

Blackstone's

# Senior Investigating Officers' Handbook

Third Edition

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# Role of the SIO

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## 1.1 Introduction

Fictional portrayals of a lead or senior detective usually depict them as a shrewd and calculating individual who is able to solve a case and outwit criminals almost single-handedly. In reality this does not reflect the true gritty realism and complexities facing the leader of a major crime investigation, with an emphasis that has swung from a 'search for the proof' to a 'search for the truth'.<sup>1</sup> This has led to highly consistent success rates in the UK, with the national average annual detection rate for homicide remaining at or around the 85 per cent mark.<sup>2</sup>

In the police service a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) is usually in command of a largely dedicated team of specialist trained and accredited officers, staff and experts from a Major/Serious Crime Unit/Division. More often than not they have at their disposal dedicated and trained professional staff. Metaphorically speaking, the SIO role can be compared to that of a musical conductor who similarly has to unify performers, set the tempo, give clear instructions, listen critically and shape the product of their ensemble.

A 21st-century SIO no longer has the luxury of being able to solely focus upon and prepare for solving and dealing with homicides. The role has evolved, with a gradual move towards training and accreditation for a much wider selection of serious and complex criminality, such as organised crime, child sexual exploitation, and suspicious missing persons, especially those involving children and young persons. Cyber crime and the rapidly advancing age of digital networks and technology in which people across the globe communicate, organise themselves and commit high-value offences need adding to an SIO's knowledge, portfolio and skills set.

Leading a major crime investigation, in whatever category of crime, places extremely high personal and professional demands upon the individual performing the role. It is undoubtedly one of the most demanding and accountable in the police service. An SIO can be held to account by judicial processes, politicians, Police and Crime Commissioners, intrusive internal and external review mechanisms, the media and, not least of all, victims, their families, friends and communities. SIOs are also answerable to agencies such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), the Coroner, and their own organisation and team. If things go wrong, they are the most obvious 'PTB' (person to blame); and when they go right, they get praise and recognition. SIOs are wholly responsible for the performance of their team and their own actions and decisions during an investigation and well beyond. High expectations are placed upon those who occupy the position, particularly from people who place an enormous amount of moral obligation, hope and trust upon them.

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

<sup>2</sup> Also cited in A Sanders and R Young, 'From Suspect to Trial', in M Maguire, R Morgan, and R Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, 4th edn (Oxford University Press, 2007), 953–89.

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

Being an SIO is not the easiest of career moves, nor is it for the faint-hearted. It is, however, by far the most challenging and rewarding role in the police service. This first chapter covers some of the requirements and considerations for the role, together with useful pointers and topics for consideration, before moving onto more practical subjects contained within other chapters.

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

## 1.2 Challenges for the SIO

There can be nothing more important for a civilised society than to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. So when details of incidents involving the horrific abduction and murder or sexual exploitation of young children emerge, the focus of attention is on the police investigation and achieving justice for victims, their families and outraged communities. This is balanced against the constant political pressure to cut costs and find greater financial savings, and the lowest UK homicide rates since the 1980s.

There is a now a much wider range and variety of cases and investigations for which the 21st-century SIO may have to take charge. Some were never originally included as part of the PIP3 accreditation process and others traditionally were never considered to be police matters. The following list indicates the wide variety of investigations:

- Serious and acquisitive crime.<sup>4</sup>
- Joint and major incident investigations.

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

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

- High volume crime.
- Linked series serious crimes.
- Crimes in action (eg kidnap, abduction, spree killings, suspect hunts).
- Deaths in health-care settings.
- So-called 'honour killings'.
- Sophisticated suicide methods and autoerotic deaths.
- Serious case reviews (eg homicide of parent with child survivors).
- Domestic related abuse/homicide (Domestic Homicide Reviews).
- Gang-related firearms and drugs criminality.
- Violence and public protection.
- SUDC/SUDI deaths (sudden unexpected deaths of children and infants).
- Child sexual offences, eg child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Human (including children) commercial migration and trafficking (ie sex and slave trading).
- High-risk vulnerable missing persons and 'no body' murder investigations.
- Serious organised crime.
- Cyber and e-crime.
- Economic crime, financial investigations, proceeds of crime and identity theft.
- Public corruption.
- Article 2 deaths and corporate manslaughter, eg Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigations.
- Prison-related deaths.
- Drug- and alcohol-related deaths.
- Gang-related firearms and drugs criminality.
- Threats from extremism and terrorism.
- Threats from riots and public disorder (eg UK riots 2011).
- Mass fatality atrocities, accidents and environmental disasters.
- Historic (cold) cases, and those involving celebrities (eg Operation Yewtree).
- Road traffic collisions involving dangerous driving and manslaughter.
- Trans-European and international offenders and victims (living in transient and virtual communities).

