersed in the intelligence world and loved it.

Our Divisional Commander was on a working group to bring analysts to Strathclyde Police, so I piloted the role for a year or so then was successful for the analyst position when advertised and started officially in March 1994 as one of 17 analysts.

In those early days, what was your core job role?

At first, no one knew what we should be doing. I did some initial training at the NCIS in London in 1994 and was given plastic shapes and colouring pencils!

To be honest, although we had some basic training then further anacapa training later it was challenging to do the role we were employed to do. In those early days I was still seen as female who could type and I was often asked to type up bulletins and reports.

I was lucky with the officers I worked with you could see the benefit and was given some responsibility of helping with target packages. One officer who transferred to my division in the 1990s had been asking lots of questions and apparently the answer he got from most people was 'ask Alexis'. When he was introduced to me, he was shocked as he thought 'Alexis' a computer system!

How did your role as an analyst develop?

Initially the main tasks were identifying trends, patterns, problem profiles and assisting with target profiles.

From 1994 until 2003 I was the analyst for the division working with Intel Officer and a Sergeant, being line managed by the Sergeant.

In 2003 things changed in Strathclyde with a new structure, a Principal Analyst, Deputy and assistant Principal Analysts and teams of four in each division. An Analyst Coordinator, A senior Analyst, an Analyst and a Researcher.

Initially I was the Senior analyst then Analyst Coordinator. Since then, it's been analysts managing analysts which I do think has greatly helped the profession.

I have had some amazing Police Officer Managers but did take a while for officers to understand what we could do. Obviously NIM had a massive influence on products and every time a Senior Officer came back from a course or meeting where NIM was on the agenda things changed again particularly in relation to the Tactical Assessment.

What are your career highlights?

I have lots and too many to list but enquiry wise, I worked on a high-profile Scottish Murder Enquiry in 1999/2000 after coming back from maternity leave. I learned so much about major investigations on that enquiry and working with others, working as a team.

I suppose a personal highlight for me is becoming Principal Analyst and 30 years later seeing the incredible work analysts do in my force and elsewhere and knowing I had a wee part to play at the very start. I do try very hard work to help with development of analysts which was lacking for us at the start.

How has the role developed over the years?

I started as an analyst officially in 1993 but in 2003 with a career structure became Higher Analyst, then Analyst Coordinator then Assistant Principal within Strathclyde then Principal in Police Scotland so quite proud of that. We have paved the way for analysts now, being valued and seen as crucial to major enquiries and really any investigation, finding patterns, trends, that bit of the jigsaw.

The role is basically the same as it was...looking at the who, what, when, where, why and how, and of course we are still nosy and inquisitive.

Technology is the main development, with the analyst having all the tools on their laptop or desktop, dual screens, various software packages, not need to make appointments to use i2 or get someone to come out of a system to use it.

Telecommunication analysis of mobile phones, analysis social media is certainly a key area in analysts' workloads now which (now I am showing my age) wasn't a key task in my early career. In fact, in my major enquiry 25 years ago, the telephone and computer analysis was done by an analyst at Headquarters and brought down to me in chart form to analyse.

Geospatial analysis technology has also improved tenfold and is integral to intelligence analysis and the systems now are incredible compared to the very first clunky mapping system I was given to work with in the 1990s but hey it beats putting dots or pins onto a map in the wall.

Going from Strathclyde Police to Police Scotland led to more more opportunities and knowledge sharing and with improved technology and meeting platforms now going into 2025 the opportunities are endless.

I have brought analysts from other UK forces and from USA to speak at our lunch and learn and user forums which can really motivate and inspires analysts. What are the big challenges for the role?

As Principal Analyst one of my main challenges is resourcing and not having enough analysts to do the high demand of work.

I spoke to a few of my analysts to see what they see as the challenges facing them. Here's what some of them said:

- the complexity and hybridisation of threats
- the massification of data
- emerging/potential challenges from artificial intelligence e.g. the move from descriptive to predictive analysis
- large volumes of work, high demand for analytical products, scarcity of analyst posts
- data quality (particularly crime reports)
- the advance in technology and the lack of training available around this. Keeping on top of all the changes in technology/systems whilst also trying to provide work of a decent standard. Changing technology. This was the challenge most highlighted!
- Officer Knowledge Gaps

How do you see the role developing in future?

I think with technology continuing to advance rapidly, we may see the inclusion of AI and machine learning to augment analyst capabilities and enhance our work. Such technologies can help speed up and process information and data, but I can't see it replacing the expertise and judgment of actual human criminal intelligence analysts.

There is also the need for more analysts to be trained in cybercrime, as cybercrime continues to rise, analysts need to understand the technologies and tactics to be one step ahead of the criminals.

One of the best things for me is to see how much value is put on analytical work now to drive enquiries and if the analysts are appreciated and valued, then I am happy too.

I have seen a lot of changes over the last 30 years and think there will be more changes in future that are driven by technological advancements and evolving societal needs.

Criminal activities are constantly evolving and as analysts we need to stay ahead of trends and emerging threats although there are some crime types that are still prolific.

Wellbeing is another area that I am passionate about. This has changed significantly for analysts in fact all police staff in the last 30 years. It has taken a while for the importance of this to be recognised for analysts, so this is a positive development.

What are your final thoughts?

To sum up, I have had an amazing career, still love my job and lucky to have done the type of work I have.

It certainly has changed over the years and is now more sophisticated and technologically driven than it ever was but the whole ethos behind it is still the same.

Criminal Intelligence Analysts
Who are they? What do they do? Where are they? and how can they help you?

Sharon McCauley, Susan McHugh, Laura Bell, Sarah Dicks, Carol McKeown, Colleen Kelly, Cheryl Keating, Sarah Gannon, Claire Gannon, Anna Kelly, Emma Lacey, Aileen O'Connell, Doreen Healy, Linda Webb, Angharad, Margaret Ward.

Since 1994 Strathclyde Police employed 17 civilian personnel as Criminal Intelligence Analysts, a completely new post within the Criminal Intelligence system in Strathclyde.

All 17 went onto an Intelligence Analysts training course run by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) in London. The two-week course covered the various aspects of criminal intelligence analysis including strategy, case analysis and assessment strategy.

