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Efficiency and Effectiveness Review Programme
Sharing Good Practice Review

Developing the MPS's Capability to
Share Good Practice: Management Summary

Summary Report, May 2003

MPA
Metropolitan Police Authority

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1. Management Summary
1.1 Introduction

In this report, good practice is defined as follows:

> Good practice is an evaluated technique, methodology or procedure that has been proven to produce measurable and desirable results in a particular business context.
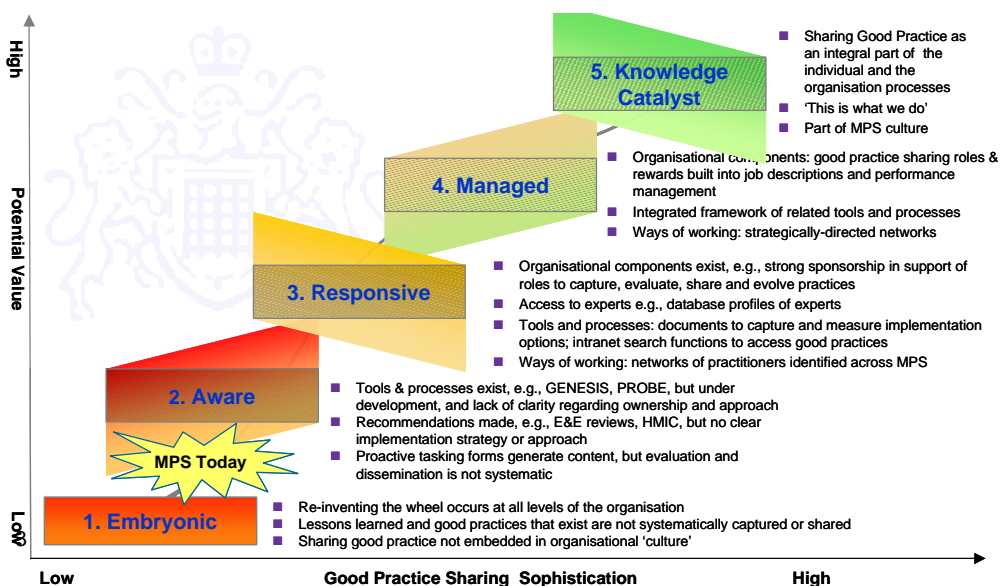
Sharing good practice refers to an organisation's capability to extend the benefits of good practice beyond the particular units or teams that devised it. Sharing good practice describes a discipline, or a systematic and structured means of gathering and disseminating evaluated good practice across an organisation. This capability or discipline is built on an "infrastructure" of processes and roles.

The term "good practice" should be preferred to the term "best practice" since the latter implies that there is only one way to do things, regardless of local circumstances. On the contrary, good practice is not mandatory, and for this reason should not be confused with policy or with Standard Operating Procedures (though good practice may become policy).

Sharing good practice (SGP) is one branch of the wider discipline of **knowledge management**, which involves the systematic capture, evaluation, distribution and application of an organisation's knowledge capital. Because SGP and knowledge management are closely linked, many of the findings of this report are applicable to implementing an infrastructure to support both.

An **overview of sharing good practice in the MPS** clearly showed that although much good practice is generated across the MPS, it is rarely systematically captured and communicated across functions, OCUs or Business Groups. The 'Sharing Good Practice Development Curve', depicted in Figure 1.1, shows the MPS's current SGP capability.

Figure 1.1: Sharing Good Practice Development Curve

Potential Value (High → Low) vs Good Practice Sharing Sophistication (Low → High)

5. Knowledge Catalyst
- Sharing Good Practice as an integral part of the individual and the organisation processes
- 'This is what we do'
- Part of MPS culture

4. Managed
- Organisational components: good practice sharing roles & rewards built into job descriptions and performance management
- Integrated framework of related tools and processes
- Ways of working: strategically-directed networks

3. Responsive
- Organisational components exist, e.g., strong sponsorship in support of roles to capture, evaluate, share and evolve practices
- Access to experts e.g., database profiles of experts
- Tools and processes: documents to capture and measure implementation options; intranet search functions to access good practices
- Ways of working: networks of practitioners identified across MPS