Crimes that aren't quickly solved usually pose more of a challenge, particularly if the case is high profile. A long-running undetected case, such as homicide, will soon begin to attract internal review processes and potential doubts about the chances of success. It may also be a problem that borrowed resources are recalled or reduced, despite the fact that there are numerous important outstanding lines of enquiry. This is when an SIO can benefit from having some good support and advice that provides reassurance that nothing obvious has been missed, and that the enquiry is still heading in the right direction.

### 1.2.1 Consequences of unsolved crimes

Performance and professionalism in the role become even more significant when considering the consequences of unsolved major crime, such as homicide and

serious sexual offences. Apart from reputational risk (personal and organisational) and financial cost implications, unresolved serious crime hinders the healing process for victims, families and local communities.

Increased fear and loss of public trust and confidence can lead to a reluctance in people coming forward to report crimes and assist investigations. This fear is heightened in communities that are blighted by gangs (eg drugs, guns and 'turf-war' type criminality) where unsolved cases become a self-fulfilling prophecy due to lack of confidence and reliability in the police and judicial system. The most important consequence of unresolved serious and complex crime though is that offenders, some of whom are extremely dangerous, remain at large to re-offend.

Each case begins with a level of solvability and probability of success. Some murder cases, for example, are easier to solve with the majority (up to 70 per cent) being 'self-solvers' rather than 'whodunnits'.<sup>5</sup> Others can be more difficult or seemingly impossible (such as those where there are no witnesses, no intelligence nor forensic evidence and no suspects). Obviously if an SIO and their team can perform to a high standard and ensure correct procedures are followed, the likelihood of success significantly increases.

### 1.2.2 High-profile cases

Some cases attain high-profile status, and from time to time some of them suddenly reappear in the public spotlight, even though they may be relatively old and historical. This can be due to a variety of reasons, such as the public and media interest, added publicity, scrutiny, expectations and accountability. Notable examples are Stephen Lawrence (murdered 1993); the Moors murderers (Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, 1966); the Yorkshire Ripper (Peter Sutcliffe, 1981); the Hillsborough football stadium disaster (1989); the US O J Simpson case (1995); and the Madeline McCann missing child investigation in Portugal (2007). These, together with many others, never seem to lose their public or media appeal. Such cases are the supreme test of any police force (and SIO), as the decisions made and outcomes are regularly recycled and continually debated.

The significance of the performance of the SIO and the reputation of forces, lead investigators and the criminal justice system can therefore often have a long-lasting affect on those affected by serious crime; either positively or negatively. This phenomenon should never be underestimated.

### 1.2.3 Linked series crimes

Linked series homicide and major crime investigation (ie the actions of the same offender(s)) occur infrequently but when they do, pose specific challenges,

<sup>5</sup> M Innes, 'The "Process Structures" of Police Homicide Investigations' (2002) *British Journal of Criminology* 42, 669–88.

particularly in relation to the Major Incident Room structure of a linked series investigation. The resulting categorisation also has significant impact on overall investigative strategy and resourcing.

The information (eg messaging) and intelligence management functions require a far more sophisticated approach, as does linking and managing the other investigative strategies, such as family liaison and communications (eg media).

SIOs would be well advised to contact the National Crime Agency (NCA) Specialist Operations Centre (SOC) (telephone: 0845 000 5463) for additional support as soon as they suspect a link between crimes. A number of the services available, such as comparative case analysis and behavioural investigative advice and support, can help guide judgements on the identification of commonalities and linkage.

#### KEY POINT

If there are multiple victims and offenders, it is most certainly a serious and complex criminal investigation, for which most forces would appoint a senior SIO to take the lead.

## 1.3 SIO Role and Key Skills

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

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

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

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

The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) sets out duties for the SIO (and police in general), not simply in relation to disclosure, but also in respect of the investigation itself. Section 23 refers to the treatment and retention

<sup>6</sup> ACPO, *Murder Investigation Manual* (NCPE, 2006), 25–6.



of material and information generated during such an investigation, and subs 23(1)(a) contains a requirement for the police to carry out an investigation. It states:

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

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

The police officer responsible for directing a criminal investigation is also responsible for ensuring that proper procedures are in place for recording information and retaining records of information and other material in the investigation.

### 1.3.1 Key skill areas

According to a police research paper,<sup>7</sup> the role requires a combination of three different categories of skills. These come under the headings of: (1) investigative ability, (2) professional knowledge, and (3) management skills. These can be further summarised as follows:

#### Investigative ability

- Investigative competence (eg formulating lines of enquiry, problem solving and decision making—see also Chapter 2).
- Ability to appraise and analyse information (eg interpreting and assimilating information, challenging assumptions, checking accuracy and relevance).
- Adaptability (ie being flexible to changing circumstances).
- Strategically and tactically aware (understanding the bigger picture).
- Innovative, creative and flexible.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Strong problem-solving and decision-making ability.
- Sharp mental agility and self-belief.
- Ability to remain calm and cope under pressure.
- Nerve, strength of character and confidence.
- Time management skills.
- Ability to prioritise and manage competing demands.