At this point you may be wondering what this has to do with you. The answer is simple - as a police officer you can regard analysis as a process which supports you in any attempt to identify, control or prevent any criminal activity.

The aims of the Criminal Intelligence Analysts are:

- to develop and use information which outlines the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW about past, continuing, present or future criminal activities and to describe the nature and scope of groups and organisations; and
- to provide clear tactical or strategic assessments to enable the establishment of priorities for action and to make the most efficient use of available resources.

Or, in plain English, the Analyst aims to assemble bits and pieces of information from all available sources to show a pattern and meaning. Analysis is the key to the successful use of information. Without it, information does not become intelligence. It remains raw data. It is the presence of an analytical process which clearly distinguishes an intelligence unit from an information storage unit.

What is intelligence? Intelligence deals with all the things that should be known in advance of initiating a successful course of action.

This term stands at the forefront in the area of Criminal Intelligence Analysis with an Analyst required within the Criminal Intelligence Office at every Divisional HQ.

Your Divisional Analyst appears in the start above.

Use their skills to advance your enquiries; to illustrate what you know, believe or suspect; to confirm your intelligence assessment; to show connections between associates; to drive courses; and to recall you.

Divisional Inspector Ian McCraith, former Criminal Intelligence Officer, at CID intelligence.

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Cell site analysis, contemporary updates for investigators and analysts 5 February 2025



Model Behaviour

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is a systematic tool that allows law enforcement to use intelligence in a strategic, tactical, and operational manner. Adrian Ramdat from the Signature Brand Training and Consultancy provides an overview of the NIM and discusses its benefits.

The model ensures that law enforcement actions are driven by up-to-date intelligence, thus improving prevention, detection, and disruption of crime. Rather than reacting to crimes after they occur, NIM empowers proactive policing.

Core Components of NIM

NIM operates through several key components that allow law enforcement agencies to analyse and act upon intelligence:

Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Levels:

NIM operates across three interconnected levels:

Strategic: Long-term planning, focusing on larger

trends like organised crime and terrorism.

Tactical: Mid-level operational plans addressing specific problems or criminal networks.

Operational: Immediate, day-to-day policing actions, such as patrolling and responding to incidents.

Tasking and Coordination Groups (TCGs)

These groups bring together analysts and decision-makers who assess intelligence, determine priorities, and allocate resources. TCGs ensure that intelligence leads to informed actions at both tactical and operational levels.



The Intelligence Cycle

NIM is based on the intelligence cycle, which involves:

Collection: Gathering data from various sources.

Evaluation: Assessing the reliability and quality of that data.

Collation: Organising the information.

Analysis: Identifying patterns, trends, and emerging threats.

Tasking and Dissemination: Using the intelligence to guide law enforcement actions.

Intelligence-Led Policing and NIM

Intelligence-led policing (ILP) emphasises the use of information to guide law enforcement decisions, moving beyond reactive measures. The NIM framework is essential to ILP, as it ensures that intelligence is central to decision-making processes. This method enables organisations to focus resources on high-priority areas and high-risk individuals, helping them to prevent crimes before they occur.

Case Study

Operation Trident

One of the most notable examples of ILP in action is Operation Trident, a Metropolitan Police initiative aimed at reducing gun violence and gang activity in London. By collecting and analysing intelligence from various sources, including human sources and surveillance, the police are able to map gang structures and target key individuals. As a result, they significantly disrupted gang activity and reduced gun crime in high-risk areas.

This case highlights the value of intelligence-led policing: it prioritises resources and operations based on specific intelligence, allowing law enforcement to address root causes of crime rather than merely responding to symptoms.

Benefits of NIM in Policing

NIM's focus on intelligence-led strategies brings several key advantages to law enforcement:

Proactive Crime Prevention: Instead of waiting for crimes to happen, police forces can anticipate and disrupt criminal activities before they escalate.

Efficient Resource Allocation: With NIM, police can focus resources where they are most needed, addressing high-risk individuals, groups, and locations.

Collaboration: NIM enhances collaboration

between law enforcement organisations and other agencies, both nationally and internationally. Sharing intelligence helps to build a cohesive strategy for tackling crime.

Challenges in Police Implementation

However, implementing NIM is not without challenges. One of the most significant issues is the quality of data.

Poor intelligence can lead to flawed operations, as seen in the UK Datong incident, where incorrect intelligence resulted in the wrongful arrest of innocent individuals. NIM's success depends heavily on accurate, reliable data.

Another challenge is resource constraints

Intelligence-led policing requires trained analysts, technology, and ongoing coordination, all of which can be resource-intensive. Smaller organisations or those with limited budgets may struggle to fully implement NIM, leading to inconsistent application of the NIM.

Application of NIM in Non-Police Organisations

The NIM framework, although designed for policing, has found applications in various non-police organisations, including local government, regulatory bodies, and private companies.

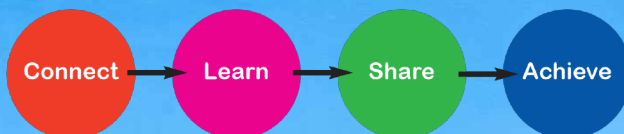
Its focus on intelligence collection, analysis, and tasking has made it valuable in sectors outside of law enforcement.

Local Government and Public Sector

Local government bodies have used NIM principles to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, and fraud.

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By analysing patterns of behaviour and identifying hotspots for disturbances, councils can allocate resources for interventions like youth engagement programs and neighbourhood patrols.

NIM has also been used in child protection services. By identifying trends and vulnerable individuals, local authorities can better coordinate with law enforcement to prevent exploitation and intervene in high-risk situations.

Regulatory Agencies

Regulatory agencies such as the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Environment Agency have adopted intelligence-led approaches to guide compliance and enforcement efforts.

For example, the FCA uses intelligence to detect and prevent financial crimes like insider trading and money laundering.

By analysing transaction data and, where appropriate, sharing intelligence with law enforcement, the FCA can intervene early to prevent financial misconduct.

In the environmental sector, NIM helps regulatory bodies monitor industries at high risk for offences like illegal waste dumping.

By using intelligence to track suspicious activity, agencies can focus their enforcement efforts on areas with the most significant risk of environmental damage, or those people believed to be engaged in such activities.

Private Security Firms

Private security firms managing large-scale events or corporate security have also adopted NIM principles.