2. Aware
- Tools & processes exist, e.g., GENESIS, PROBE, but under development, and lack of clarity regarding ownership and approach
- Recommendations made, e.g., E&E reviews, HMIC, but no clear implementation strategy or approach
- Proactive tasking forms generate content, but evaluation and dissemination is not systematic

MPS Today

1. Embryonic
- Re-inventing the wheel occurs at all levels of the organisation
- Lessons learned and good practices that exist are not systematically captured or shared
- Sharing good practice not embedded in organisational 'culture'

The MPS is currently moving towards an 'Awareness' of the value of SGP. In the short to medium term, it is possible for the MPS to develop a 'Responsive' capability, and this report outlines the steps required for the MPS to do so. Over the longer term, the MPS as a whole may be expected to achieve a 'Managed' capability, although particular, knowledge-intensive functions or units may attain a higher status (e.g. 'Knowledge Catalyst').

The EFQM Excellence Model is used in the full to structure an assessment of the MPS's current SGP capability as well as of those measures required to develop this current capability. The headings depicted in Figure 1.2 are therefore those of the chapters of the report.

Figure 1.2: The EFQM Excellence Model
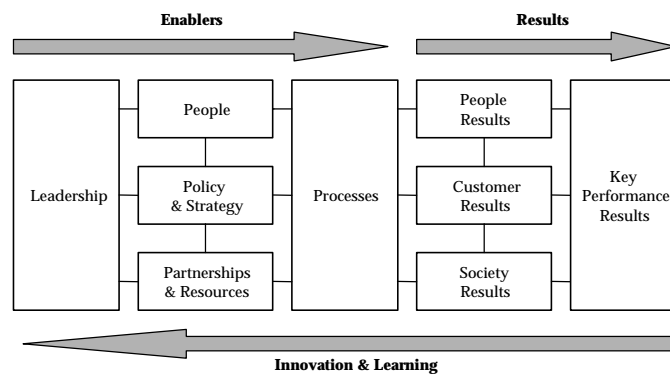
1.2 Leadership

High-level executive sponsorship is critical to developing an effective SGP capability. Unfortunately, there is currently no clear senior management ownership of SGP in the MPS, which probably explains the fact that the proposals of the MPS Inspectorate, and the options presented in a paper by the former Business Change Group, have not been implemented or taken forward.[1]

The Senior Executive Sponsor should be supported by the Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO), who is tasked with managerial control of SGP initiatives. He or she should "own" the SGP change programme, and be accountable for its results, as well as support the Senior Executive Sponsor in a series of outward facing duties. In time, it is expected that the CKO would also take responsibility for corporate wide knowledge management strategic initiatives.

1.3 People

No amount of sophisticated technology or developed processes can make for an effective SGP capability in the absence of an **organisational culture** conducive

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[1] MPS Inspectorate, *Inspection of Good Practice 2002*; Shaun Romeril (former Business Change Group) and Angela Emery (Consultancy Group), *Outline of the Business Need and Options for a Management System for Good Practice within the MPS*.

to knowledge sharing. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the MPS does not have an organisational culture which is conducive to the sharing of good practice, perhaps as a result of its hierarchical structure and competitive ethos. It is therefore imperative that the MPS begin to build a knowledge sharing culture, although this is clearly a long term objective.

1.4 Policy & Strategy

The benefits of sharing good practice are real benefits only if they can be shown to contribute towards achieving **MPS and national strategic objectives**. Little systematic thinking has been done to date on how SGP links to the MPS's strategic direction, although the strategic goals of "Developing Safer Communities" and "Developing a Professional and Effective Workforce", stated in *Towards the Safest City*, respectively mention "good practice" and "continuous learning".

A business case should be developed to formally and rigorously demonstrate the anticipated contribution of SGP to Service and national objectives. Figure 5.1 of the full report schematically matches the anticipated benefits of SGP with the five strategic goals stated in *Towards the Safest City*, and thereby demonstrates the type of thinking that must inform the business case.