#### Professional knowledge

- Legal frameworks, powers and procedures, case law, rules of evidence, definitions (eg the terms 'reasonable suspicion' and 'reasonable grounds to believe').

<sup>7</sup> M Smith and C Flanagan, 'The Effective Detective: Identifying the Skills of an Effective SIO' (2000) Home Office Police Research Series, Paper 122.

- Be 'well read' and continuously develop and improve/expand knowledge, using numerous sources such as Home Office circulars, internal force policy and 'orders', legal databases eg Police National Legal Database (PNLD), police journals, conferences and seminars, National Police Library at Bramshill.
- Knowledge of national guidelines, best practice guides, good practice and learning points (eg via POLKA<sup>8</sup> communities and Authorised Professional Practice<sup>9</sup>), strategic debrief reports, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) position statements and nationally disseminated good practice.
- Knowledge of forensic procedures and techniques, eg DNA and familial DNA (fDNA), investigative and technological advances, forensic examination techniques and crime scene examination, body recovery and pathology principles, procedures relating to exhibit recovery and processing.
- Understanding of terminology, eg in the medico-legal world when communicating with professionals, pathologists, doctors and scientists, and understanding their language and findings.
- Operational knowledge, such as Major Incident Room (MIR) procedures and HOLMES, eg TIE actions (Trace, Interview, Eliminate), Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) guidelines, covert and overt proactive tactics, investigative strategies, digital and social media opportunities.
- Awareness of wider community and safeguarding issues.

### Leadership and management skills

(Covered in later section)

#### KEY POINTS

- 'Creative thinking' involves looking at problems from different perspectives and questioning assumptions to test the validity of theories and information. Investigators must continually question whether there might need to be another possible way or explanation.<sup>10</sup>
- Bright ideas often come at odd times (off duty or at unsociable times, eg middle of the night) and are sometimes triggered by unrelated activities or events. Having a means of recording them to aid memory is useful.
- SIOs always remain students and must continuously invest in their own skills and knowledge by seizing every opportunity to (re)train and develop. Contributing to the training of others by providing inputs to courses, training events and seminars helps improve personal learning and development.

<sup>8</sup> POLKA is the Police Online Knowledge Area provided by the College of Policing, one of their communities is aimed at supporting SIOs entitled 'Major Crime Investigation' (see <<https://polka.pnn.police.uk/communities/home>>).

<sup>9</sup> Authorised Professional Practice (APP) <<http://www.ncalt.pnn.police.uk/app>>.

<sup>10</sup> ACPO, *Practice Advice on Core Investigative Doctrine*, 2nd edn (NPJA, 2012).

### 1.3.2 MIRSAP requirements

The Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures, or MIRSAP manual<sup>11</sup> outlines the roles and responsibilities of the SIO relating to the functions of the Major Incident Room (MIR). These are standardised to ensure that in linked or series cases there are similar practices across forces.

#### Checklist—MIRSAP SIO requirements

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

## 1.4 Professionalising Investigations Programme

The Police Reform Act 2002 and Police Reform White Paper (2001) highlighted the need for the police service in England and Wales to professionalise all aspects of police investigations to address inconsistent standards of investigation, failing community confidence in the police, high attrition rates and the lack of benchmarked standards in policing. The Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) was the response from ACPO and the Home Office to this challenge. PIP was led by ACPO Crime Business Area and had as its vision:

To deliver a professional, ethical and effective investigation capability for policing in the 21st Century providing robust national benchmarked standards maintained and overseen by a Professional Policing Institute.

The structure and consistent development and maintenance of investigative skills is at the forefront of the programme as it delivers the ability to conduct professional investigations at all levels within the police service and in other sectors of law enforcement, which now includes the National Crime Agency (NCA).

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<sup>11</sup> ACPO, *MIRSAP Manual* (NCPE, 2005), 18–20.

PIP is aimed at ensuring investigators remain competent to practise throughout their service by the registration of their skills and competency at both national and local levels, which is built on and maintained through continued professional development (CPD). PIP has now been in place for a number of years and continued through the transition from the NPJA to the College of Policing and the development of Approved Professional Practice (APP), together with the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR).

The various PIP levels are:

- Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP)—PIP level 1.
- Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP)—PIP level 2.
- Initial Management of Serious Crime Course (IMSC)—PIP level 2.
- Detective Inspector Development Programme (DIDP)—PIP level 2.
- Senior Investigating Officer Development Programme (SIODP)—PIP level 3 (threshold for PIP 3 now updated to include Serious Organised Crime).
- Strategic coordinators accreditation (PIP level 4).