For example, during the London 2012 Olympics, private firms used intelligence-led approaches to assess potential security risks, ensuring that resources were allocated effectively to mitigate threats.

Conclusion

The National Intelligence Model has significantly impacted the way law enforcement operates, moving policing from reactive to proactive through intelligence-led policing.

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By prioritising resources and actions based on data and intelligence, police forces can better anticipate, prevent, and disrupt criminal activities.

While challenges remain, particularly around data quality and resource allocation, NIM has proven to be a transformative tool in policing.

NIM's broader applicability has also made it valuable to non-police organisations such as local councils, regulatory bodies, and private companies.

In these sectors, NIM helps organisations make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and manage risks effectively.

As threats continue to evolve, the National Intelligence Model and its focus on intelligence-led strategies will remain essential for both police and non-police organisations in addressing the complexities of terrorism, modern crime and public safety.

National Intelligence Model CPD event, April 29 – book your place now

The Investigator is pleased to offer a session on Using the NIM Efficiently on 29 April.

It will be delivered by Adrian Ramdat from The Signature Brand Training and Consultancy, via Ms Teams It will examine key areas of the NIM and how it can be used efficiently in organisations.

To book your place or to request further information email booking@the-investigator.co.uk





Covert Risk

Managing risk in covert operations ensures they remain safe, ethical and successful. Adrian Ramdat reports

Covert operations are a crucial aspect of law enforcement, particularly in addressing serious crimes such as terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking, and drug smuggling. Managing risk In the United Kingdom, agencies like the National Crime Agency (NCA), MI5, and the police rely on covert operations as a vital tool but equally a whole range of other organisations engage in covert activities including government departments and local authorities.

These operations are inherently risky, and without effective risk management, they can result in severe consequences for staff, informants (or Covert Human Intelligence Sources - CHIS), or the public. Proper risk management ensures that covert operations remain safe, ethical, and successful.

Defining Covert Operations

Covert operations involve secretive activities that include undercover activity, surveillance, informant handling, test purchase activity and more recently digital surveillance undertaken as Targeted

Equipment Interference

These operations enable law enforcement to gather intelligence, infiltrate criminal networks, disrupt illegal activities or safeguard vulnerable people.

However, the secretive nature of covert operations exposes personnel to significant physical and psychological dangers. There is also a risk of the operation being compromised, which could lead to failures that put staff and members of the public in harm's way.

In the UK, covert operations are tightly regulated, and law enforcement agencies must ensure that they operate within legal frameworks.

This is where risk management becomes critical, helping to balance operational goals with the need to protect officers, preserve public trust, and avoid legal repercussions.

The Role of Risk Management

Risk management in covert operations refers to identifying, assessing, and mitigating the dangers associated with such activities.

This process is essential for ensuring the safety of



Using the National Intelligence Model (NIM) in intelligence-led activity

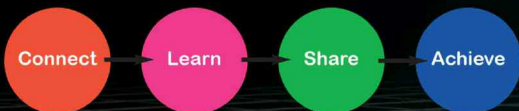
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Understanding the Digital Disclosure process, challenges and best practice,

22 January 2025

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those involved, safeguarding the integrity of the operation, and maintaining compliance with legal and ethical standards.

In the UK, risk management in covert operations is guided by national guidelines, such as the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) or more latterly the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA), both of which provide the legal framework for authorising and overseeing covert activities.

Key Components of Risk Management in Covert Operations

1. Operational Planning and Intelligence Gathering

The foundation of any covert operation is thorough planning and accurate intelligence gathering. Poor or outdated intelligence increases the risks of failure or operational compromise, which sadly has been seen in some high-profile cases.

Effective intelligence-gathering methods, such as human sources (HUMINT/CHIS) or digital surveillance, allow law enforcement agencies to make informed decisions about the timing, tactics, and resources required for an operation.

Proper intelligence helps to mitigate risks by providing a clear picture of the threat environment, enabling law enforcement to anticipate challenges, such as identifying potential threats to officers' safety or uncovering weaknesses in the criminal organisation they are targeting.

2. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a critical component of covert operations. It involves evaluating the potential threats and hazards associated with the operation and assessing their likelihood and potential impact. In the UK, law enforcement agencies use frameworks such as the National Decision Model (NDM) to guide risk assessments and decision-making.

The NDM helps staff evaluate situations, ensuring that any actions taken are proportionate, necessary, and lawful.

Effective risk assessment considers a range of potential risks, such as the possibility of operational exposure, physical harm to staff or human sources, or the legal and ethical challenges that might arise during the operation.

By carefully assessing these risks, agencies can make better decisions about whether to proceed with an operation and how to mitigate the identified threats.

3. Ethical and Legal Considerations

Covert operations in the UK must adhere to strict legal and ethical standards, particularly regarding the use of surveillance, undercover operatives and informants.

As mentioned, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) provides the legal framework for authorising covert surveillance, ensuring that these operations are carried out lawfully and with appropriate oversight.

Additionally, the role of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT), the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO) and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) ensures that covert operations remain accountable and transparent.

One significant risk in covert operations is the potential violation of legal or ethical boundaries. Such violations can lead to public outcry, legal challenges, and damage to the reputation of law enforcement agencies.

Maintaining ethical standards and ensuring compliance with RIPA is essential to avoid these risks.

For example, the improper use of undercover officers, such as in previous cases where relationships between officers and members of the groups they were targeting were inappropriately formed, has led to legal repercussions and ongoing public criticism and an ongoing public inquiry, emphasising the need for strong oversight and accountability.

4. Safety of Officers and Informants

The physical and psychological safety of staff and informants is a primary concern in any covert operation.

Undercover operatives work in high-risk environments where the potential for exposure or detection is ever-present. In some cases, officers are required to infiltrate dangerous criminal

organisations, increasing the likelihood of physical harm.

To mitigate these risks, UK law enforcement agencies invest in extensive training programs for CHIS handlers and Controllers and undercover operatives.

These programmes teach staff how to undertake their respective roles, maintain their cover, avoid detection, and manage high-stress situations.

Moreover, regular psychological evaluations help ensure that staff remain fit for duty and are not suffering from the mental strain that often accompanies covert work.

Informants, or Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS), also face significant risks. CHIS are often closely tied to the criminal activities they are helping to expose, making their safety a priority for law enforcement.