1.5 Partnerships & Resources

There are several different types of **external organisations** with which it would be beneficial for the MPS to share good practice, including other law enforcement/security agencies, local authorities, the private sector and international agencies. Currently, exchange of good practice with external organisations happens sporadically in the MPS; the newly formed Cultural and Communities Resource Unit, for instance, is in the process of sharing its tested methods nationally and internationally.

It is not possible to determine precisely the **current staff resources** the MPS dedicates to sharing good practice, or what proportion of time staff exclusively spend on SGP activities. There is no corporate function, or network of units, tasked with developing or delivering SGP initiatives, though there are some units with related functions. In particular, it is proposed by this report that a SGP corporate unit might be attached to the Policy Clearing House, with the associated policy units that serve Strategic Committees, or the Corporate Risk Management Unit (DCC2(7)).

There are also many **existing repositories**, principally intranet-based, that claim to contain good practice, but few of these are in fact collections of good practice, and most are outdated and ill-maintained. A search under "good practice" (of all intranet sites and Notices) results in 2129 hits, 66% of which are dated older than half a year. Of the first twenty intranet pages displayed after they are searched for "good practice", only four could be considered bona fide, whilst three remain under development (although two date from 2002), and twelve are not useful.

It is not possible to definitively determine the **resources required to build a corporate SGP infrastructure** without first defining the extent of that infrastructure, though some tentative estimates can be made. Analysis and comparisons with other organisations suggests that *staff resources* for a corporate SGP infrastructure should be split into three levels: a Central Content Management Unit (CCMU), Local Good Practice Sponsors and individual participants, including local Quality Assurance Officers who evaluate good practice.

To equip an initial or trial SGP central function, this report estimates that, including the Chief Knowledge Officer, a total of five full time staff will be needed (and one part-time change or communications manager), though this estimate is directly dependent on the organisational reach and resource intensity of the proposed SGP infrastructure. Local Sponsors and Quality Assurance Officers will also need to be appointed, although these roles are compatible with other duties.

Technical/Material Resources cannot be precisely projected without first defining what tools or media will be used to capture, store and share good practice. Technical requirements are not significant for the majority of the recommended SGP tools or media. Other material resources, principally in the form of a budget for the CCMU are likely to be fairly small—although the projected budget of approximately £50,000 does not include IT costs or the cost of producing the tools for storing or sharing good practice. These figures are merely indicative, however, as is not possible to be precise without first defining the extent of the desired SGP infrastructure.

1.6 Processes

There is a set of **basic processes** that comprise a good practice sharing infrastructure. *Creation* is the spontaneous innovation of a technique, methodology or procedure that is successful in delivering proven results. The MPS generates much good practice, several examples of which are cited in the main body of this report. *Capture* is the process of extracting information and experience from staff so that it can be recorded, and ultimately shared with others. Currently, there is no corporate form of capture, save the Staff Suggestion Scheme ("Blueprint"), which has largely fallen into disuse, and inspection reports, though there are several local means of capture.

Good practice is distinguished from good ideas by the fact that it is formally *evaluated* and validated. The main report present a series of basic questions that should be used to interrogate proposed good practice, whilst Appendix 4 includes the form of evaluation used by the West Midlands Police. The purpose of this evaluation or quality assurance process is to establish both the acceptability and replicability of the use of good practice across a range of circumstances, and its relevancy for MPS objectives or priorities.

Once good practice has been evaluated and organised in a reusable format, it must then be *stored* in an accessible form. Storage media may be electronic

(e.g. databases such as GENESIS) or hardcopy (e.g. good practice guides, manuals). The maintenance of stores of good practice is the responsibility of Content Managers and Technical Managers (staff of the CCMU).

The *sharing* of good practice should be systematic and targeted (e.g. on those users for whom it is relevant and useful). There are a number of tools, such as Directories of Contacts, Good Practice Forums, or good practice intranet pages that are appropriate to different content, and therefore to different target audiences.[2] The choice between these tools is dependent on the working practices of the target audience and on more practical considerations, such as the availability of AWARE terminals.

Good practice is not 'best' practice, e.g. the single best approach. Good practice is therefore subject to *development* and improvement as it is shared and used. It is the responsibility of the CCMU to ensure that feedback channels are exploited or developed so that contributors and users may provide input on items of good practice and on their means of capture, storage and distribution.