There are further linked training programmes that may also be useful to incorporate into an SIO's PIP training and development. Some examples of which may include:

Management Linked Serious Crime (MLSC)	Communications data for investigators
Specialist Child Abuse Investigator Development Programme—PIP level 2	Investigative interviewing
Coaching to improve performance	Leadership and management development
Family liaison training	Kidnap and extortion
Sexual offences investigation	Chairing meetings, presentation, time management courses
Review Officer's course	Financial investigation
Serious and Organised Crime SIO	Senior Identification Manager (SIM)
Child death investigation	Counter terrorism SIO
Culture and diversity training	PIP 4 development course
HOLMES	Firearms Incident Commander

Some form of academic course, study or project can also prove useful to improve research skills and gain an appreciation of general scientific methods (ie putting an 'argument' together) and theoretical expertise.

On-the-job experience alongside an experienced and well-established SIO is an obvious learning opportunity that should never be overlooked. This would be complementary to the specialist knowledge essential for the role.

**KEY POINT**

Most of the key areas of responsibility need not be tackled alone. It is vitally important to establish a good support network comprising trusted and reliable peers, practitioners, critical friends, specialists and experts who can provide help and support when it is most needed.

## 1.5 Preparation for the Role

Calls and notifications can come at any unsociable hour, particularly when on-call or off guard requesting the most senior detective to take charge of a reported or suspected serious crime. These are moments that can set the heart pounding, which is why SIOs need to be fully prepared and ready for an incident they may have to attend and take charge of, and hit the ground running. An acronym to consider is AYR:

A	Are
Y	You
R	Ready?

Once involved, an SIO may be on duty for a considerable length of time, particularly in the early stages of an investigation. Working long periods without proper rest and food, together with pressure and time constraints, is not going to be helpful when having to make critical decisions. An SIO has to be well prepared and ready for any challenge that lies ahead and able to manage themselves effectively in order to successfully perform the role.

### Checklist—SIO's basic kit

- 'Grab' or 'go' bag/case containing essential items.
- Reliable and accurate watch/timepiece.
- 'Casebook' or notebook (and spare) with reliable writing implements to record all information, sketches, notes, details and decisions (or digital equivalent).
- Fresh policy book (and spare).
- Official identification (for self) and personal business cards.
- Weatherproof clipboard (or similar) to rest on with sufficient writing/drawing paper.
- Useful forms/documents (eg paper management system, list of actions raised, blank actions, officer debriefing sheets, major incident (MI) write-up sheets, message and H-2-H forms).

- Communications equipment (mobile phone, charging lead, police radio).
- List of important contact numbers (eg Crime Scene Investigator (CSI), Pathologist, Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and radio channels).
- Foul weather gear (eg raincoat, waterproof footwear, warm clothing, hat and gloves).
- Standby refreshments (food and drink).
- Maps (eg digital mapping or satellite navigation system).
- Flashlight and batteries.
- Crime scene barrier tape, scene log books, exhibit bags/labels.
- Digital camera.
- Forensic suit/mask/gloves/overshoes.
- Suitable transportation (eg vehicle with fuel and window notice to identify who it belongs to).
- Money/loose change/credit/debit cards for emergencies.
- Personal comfort and wellbeing necessities and supplies (eg spectacles, medicines).
- Addresses of, directions and access codes to buildings and details of parking facilities.
- Overnight bag plus details for booking short notice overnight accommodation.
- Blackstone's SIOs' Handbook.

#### KEY POINT

Practical clothing or dress worn for cold or wet outdoor scenes in the early hours may be unsuitable for more formal duties later in the day, eg conducting briefings, meeting victims' relatives or giving media interviews. It is sensible therefore to have a suitable change of clothing prepared and readily available. Some SIOs may have to cover and travel across large geographical areas. Advance planning for places to stay over that are suitable and appropriate for an SIO who has been working long hours on a major enquiry may be required. A person may become so fatigued they are not fit for a long drive home and quick turn around. Good transport and parking facilities, hot food, and secure and discreet facilities are essential to ensure one is suitably refreshed and ready to face the challenges of the following day.

## 1.6 Leadership and Management

The supervision and management function in a serious crime investigation is quite unique in comparison to other senior police management roles. Apart from the extensive skills and knowledge required, an SIO is expected to actively participate in (although this may sometimes be necessary) and manage the investigation in addition to managing staff. This does not mean there is a requirement to perform functions such as interviewing witnesses and suspects, searching crime scenes or collecting exhibits. Active participation does not mean micro management either, but it does involve maintaining an extensive knowledge and keen overview of all aspects of the investigation in addition to directing, controlling and managing the resources that perform more 'hands on' functions.