If a CHIS's identity is compromised, it could lead to violent retribution or the collapse of the whole operation.

Managing these risks involves protecting CHIS identities and providing them with secure means of communication and support throughout the operation.

5. Contingency Planning

Despite the best planning and risk management efforts, covert operations can fail. For this reason, contingency planning is essential.

Law enforcement agencies must prepare for a range of possible scenarios, including operational exposure, or the need to extract staff or CHIS from dangerous situations.

Contingency plans involve having backup teams on standby, extraction protocols for undercover operatives, and legal measures to handle any fallout from a compromised operation.

Proper contingency planning minimises the damage when things go wrong and ensures that the operation can proceed without putting staff or CHIS at unnecessary risk.

Conclusion

Covert operations are an essential tool in the fight against serious and organised crime, but they are fraught with risks.

Effective risk management is crucial to ensuring the success of these operations, protecting the safety of staff and human sources, and maintaining public trust in law enforcement.

By carefully planning operations, conducting thorough risk assessments, and adhering to legal and ethical standards, law enforcement agencies can mitigate the inherent dangers of covert work.

Risk management not only protects the individuals involved in covert operations but also ensures that these operations are conducted in a manner that upholds the integrity of the justice system.

In a world where crime is becoming increasingly complex, managing risk in covert operations must remain a top priority for law enforcement across the spectrum.

Risk Management in Covert

Operations/Investigations CPD event 24 June 2025.

Booking open now.

Our online workshop provides investigators, operatives and managers with best practice around the issues of risk when using covert activities in investigations or operations and will be delivered by Adrian Ramdat.

To book your place or to request further information email booking@the-investigator.co.uk



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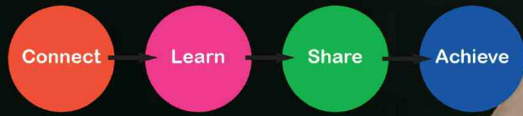


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Taking Note

Accurate notetaking is a key skill that is vital for ensuring the success and integrity of an investigation while also upholding legal and procedural standards. Adrian Ramdat from the Signature Brand Training and Consultancy explores why notetaking is essential at every stage of an investigation.

Notetaking involves recording observations, interviews, and key actions during an investigation. These notes serve as an accurate, contemporaneous record that helps investigators document what they've seen, heard, or done—critical in piecing together the case timeline and facts.

In the UK, whether working in law enforcement, corporate fraud teams, or regulatory bodies, adhering to professional note-taking standards is paramount for several reasons:

Accuracy and Objectivity

Investigators face complex situations where details can be easily forgotten if not documented promptly. Contemporaneous notes reduce inaccuracies and subjective interpretations, ensuring records reflect what occurred without embellishment, safeguarding objectivity and credibility.

Supporting Investigative Continuity

Investigations may span months or years, during which evidence can emerge and personnel can change. Good note-taking practices ensure continuity, enabling new team members to understand previous lines of inquiry.

For example, if an investigator is replaced, comprehensive notes allow their successor to continue the investigation seamlessly without jeopardising its integrity.

Legal and Evidential Requirements

Investigative notes can form part of the evidence in courts or tribunals.

Whether for criminal or civil proceedings, investigators' notes can corroborate statements or provide a clear record of the investigation's progress.

Poor or incomplete notes leave investigations vulnerable to legal challenges, where defence teams may question the reliability of the investigator's recollection, weakening the prosecution or claim.

Accountability and Professionalism

Investigators are, rightly, held to high standards of accountability. Should an investigator's actions be questioned, well-maintained notes provide transparency, and a record of decisions made.

These are vital for demonstrating compliance with professional guidelines and legal frameworks, including adherence to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984.

Note-Keeping: The Foundation of Investigative Integrity
While note-taking documents immediate observations, note-keeping refers to how those records are maintained, stored, and retrieved during the investigation.

Proper note-keeping ensures the long-term integrity of investigative work.

Organisation and Accessibility

In large-scale investigations, vast amounts of information are accumulated.

Efficient record management allows investigators to easily access critical information. Disorganised or difficult-to-retrieve notes can result in wasted time and resources—or worse, critical evidence being missed.

Chain of Evidence and Legal Compliance

In the UK, and other jurisdictions, maintaining the chain of custody for evidence, including notes, is crucial to ensuring records remain admissible in legal proceedings.

Notes must be securely stored with time stamps and any changes logged to prevent accusations of tampering.

Proper note-keeping also ensures compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, which regulate how personal data (including investigative notes) should be stored and managed.

Mishandling this data can lead to legal repercussions for investigators and their organisations.

Retention Policies

Investigators must follow their organisation's retention policies for notes. In several jurisdictions around the world, there are guidelines on how long records should be kept, depending on the nature of the case.

For example, in criminal investigations, notes may need to be retained for a period after the case is closed to account for potential appeals.

Understanding these policies ensures that records are properly disposed of and that organisations remain compliant with regulations.

Good Practice for Investigators

Consistent Documentation: Investigators should make a habit of consistently documenting key information throughout the investigation. This includes dates, times, locations, people involved, actions taken, and decisions made.

Doing so ensures that all developments are properly recorded and can be reviewed later if needed.

Use of Technology

While handwritten notes are common, the use of digital tools for note-keeping is growing. Digital tools

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offer advantages such as timestamping, easy storage, and search functions.

However, it is crucial that investigators using these tools comply with legal standards to ensure their records are admissible in court. This includes securely storing data and maintaining an audit trail.

Regular Review and Updates

Notes should be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain accurate as the investigation evolves. As new evidence emerges, earlier notes may need to be clarified or supplemented to reflect the latest developments.

Conclusion

The importance of notetaking and note-keeping for investigators cannot be overstated. These practices ensure accuracy, accountability, and legal compliance—essential for building a credible investigation.

Well-maintained notes also form the foundation for internal reviews and external legal processes, protecting both the investigator and their organisation. Adopting rigorous notetaking and note-keeping practices is not merely an administrative duty; it is a professional obligation that helps ensure the credibility and success of an investigation.

Notetaking CPD Day 28 January 2025 – book your place now!

The Investigator is pleased to offer a session Notetaking for Investigators on the January 28 delivered by Adrian Ramdat from The Signature Brand Training & Consultancy, via Ms Teams.