Good practice should be *maintained* and reviewed regularly to ensure it is still of value and is not obsolete as a result of new legislation, policy changes or guidelines. The maintenance of the relevancy of good practice does not currently occur in the MPS: for example, some intranet pages that contain good practice have not been reviewed for years.

1.7 Results

The contribution of a SGP infrastructure to MPS strategic objectives should be **evaluated or measured**. Measurement is needed to show value for money, to justify the expansion of SGP initiatives, to refine SGP initiatives and to ensure that the infrastructure is adequately implemented and maintained. Measures should be quantitative wherever possible, though qualitative measures or supporting anecdotal evidence will also be useful.

## 1.8 Implementing a Sharing Good Practice Capability

A **phased implementation strategy** for taking SGP forward is recommended by this report. A SGP infrastructure should be built gradually, beginning with a defined, high-impact and cross-OCU function or capability to both demonstrate the operational value of SGP, and to trial the initiative's ability to share good practice across the MPS. The results from initial trials can then be used to justify further expansion.

This phased implementation strategy is illustrated in Figure 1.3, below. The major tasks required to trial a sharing good practice infrastructure are presented

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[2] Please consult Appendix 6 of the main report for a menu of tools, and the Sharing Good Practice Toolkit, which accompanies this report, for more a more detailed explanation and examples of a Directory of Contacts, Information Cards, Postcards, a Good Practice Forum, a Discussion Database, Intranet Pages, and an Information Menu.

in Section 9 of the main report, in the form of a high-level trial implementation plan.

Figure 1.2: Phased Implementation Strategy
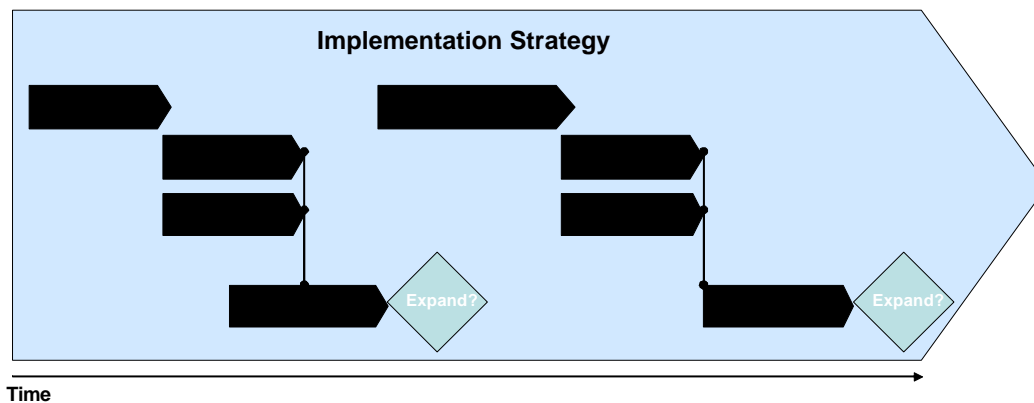
It is estimated that trials can be designed, built and run in an eight month period, though this depends on the breadth and resource intensity of the trials. Trials should run for at least six months to allow their impact to be meaningfully assessed.

1.9 List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The term "good practice" should be preferred to the term "best practice". Good practice should also be clearly distinguished from policy or Standard Operating Procedures.

Recommendation 2:

A knowledge management strategy should be agreed by the MPS, of which sharing good practice initiatives should be part. This strategy should specify an approach to implementing knowledge management disciplines in the MPS and ensure that the measures taken to this end do not (or will not) duplicate resources or processes implemented to share good practice.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that the MPS appoint the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner as the Senior Executive Sponsor for building a sharing good practice capability, to reflect the importance and Service-wide relevance of sharing good practice.

Recommendation 4:

Operational responsibility for building a SGP infrastructure should be delegated to a Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO), accountable to the Senior Executive Sponsor. Depending on whether the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner is appointed to the latter position, the CKO should be the DAC Directorate of Strategic Development, Commander Reform and Growth or the Chief of Staff (see Section 3.2 of the main report and Appendix 8).