Regardless of how absorbed and engrossed in a complex and intricate criminal investigation the SIO is, they still have overall responsibility and primacy as a professional people manager. Staff in their enquiry team, temporary or otherwise, are entitled to be supervised and properly led. SIOs retain a duty of care for all staff members under their control, not only for performance and welfare, but also standard setting, policy implementation, motivation, learning, professional development and conflict resolution.

Leadership is an important facet of management. Managers on the one hand maximise *output* and *outcomes* from their teams through various administrative processes and implementation, such as organising, planning, coordinating, directing and controlling; whereas leaders inspire and motivate. It is important to note the difference between the two.

### KEY POINT

Managers do things right while leaders do the right thing.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.6.1 Leadership and management styles

Leadership and management styles vary somewhat. What works for one does not always work for another. Some believe good leaders give off a certain 'presence', 'gravitas' or 'authority'; while others consider it is about being charismatic and popular. It all depends on what is most suitable and appropriate for the individual and circumstances.

In time-critical and urgent situations, leadership and decision making may need to be more authoritative, direct and forthright. This is why the police service has a disciplined organisational rank structure. In other less urgent times a well-managed and self-sufficient team may need only the lightest of touches.

There are a number of different styles and one theorist (Kurt Lewin) suggests there are three:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> P Drucker cited in R Pascale, *Managing on the Edge* (Penguin Books, 1990), 65.

<sup>13</sup> K Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (Souvenir Press, 1973).

1. Autocratic. Direct orders and directives made through one-way communication with little or no involvement from subordinates. Advantages include speed of response by the enabling of a quick decision-making process and greater control and immediate direction. Drawbacks are that staff may become frustrated by the autocratic manner of decision making which allows for little or no involvement from those who have good or better ideas.
2. Democratic. Involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process through consultation. Advantages are that staff are involved and can contribute towards strengthening the outcome of a decision and will feel more motivated for being involved. Drawbacks are that this style can become too slow and cumbersome, which means it then becomes difficult to reach a consensus; or the SIO doesn't get to make the decision that they prefer.
3. Laissez-faire. Involves minimal involvement in decision making by the leader or manager by allowing subordinates to decide for themselves. This may be feasible when staff are fully competent to make their own decisions. Advantages are similar to the democratic style, with motivational levels being high as power and control is devolved, which may enrich team and individual roles and jobs. Drawbacks are that this leadership style may mean subordinates are not led, nor coordinated, and their work is largely unstructured.

SIOs are free to choose which style suits them, or the situation and circumstances best. Sometimes an autocratic style is entirely necessary and correct (eg in urgent operational or time-critical situations), and at others a more democratic style, or even a hybrid is more appropriate, ie a somewhere in between ('auto/democrat') style.

Great leaders have an ability to adapt, adopt and improve their own style. This may depend on a person's own personality and preference for the situation. An SIO has to decide which style to use to suit the circumstances, remembering that effective leadership often needs to be moving, fluid and dynamic.

There is no standard set of qualities to make the perfect leader, yet 'influencing' seems to be best suited. Decision-making and problem-solving skills are also central to leadership (dealt with in Chapter 2) because they enable things to get done. There are lots of adjectives that can be used to describe attributes of leadership, such as commitment, enthusiasm, motivation, passion, approachable, decisive, assertive, inspirational, adaptable, energetic and so on.

#### KEY POINTS

- Leadership involves influencing.
- Where there are leaders there are followers.
- Leaders are able to make tough decisions and take decisive action when required.



- Leaders are visible and respected by their team.
- Leaders are people who have a clear idea of what they want to achieve, how and why.<sup>14</sup>

Good leaders control their emotions under pressure. Panic and freezing are totally unacceptable. At some crime incidents and scenes there can be pandemonium, with the initial response disorganised and chaotic, in which case the SIO must not allow themselves to become paralysed, remaining cool, calm, composed and in control. Displaying confidence, inner calm and self-assurance in high-pressure situations is a key attribute and reassures those around that an effective leader has assumed command and taken control.

### Checklist—Good leadership traits

- Staff should be encouraged to contribute and speak freely and frankly, not just to comply and conform out of loyalty or fear.
- SIOs must demonstrate they are knowledgeable and up to date on information, facts, actions, events, activities, key names and details.
- Inconsistent decision making creates confusion, as does moody or changing attitudes and behaviour. Staff need to know where they stand and what to expect from their leader.
- Personal integrity. Good leaders demonstrate good self-control and apply professional ethical and moral standards; being wholly dependable, not displaying inappropriate behaviour or abusing levels of authority.
- Being professional. Relaying a belief in others that the role and responsibility is taken very seriously and that decisions can and will be made when and where necessary.
- Showing concern and understanding, sympathising and empathising when necessary.
- Working hard. Staff want their leader to put in as much if not more effort than they do, including being available and approachable, demonstrating firm commitment.