This event will examine a number of key areas in note taking to ensure that notes comply with not only the legal requirements but also good practice.

To book your place or request further information email booking@the-investigator.co.uk





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Technology Trafficking

An innovative new operation to tackle the emerging trend of human trafficking facilitated by technology, including social media, apps and other digital platforms has been launched by Interpol. The Investigator reports.

The initiative is a response to a worrying pattern of victims being trafficked from Latin America, lured by fake or deceptive job offers. They are then taken to another country, increasingly in Europe, where they are subject to exploitation, mainly through prostitution.

This first-of-its-kind operation involved investigators who were supported by INTERPOL's capabilities in human trafficking, facial recognition, cybercrime and criminal analysis.

Results

Throughout the action days, participating countries worked side by side poring over information from websites and messaging apps. Significant results included the identification of:

- 68 potential victims
- 146 potential exploiters, recruiters and facilitators
- 365 usernames and 162 URLs linked to suspicious activity.

Cyril Gout, INTERPOL's Acting Executive Director of www.the-investigator.co.uk

Police Services said: "Technology is, now more than ever, facilitating all forms of organized crime - human trafficking is no exception.

"This innovative operational week at INTERPOL's headquarters successfully brought together officers at both ends of this troubling trafficking flow between Latin America and Europe.

"Their hard work led to the detection of hundreds of incidents and data elements that will be the basis for further investigation."

Images

In one case, the Netherlands and Venezuela were able to collect facial images of women advertised as Venezuelan escorts on European websites and run them through INTERPOL databases.

A match was made to a Blue Notice, a notice which seeks to collect information about a person's identity or location because of a suspected connection to, or knowledge of, a criminal investigation.

The operation also detected an influx of Brazilian women on adult service websites advertised in Ireland, with one individual suspected to be behind the numerous accounts.

Police from Ireland and Brazil worked together to identify a suspected recruiter with links to an organized crime group. A similar pattern was observed by the United Kingdom, which identified a domestic services website closely connected to a page offering sexually explicit content.



Debt

Officers from Spain and Colombia teamed up to investigate the recruitment of Colombian women to work as escorts in Spain, only to be forced into prostitution. To be released from their debt, victims were being asked to pay EUR 12,000. Netherlands investigators focused on examining active Telegram groups featuring offers for sex workers which showed signs of exploitation.

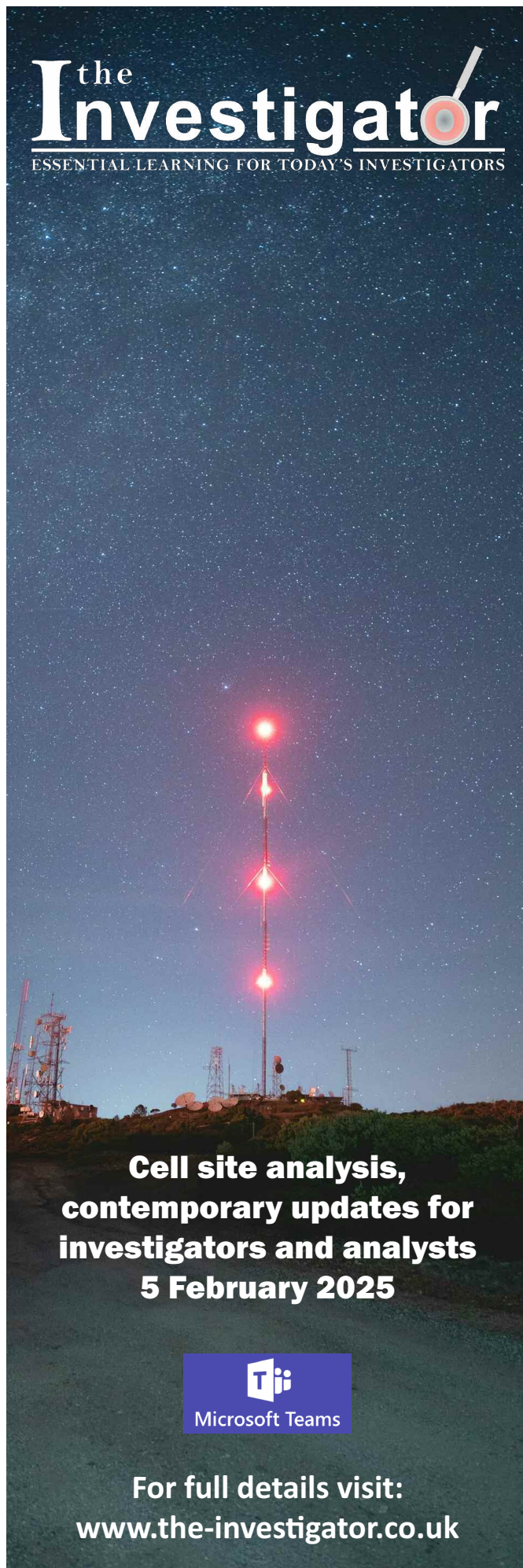
They were able to extract a range of images, usernames and even telephone numbers, which were shared with all participating officers, prompting multiple further probes.

In another example, officers from Germany detected a potentially underage victim being advertised in Switzerland. The case was communicated to Swiss authorities via INTERPOL's secure messaging system for further investigation, helping to verify the victim's age and locate potential traffickers.



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Forensic Focus: New study finds sperm in blowfly maggots can crack crime scenes

Blowfly eggs and larvae can carry crucial evidence, like sperm, which could help in sexual assault investigations, a new study from the University of Portsmouth has found.

The findings demonstrate that blowflies can inadvertently collect and retain DNA evidence from sexual assault crime scenes, making them a potentially powerful tool for forensic investigations.

Insects

Forensic entomology is already well-established for its ability to estimate time of death and other details by studying insect activity. But this new study examines whether insects can carry DNA evidence to identify sexual offences suspect.

This discovery could prove invaluable in solving complex cases where conventional evidence is scarce or unavailable.

Alexine Clarke, from the University's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, said: "I wanted to question whether eggs being laid on a body with semen

present could act as a vessel for DNA, which would theoretically allow us to link an offender to the crime.

"Although forensic entomology can be used in death investigations to estimate time since death, recovering male offender DNA, attributed to sperm cells, from the gut content of blowflies is relatively new, and this is the first time research in England has looked specifically at sperm cells."