Recommendation 5:

The MPS should design and implement incentive schemes that set organisational expectations (e.g. pay rewards, promotion/performance criteria, recognition schemes) for contribution to SGP initiatives. These expectations should also be incorporated into induction training programmes that strongly emphasise the value of sharing good practice. These measures are required, in addition to strong and active leadership, to build a knowledge sharing culture.

Recommendation 6:

A business case should be devised to link the benefits anticipated from building a SGP capability with MPS and national strategic objectives or priorities. SGP initiatives cannot be shown to contribute to MPS priorities should be discontinued.

Recommendation 7:

A SGP infrastructure should be implemented and maintained by both a central and distributed function. If it is deemed appropriate to appoint *the Deputy Commissioner* as Senior Executive Sponsor, then it is recommended that the central function, or the Central Content Management Unit (CCMU), be located in one of the following two places:
   1. Attached to the Policy Clearing House with access to the policy units that serve Strategic Committees;
   2. Attached to the Corporate Risk Management Unit (DCC2(7)).

If it is deemed appropriate to appoint the *Commissioner* as Senior Executive Sponsor, then it is recommended that a new unit be formed, as a part of DCC1, that reports directly to the Chief of Staff. These options are discussed in Section 6.2.2 of the main report and Appendix 8.

Recommendation 8:

Local Sponsors should be appointed in each OCU involved in SGP initiatives, responsible for promoting sharing good practice in his or her Unit. In addition, local Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs) should be selected to evaluate good practice. QAOs should be practitioners with acknowledged expertise and credibility in the area of good practice concerned.

Recommendation 9:

To resource a trial capability, it estimated that the minimum full-time staffing requirement of the CCMU is one Chief Knowledge Officer, three Content Managers and one Technical Manager (a total of five full time staff). The need for a part-time Change or Communications Manager is also anticipated. However, it should be noted that this staffing requirement is dependent on the breadth or organisational reach of the proposed SGP infrastructure, as well as on the resource intensity of the tools or media chosen to store and distribute good practice.

Recommendation 10:

The MPS should implement processes or mechanisms for the capture of good practice that are systematic and regular. All contributions should be promptly acknowledged or recognised. It will be the responsibility of the Central Content Management Unit (CCMU) to design and codify these mechanisms, and guide Local Sponsors with their implementation.

Recommendation 11:

Good ideas must be formally evaluated before they become good practice. This should be done by local practitioners or Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs). QAOs should evaluate good practice according to corporately standard and agreed criteria.

Recommendation 12:

Once evaluated, good practice should be stored in a way that is accessible at the point of need, although security protocol should also be considered. Stored content should be capable of being managed, and should be auditable. Cost and compatibility with existing systems should also be considered when selecting a means of storing good practice.

Recommendation 13:

Tools for disseminating good practice should be chosen with the target audience in mind. The complexity of work and the level of working interdependence, amongst the target audience will guide the selection of tools. Practical considerations, such as the accessibility to IT terminals, should also be considered. It is the responsibility of the CCMU to select the most appropriate tools, in consultation with Local Sponsors and QAOs.

Recommendation 14:

The CCMU must ensure that channels for gathering feedback on items of practice and the SGP infrastructure are exploited or created. Feedback should actively be solicited and used to further refine and develop the good practice or the infrastructure.

Recommendation 15:

Good practice should be actively maintained. To this end, metadata tags should be used to indicate, at a minimum, the author of items of good practice, the date submitted, the expiry date, and appropriate protective marking. It is the responsibility of the CCMU to maintain the currency of good practice.

Recommendation 16:

Metrics and measures should be introduced to track the contribution of SGP to the MPS strategic objectives specified in the business case (Recommendation 5). This will typically be captured by identifying the effect of SGP initiatives on key performance results. Where possible, data already collected by the MPS performance units should be used.

Recommendation 17:

The MPS should adopt a phased implementation strategy for developing a SGP capability. Limited trials should be run in operational, high-impact functions that span OCUs and/or Business Groups (e.g. investigation of vehicle crime, intelligence, etc.) to demonstrate the effectiveness of, and build credibility for, the systematic and methodical sharing of good practice. Further expansion should be justified in a business case that makes use of data collected during the trials and their subsequent evaluation.