### KEY POINT

Professional appearance, behaviour, style, verbal and bodily communication, posture, voice tonality, projection, pace and volume, together with clear and open gestures and facial expressions demonstrate strong leadership traits. Making allowances for diversity, these are features through which SIOs are judged by others and when in the public spotlight.

<sup>14</sup> Taken from C Rogers, *Leadership Skills in Policing* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

### 1.6.2 Teambuilding

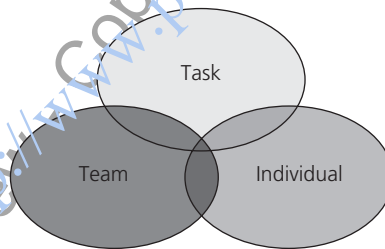
A management and leadership function is to build a team into an efficient and effective unit.

The modern approach to serious and major crime investigation recognises that there is no place for the lone SIO entrepreneur. The role is to be the leader of a team, to provide investigative focus, to coordinate and motivate and to be accountable for every aspect of the enquiry whilst managing a whole host of specialist resources.

Professor John Adair (internationally acknowledged in the field of management and leadership development) describes how team-building consists of three complimentary and overlapping requirements:

1. Task.
2. Team.
3. Individual.

Tasks that need completing create frustration and low morale if those who have them to complete are prevented from or unable to do so. Team maintenance needs are equally important, as group cohesiveness is essential under the 'united we stand, divided we fall' principle. Individual needs are also key and include psychological and physical needs such as reward and recognition, a sense of doing something worthwhile, job satisfaction and status. The three overlapping elements are represented in this diagram:



The overlapping circles indicate how all three elements are mutually interdependent. In theory, if team maintenance fails, performance of tasks becomes impaired and individual satisfaction reduced. If individual needs are not met, the team will lack cohesiveness and performance of tasks will be affected. Effective managers tend to try and satisfy all three elements. In other words, too much emphasis on one will be detrimental to the other two.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.6.3 Supervision and support

An ability to supervise discreetly can be a great asset, provided swift action is taken when things are done incorrectly. This sends out the right message

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<sup>15</sup> J Adair, *The Best of Adair on Leadership and Management* (Thorogood, 2008).

regarding (non-) acceptable professional standards. Being able to pick up, read and interpret signals is important—eg quickly noticing and acting when morale is dropping or complacency and lethargy are creeping in. This includes managing and dealing with tensions and inappropriate behaviour when they arise.

The SIO must know or find out what problems the team are facing and must never assume they know what it is like for their staff. Teams respect a leader who is willing to leave their comfort zone and find out for themselves what working environments are like first-hand (often referred to as ‘management by walkabout’ or through the acronym ‘MBWA’).

#### 1.6.4 Maximising potential

It is good to have a rich mix and spread of talents and attributes amongst team members. Some, for example, may have a relaxed, easy communication style, readily adaptable to fit most circumstances, and like to be seen and heard. They are most likely to be extrovert personalities. Quieter, more introverted types may just get on with allocated tasks in a less obvious fashion and prefer to be left alone. Some thought has to go into understanding individuals and how best to motivate them. A skilful manager will analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their team and allocate tasks according to attributes. For example, trying to encourage and support potential witnesses to give evidence or information may be more suited to some than others. Watching hours and hours of CCTV footage or ferreting out intelligence, although arguably core detective skills, may be better suited to particular types of individual.

SIOs should also be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in order to build a team around them. This helps identify gaps where an SIO’s needs are greatest. Taking responsibility for self-development, setting high personal standards and ‘leading by example’ involve accepting liability when things go wrong or when others cannot handle situations. Giving credit, praise and recognition for any effort, struggle and determination is enormously beneficial to building team spirit.

A good level of command and control should not seek to stifle an investigator’s natural desire to use their skills, flair and experience to full advantage. SIOs should empower their staff to apply their skills and experience within the SIO’s investigative strategy and the framework of action management imposed by the MIR. This will allow the team to realise their full potential and not only maintain a high standard of morale, but also perform at the highest level.

#### Motivation and positive psychology

Motivated individuals are more productive due to their sheer enthusiasm, commitment and conscientiousness—fact. These are attributes that rub off onto others and very little happens without these star qualities, yet they are not easily taught. Positive thinking is a method of increasing confidence and the likelihood of success by ensuring problems and obstacles are approached favourably. Negative and

pessimistic attitudes are unhelpful and become self-fulfilling and culturally internalised. Optimistic attitudes, however, allow tasks to be approached with greater vigour, energy and vitality; focusing on what can be achieved and not what cannot. Those who constantly raise problems to solutions, play the 'devil's advocate' and destruct rather than construct need to be tasked with balancing their negative views with positive ones.