Remains

Researchers designed an experiment to mimic real-world forensic scenarios. A small amount of boar semen was applied to the skin of pigs to simulate evidence sometimes found at serious and complex crime scenes. Blowflies were attracted to the decomposing remains and lay hundreds of eggs and larvae.

The scientists processed some of the blowfly eggs and younger larvae by washing and freezing them after collection. Other larvae were left to grow larger, and their gut content was examined just before they pupate.



Dr Katherine Brown

Analysed

They used a specialist technique called differential extraction to separate the sperm from piglet skin cells. The samples were then analysed under a microscope to detect the presence of intact sperm.

Mrs Clarke added: "In at least 50 per cent of the samples, sperm cells were present. This is an exciting finding because it shows that the blowfly eggs and larvae can retain evidence such as sperm, potentially linking perpetrators to crime scenes."

Knowledge

Dr Katherine Brown, Principal Lecturer in Forensic Science, said: "This research builds on existing knowledge of host DNA detection in blowfly and other insect larvae, with the important distinction that we can attribute the DNA to the cell-of-origin; sperm.

Not only does this indicate the source of the DNA, but also potential activity, contributing significantly to serious crime and tackling violence against women and girls".

Samples

This paper was very much a scoping study and Mrs Clarke has plans to develop the research further. She is now working on a PhD at the University of Portsmouth, which is exploring whether you can get a full DNA profile from the samples.

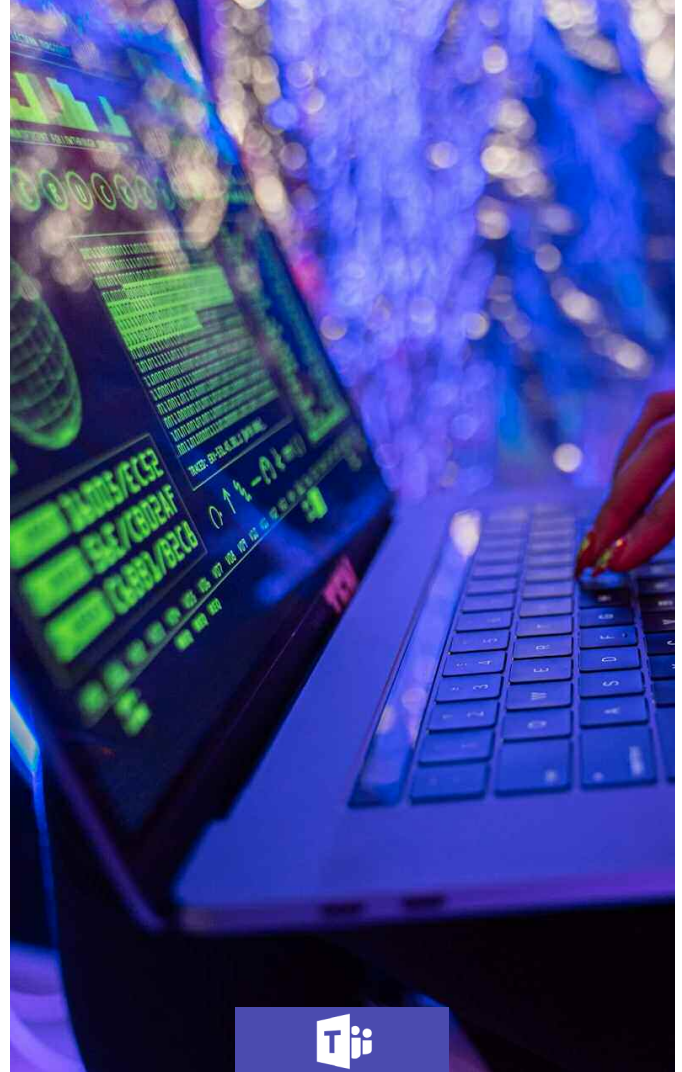
Further research is also necessary to explore how environmental factors and time affect the preservation of such evidence on and within blowflies.

Dr Brown added: "As we expect samples to rapidly degrade, this project is interlinked with our Single-Cell DNA Identification (SCAnDI) work to maximise chances of obtaining a full DNA profile."

The paper is published in the Journal of Forensic Entomology.

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Stopping Stalking

Police will be given new powers to reveal the identity of online stalkers in order to provide a better deal to victims. The Investigator reports.

The harrowing ordeal that actress Nicola Thorp faced at the hands of an online stalker is the inspiration for an important new law change that will give more rights to victims.

Former Coronation Street actress and Talk TV host Nicola was stalked and abused online for months by a man she did not know, who set up almost 30 social media accounts to send her a constant stream of violent misogynistic messages.

Her experience has prompted the new change that will, for the first time, provide police with new powers to release the identity of online stalkers.

Reassurance

This will set out the process for disclosure more clearly to the police and provide victims who are subject to this chilling crime with greater reassurance that they will be quickly told the identity of the individual threatening them online.

It is hoped that the move will provide more protection for stalking victims and ensure perpetrators will be

treated robustly.

Not knowing the identity of an online stalker is unsettling with victims left in the dark as to whether the offender is known to them, which can put them in more danger.

Power

As a result of her experience with an online stalker, Nicola Thorp has been working with the government to give victims the right to know who their online stalkers. This came after police working on her case said they did not have the power to reveal the identity of the offender even after he was arrested.

The man, who called himself The Grim Reaper in some of his messages to Nicola, is currently serving a 30-month prison sentence with a lifetime restraining order handed down after his appearance in court – the first time Nicola learned his true identity.

Stalking Protection Orders

In further measures to tackle stalking, victims will also be given more protection from offenders by making Stalking Protection Orders more widely available – these orders can ban stalkers from going within a certain distance of their victims or contacting them. It can also compel them to attend a perpetrator

programme to address the root causes of their behaviour.

Currently, Stalking Protection Orders can only be made by the courts if the police apply for them. Under new measures, courts will be given the power to impose Stalking Protection Orders directly at conviction – or even on acquittal if there is enough evidence to suggest that they are still a risk to the victim. This will help stop, for example, offenders from contacting their victims from prison.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said that the changes were necessary because ‘victims of stalking have been subject to debilitating and vicious abuse at the hands of stalkers who use any means necessary to monitor and control their victims’ lives.’

“Let us be clear - we will use every tool available to us to give more power to victims and take it away from the hands of their abusers,” she said.

“This starts with empowering police to give women the right to know the identity of their online stalkers, strengthening stalking protection orders and ensuring that the police work with all support services to give victims the protection they deserve.”

Further measures include:

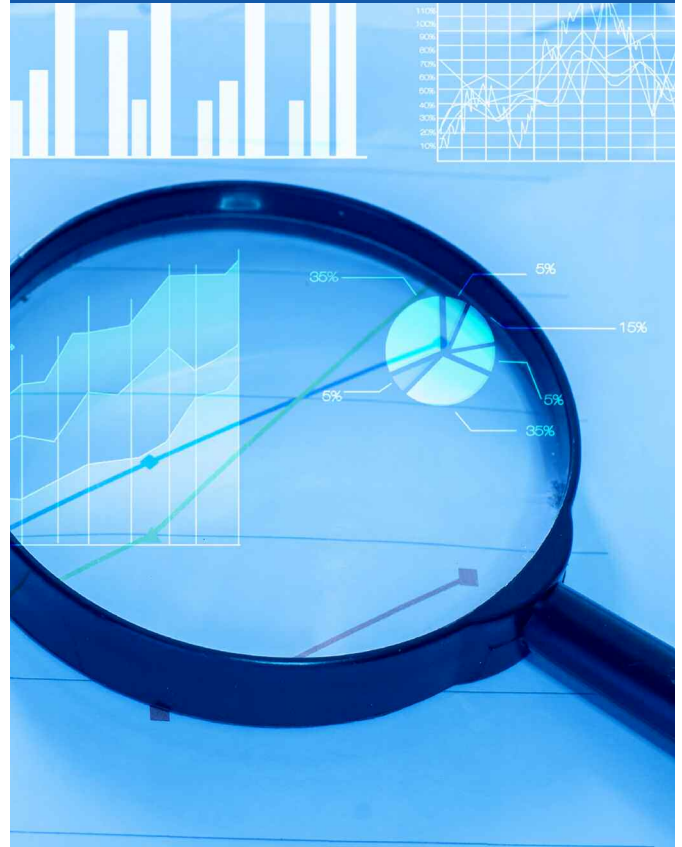
- defining stalking in statutory guidance and setting out a framework to help support services including the police, education and health services work together and share intelligence on cases to ensure that proper protections are put in place for every victim of stalking so that no one is failed by vital information falling through the cracks

- national standards on stalking perpetrator programmes will be published to ensure that interventions properly address an offender’s stalking behaviour in a consistent and evidence-based way across England and Wales

- new data on stalking offences will be published by the Home Office which will help inform policy and policing decisions on this crime

In addition, the government has committed to accepting or partially accepting all the recommendations arising from the recent super-complaint on stalking made by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and a consortium of other organisations and campaigners to demand better support for victims, and a stronger response from the authorities, in the wake of the sharp rise in stalking offences over recent years.

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Victim Voice

New measures to help keep victims of crime engaged in the justice process against the backdrop of delays have been unveiled by the Crown Prosecution Service. The Investigator reports.

The package of new measures were set out by Stephen Parkinson, the Director of Public Prosecutions and has a strong focus on victims of rape and serious sexual offences to recognise the devastating impact these crimes can have on victims. All adult victims of rape and serious offences are now being offered a pre-trial meeting with the CPS ahead of trial, as well as access to a dedicated Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) as a single point of contact to answer any questions they have. To date over 40 VLOs have been recruited and over 550 staff who will be meeting victims have received training.

It has been developed following direct input from victims of rape and serious sexual offences, meaning a more tailored service to meet their needs.

Service

Mr Parkinson said that ‘being a victim of crime can be life changing and delays to the system puts an even greater responsibility on us to make sure we are getting the service we give to victims right.’

“I know of the dark shadow people waiting for criminal proceedings are living under - it can prevent healing and damage relationships,” he said.

“Consistent, clear communication is vital to support victims to continue with the process and help us secure justice. Further measures as part of the Victims Programme include:

- Piloting an improved service to all victims of crime who have their case charged by the CPS. Victims in pilot areas will receive a phone call, email or letter from the CPS to explain our charging decision, giving them the opportunity to ask any questions, to hear more about what happens next and their rights under the Victims' Code.
- Consulting directly with victims of crime through Victim Reference Groups. For example, based on victims' feedback that seeing the defendant's name in print can be re-traumatising, we no longer use the defendant's name in the opening of our letters.

Working closely with partners including the police and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), to ensure the right support is in place for victims.

Through ISVA drop-ins, rape local scrutiny panels where cases can be analysed to identify areas of good practice, we are continuing to learn and improve our service to rape victims.

We have established joint governance with the National Police Chief's Council to co-ordinate our service to victims.

Improvements

The CPS's Victims Programme will be independently evaluated to ensure it translates into real improvements for victims.

Charlotte Caulton-Scott, Head of a RASSO unit in CPS East Midlands, said: "As a prosecutor I see first-hand the impact these crimes have on individuals, which is why it's so important they feel supported.

"Too often the CPS is thought of as a faceless organisation which impacts victims trusting us to get a just outcome for them.

"These new measures put a face to a name and provide reassurances victims were otherwise missing out on.

"Alongside working with ISVAs, police, and other support services, we will be able to do much more to help victims throughout this daunting and at times challenging process."

Mission

Victims and VAWG Minister, Alex Davies-Jones, said: "I welcome the Crown Prosecution Service's work to make the court room a safer space for victims of rape and sexual violence. This is imperative to tackling unacceptable victim attrition rates and delivering on our mission to halve violence against women and girls."

Katie Kempfen, Chief Executive at Victim Support, said: "Victim-survivors often feel let down and left in the dark whilst going through the court process.

She said that 'plans to listen to victims' lived experiences, ensure CPS staff are trauma informed and improve communication around charging decisions all have the potential to ensure victims are better supported and able to understand the court process.'

"The introduction of Victim Liaison Officers also holds promise for driving positive change. The success of these roles will rest on how well they integrate into an already complicated system and work alongside Independent Sexual Violence Advocates, who play a truly vital role in supporting victim-survivors throughout the court process.