SIOs should regularly remind their staff to remember the 3P principle, which can be summed up in three very important words:

POSITIVE  
POSITIVE  
POSITIVE

## 1.7 Managing Oneself

Management in the context of the SIO role has to include an element of being able to manage oneself in order to cope with the demands. There are both physical and mental demands placed on the SIO, particularly in the early stages of a fast-moving enquiry, and it is often necessary to be on duty long before others arrive and long after they have gone home. It is necessary, no matter how experienced or professional, to be able to manage oneself under pressure, fatigue and stressful circumstances and juggle the demands of a work/personal life balance.

Stress has psychological and physiological elements that are quite normal human reactions. Some people cope with them better than others and some even perform much better when their adrenalin is flowing and under pressure. Managing stress is a personal thing, the consequences of which surface in many different forms, eg loss of patience, being argumentative, showing anger or unusual and inappropriate behaviour. These symptoms must be recognised in order to manage the causes.

### KEY POINT

Stress and pressure can actually raise performance, which is why world records are not broken during training sessions.

An SIO's office may resemble a doctor's surgery with people queuing up waiting to speak urgently on a one-to-one basis. An 'open-door policy' is fine, but sometimes it needs closing in order to get on with some work, read and study important material, to focus clearly or hold meetings in private. There must be some control over who comes into the office and how long they stay, ensuring other supervisors down the chain of command are not being circumvented.

Having a reliable and trustworthy deputy increases resilience, and having a 'loggist' and/or 'staff officer', such as an experienced Detective Sergeant (who

should also monitor the SIO's welfare), is also useful. The SIO cannot and should not try to do everything themselves, and the delegation of key tasks relieves pressure. Nominated trusted assistants can deputise by arranging and managing searches and team tasks, conducting cascade briefings, and managing administrative tasks, provided whoever has delegated responsibilities reports back at regular intervals. This can be at stipulated times, such as during formal or informal briefings.

Time management is absolutely critical to avoid becoming overburdened and remaining effective. An SIO must be ruthlessly efficient at getting the most out of their available and valuable time. Some matters and certain individuals conspire to commandeer available time if allowed to do so and the SIO must sometimes be firm and polite, pointing out that some matters are more pressing and urgent. Investigative strategy meetings need careful management to ensure pre-prepared agendas and allocated times are rigidly adhered to. Planning and managing the day's priorities is extremely important, while appreciating there can be changes at a moment's notice. Being unable to complete all necessary and urgent tasks can unnecessarily raise stress levels.

#### KEY POINT

Nominating a personal 'staff officer' who is a trusted and reliable person is a good way of relieving pressure to control access, answer calls, take notes, write policy entries at dictation, etc. Other roles in the police service have this role routinely embedded within their command structure (eg firearms and public order commanders) and SIOs should be afforded the same luxury.

There needs to be a means of mentally 'switching off'. Sometimes it is difficult to concentrate on anything else while heading up a stimulating and challenging enquiry, yet creating time to focus on something totally unrelated and pursuing other interests at a suitable point can significantly help reduce mental anxiety and stress. It also helps refresh the mind and clear the head, ready to refocus after interrupting levels of intensity. Being able to switch off once in a while is usually an effective coping mechanism.

Personal health management is fundamentally important, being mindful of matching energy and stamina levels with workloads. It is unprofessional to go without proper food and nourishment causing energy levels to drop meaning it becomes more difficult to function properly. All humans have physiological needs and SIOs are no different.

Remaining on duty for hours on end with a short turn-around time, no matter how keen and committed a person is, does not help when making important decisions and can impair judgement. This may be something highlighted by a review team or external enquiry. It also applies to other staff on the enquiry team, including

specialists such as CSIs, who sometimes have to spend long periods at difficult crime scene locations. The SIO does not want added victims from, say, road traffic collisions involving staff travelling home after long shifts suffering from fatigue and tiredness.

An SIO need not and should not be alone in managing complex enquiries. They should take every opportunity to surround themselves by trusted and reliable peers and colleagues who can help with making tough decisions and offering supportive and useful advice. Having someone available to bounce ideas off and chat through complex theories and areas of an investigation, bringing experience from a wider field of experience, is extremely reassuring. The role of a PIP 4 (SIO/Gold Strategic and Tactical Advisor) has been introduced to perform this function in large-scale enquiries. The NCA Crime Operational Support team also has very experienced accredited PIP 3/4 Regional SIO Advisers who can offer their UK-wide experience, knowledge and specialists to support and advise at any stage of an enquiry (the service is free of charge and no authorisation level or formal approval is required).

#### KEY POINTS

- SIOs must manage themselves as well as their teams.
- A trusted individual can be nominated to perform the function of 'staff officer'.
- Delegated responsibility where appropriate can take some pressure away.
- Handover periods to a deputy so an earlier finish and time off can be utilised to reunite with family and friends.
- Someone can be allocated to drive the SIO home if tired or book into overnight accommodation.
- SIOs should not allow themselves to get emotionally wound up or involved in what may be disturbing scenes or traumatic circumstances; to do so would limit an ability to perform the role objectively and professionally.
- A good support network is essential and making use of the NCA Regional SIO Advisers for help and advice.

## 1.8 Recognising Diversity

Investigations must always take full account of any issues relating to race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, culture, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality or place of abode. There is no place for personal prejudices, discriminatory behaviour or stereotyping of any sort. It is particularly important that assumptions are not made which prejudice the facts and narrow the scope of the investigation at the outset. Full account must be taken of vulnerable persons, whether that vulnerability is the result of learning difficulties, trauma or any other circumstances.

Breakdowns in community relations occur if there are perceptions of alienation, distrust, negativity and loss of confidence in the police. This will ultimately lead to a loss of public assistance and non-receptiveness. The SIO must remain cognisant of this potential and manage the requirement in a Community Impact Assessment document (CIA) and/or policy file. There must be a clear strategy on how to communicate with hard-to-reach and minority groups in order to maintain confidence and build and sustain relationships. Community focus and the benefits of equality and diversity in operational delivery are major components of most policing strategies and of importance to community and race relations.<sup>16</sup>

The Equality Act 2010 (EA) consolidated discrimination legislation and contained new measures to strengthen protection against discrimination, stipulating protected characteristics in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The SIO in the leadership role must remain committed to managing diversity and ensure it is demonstrably part of an enquiry team's culture and philosophy. Positive action must be taken against any inappropriate and illegal language or behaviour at all times, with adequate mechanisms to monitor compliance with the legislation.

## 1.9 Ethical Standards and Integrity

The SIO has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a criminal investigation is conducted to the highest degree of moral and ethical standards. Lack of professional behaviour and standards can adversely affect the reputation of the service and individual, as well as leading to potential miscarriages of justice. Public confidence in the police depends on honesty, transparency and integrity. Statutory regulations such as the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and bodies such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) provide the public with ways of challenging police activities and actions.

To build and maintain public confidence, the police have a responsibility to ensure investigations are conducted professionally, ethically and to an agreed standard. Under the remit of the ACPO Crime Business Area Portfolio for Standards, Competencies and Training (SCT), the PIP was introduced to support this quality approach to investigations. The PIP programme incorporates the ethical principles of investigation:

- Exercise of legal powers must not be oppressive but proportionate.
- Investigations should, wherever practicable, be conducted transparently, with victims, witnesses and suspects kept updated with developments in the case.
- All reasonable steps should be taken to understand any needs of individuals and to comply with legal provisions (eg EA).
- Investigators should have particular regard for vulnerable people and children.

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<sup>16</sup> See ACPO, *Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy for the Police Service* (Home Office, January 2010).

- Respect should be shown for the professional ethics of others (eg defence solicitors).

A concept known as ‘tunnel vision’ or ‘closed mind syndrome’ must be avoided at all costs. This occurs when there is a determined focus on a theory or an individual (or individuals) at the exclusion of other possibilities. Narrow-minded approaches do not bode well for the integrity of investigations and attract criticism. The effects can also produce miscarriages of justice, corruption, incompetence, and expensive court and human costs. The concept of the ‘investigative mindset’ avoids this which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Potential leaks of information about an investigation can be a big problem on major and sensitive enquiries, particularly when there is extensive public and media interest. This must be prevented or investigated, and can lead to serious complications at a later stage. Close monitoring must be adopted, with strong words of advice, guidance and support from the SIO and management team for all those who are necessarily exposed to, perceived ‘at risk’ with, or in receipt or possession of information that must be treated with the strictest confidentiality. This has become more of a problem since the increase in usage of digital media devices such as smartphones that have powerful cameras and easy access to social media sites and the internet (see also Chapter 8).

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

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

**INTEGRITY PARADIGM**

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



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

#### KEY POINT

An SIO's behaviour and actions (and that of their teams) are always under close scrutiny, especially by those being managed/led and victims, their families, the general public, media and communities. An SIO must always appear credible and professional.

#### Further reading

- ACPO, *Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy for the Police Service* (Home Office, January 2010)
- ACPO, *Murder Investigation Manual* (NCPE, 2006)
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- Smith, M and Flanagan, C, 'The Effective Detective: Identifying the Skills of an Effective SIO' (2009), Home Office Police Research Series, Paper 122