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Radical Measures

New enforcement tools will be introduced to tackle the growing issue of youth radicalisation. The Investigator reports.

The Government has announced a package of measures to better protect the public and young people from youth radicalisation.

The public and young people will be better protected from the growing issue of youth radicalisation through new enforcement tools, extra police funding and improvements to Prevent – the UK’s programme which diverts people away from radicalisation, the Home Secretary has announced.

Funding

In recognition of the increasingly complex national security environment, including the threat from terrorism, the government is increasing funding for counter-terror police by £140 million next year, and for the UK intelligence community by £499 million, taking their funding to a record level.

With the proportion of young people in counter-terrorism casework increasing, the government will also bolster the tools available to tackle terrorist risk in

these cases with the creation of new youth diversion orders.

Unlike existing counter-terrorism risk management tools, youth diversion orders will be specifically designed for young people to better manage cases which require intervention beyond Prevent.

Intervene

They will reduce the risk of further involvement with the criminal justice system – a key aim of the government’s Safer Streets Mission and the Plan for Change – by enabling the police to intervene earlier, working with partner agencies, before a young person’s activity risks escalating to the level at which a prosecution becomes necessary.

Youth diversion orders build upon a recommendation from the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, Jonathan Hall KC.

The measures that are imposed will be subject to judicial oversight and will allow the police to impose both risk management and rehabilitative conditions, such as Prevent interventions or restrictions to online activity.

Youth diversion orders will better enable the counter-terrorism system to divert young people involved in activity of terrorism concern online and in our communities.

Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper said she was concerned that ‘for some time now, law enforcement and intelligence agencies have been warning about the rapid increase in youth radicalisation, driven in large part by online activity.’

“We are setting out new powers to tackle this and making major improvements to the Prevent programme to recognise the complex range of threats we face.

“While Islamist terrorism remains the primary threat, followed by extreme right-wing terrorism, the overall threat picture is changing to include a growing cohort of young

people radicalised online who do not align with any particular ideology and instead have fixations with violence.

She said that recent Prevent statistics showed most referrals were for individuals with a vulnerability but no ideology or counter-terrorism risk.

To address this, the Home Secretary also outlined reforms to strengthen Prevent, the UK’s programme which diverts people away from radicalisation.

These will ensure that the programme keeps pace with the increasingly complex and evolving terrorist threat, stopping people from being drawn towards dangerous and extremist ideologies, carrying out acts of terrorism or supporting terrorism. The measures include:

- conducting an end-to-end review of Prevent thresholds, and updating policy and guidance, including on repeat referrals, to ensure they reflect the full range of threats we see today
- broadening the interventions available to people

supported by the Channel early intervention programme – in addition to ideological mentoring, we will seek to reflect the increasingly diverse drivers of radicalisation, by exploring options to support at-risk individuals with cyber skills, family interventions, or practical mentoring

· undertaking a strategic policy review to identify and drive improvements in how individuals referred into Prevent who are neurodivergent or suffer from mental ill-health are supported

and managed

- strengthening our approach to the monitoring and oversight of referrals that do not meet Prevent thresholds, by launching a pilot in January to test new approaches to cases that are transferred to other services to ensure there is proper monitoring and requirements in place

A new permanent independent Prevent commissioner will also be recruited with the specific remit of reviewing the programme’s effectiveness, identifying gaps and problems before they emerge.

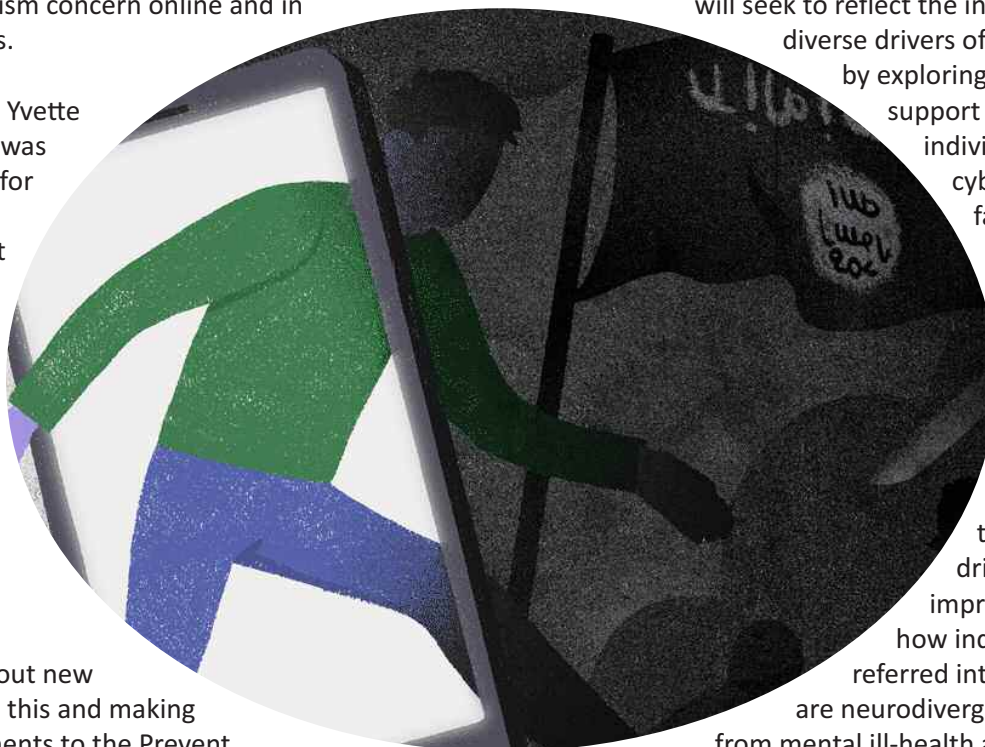
Measures

The independent commissioner will oversee the implementation of the new measures outlined by the Home Secretary.

Security Minister, Dan Jarvis said he was concerned that there had been a serious emerging trend of increased youth radicalisation across the country, with the proportion of MI5 investigations into under-18s surging threefold in the last three years.

“Our first duty will always be to keep the public safe, and the measures we’ve set out today will help ensure the Prevent programme keeps pace with the threats we face and has the tools it needs to succeed.

“The government will continue to take every possible step to counter dangerous ideologies and stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.”





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