English summary of Brå report No. 2013:20

Police officers' view of the investigation of volume crime

Assignment "Investment in more police officers"

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Summary

In 2006, new resources were allocated to the police in order to contribute to greater visibility, more planned crime prevention work and higher clearance rate. Against this background, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) has been commissioned by the Government to analyse the police's work. In the first report (Brå 2013:12), we described how the approximately 2,500 new police officers must be seen as a relatively limited investment in practice. Based on the various measurements available, we also described how the extra resources have been distributed among different units and how the result of the work has developed. The report showed that the police's results have mainly undergone a positive development over the studied period of time (2006–2012), although the percentage of cleared offences has not increased. In Brå's opinion the police have not made optimal use of the extra resources to increase the clearance rate. That is to say, based on Brå's analysis, emergency response teams and investigation units for volume crime do not appear to have been allocated more resources.

Why the investment itself has not led to a higher clearance rate is therefore explained in the first report. The purpose of this report is to listen to what employees within the police force believe stands in the way of increasing the clearance rate, primarily for volume crime, irrespective of the increased number of police officers. What do they perceive as obstacles to and problems in their work? When we speak about problems here, we are referring to both those they feel have worsened in recent years and those that have existed for a long time.

This report highlights the criminal investigation process from filing in a report to referring it to a prosecutor. The focus is on volume crime, as it constitutes the core of police operations – and has the lowest rate of clearance. The results are based primarily on a survey sent to 1,203 employees of police authorities in four counties,[17] where a total of 656 police officers with varying functions answered a number of questions. We have also made participant

[17] Södermanland, Uppsala, Värmland and the Stockholm City Police commissioner district.

observations and conducted interviews as well as an analysis of registry data.

In tandem with this study, a report is presented concerning the police's crime prevention work (Brå 2013:21). It is based on similar material from three other counties.[18] Both reports are Brå's own initiative and are presented in addition to the two reports that the Government requested in its commission.

Background

Organisation of the police in Sweden

Apart from the National Police Board, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Swedish National Laboratory of Forensic Science, the Swedish Police consists of 21 police authorities, one for each county. Each police authority is led by a police board of which a County Chief Commissioner and politicians appointed by the Government are members. The police board decides on operational plans, budget, internal organisation and rules of procedure within the authority, whilst the County Chief Commissioner is responsible for the continuous operations and finances. The police authorities govern their own organisational structure, which creates a certain degree of variation. As a rule though, there are units for investigation and prosecution, crime prevention work and service. The size of an authority varies, both geographically and in the number of police officers employed. In Stockholm, for example, there are over 5,500 police officers, compared with Gotland's barely 100-strong force (Brå 2013:12).

Volume crime

In this report, the police's investigation of volume crime is in focus. The reason for this is that these crimes have a low clearance rate, while they are estimated to constitute 86 per cent of all received cases. Volume crime refers to crimes in which the preliminary investigation is normally led by a police[19] preliminary investigation leader.[20] Examples of crimes included in Brå's study are theft, re-

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18 Blekinge, Norrbotten and Västra Götaland.

19 Prosecutors lead the preliminary investigation when the suspect is detained, when violence or threats within the family or towards close relations are suspected, when the suspect is 15-17 years, when the victim of the crime is under 18 or where the crime is of a serious or complicated nature.

20 Swedish: FU-ledare. Preliminary investigation leader is a position found in different parts of the operations and entails a number of different tasks. Personnel in the field receive directives from preliminary investigation leaders concerning what initial investigation measures and technical investigations shall be carried out. So that received cases can be quickly submitted to the preliminary investigation leader on duty for assessment, it is also important that the inspectors on duty are able to easily make contact with the preliminary investigation leader. Investigators, especially those who do not have a long history of experience, also need to make contact with the preliminary investigation leaders in order to receive directives and feedback.

ceiving stolen goods, assault and battery, breaking and entering, fraud and malicious damage.[21]

Performance measurement: Clearance rate

The most common measurement of performance is the clearance in per cent. In Sweden, there is a difference between offences that are not cleared up, cleared offences and technical clearance. A cleared offence means that a prosecutor has decided to bring the case before court, issued fines or has notified of abstention from prosecution. Technical clearance means that the crime will not or cannot be cleared up. This may for example concern acts that turn out not to be crimes, perpetrators that are under 15 years or crimes committed in another country.

Varying quality in reports from PKC

The first step in the investigation process is that the police fill in a crime report. A crime can be reported in a number of ways: a telephone call to the Police contact centre (PKC), online via the Police website, by a visit to a police station or by a police patrol sent to the crime scene by the Police command center (LKC). The majority of reports, 60 per cent, have been reported to PKC, either by phone or via internet.[22]

Previous studies have called attention to certain shortcomings in quality in the reports drawn up and approved by PKC (RiR 2010, RPS 2011a, RPS and ÅM 2013). This view is shared by the preliminary investigation leaders outside of PKC that have been interviewed in our study. The employees working at PKC who have been interviewed by Brå feel that the problems relate primarily to reports made online. This method of reporting was introduced in order to increase accessibility and efficiency in the reporting process. Several of the interviewees do not feel the online reporting system has increased the efficiency. In fact, they believe it has led to more work as a great deal of time is spent filling in additional information after the initial report has been made. The preliminary investigation leaders outside of PKC who were interviewed were also of the opinion that reports made online are not up to standard.

Extended authorisation for operators and preliminary investigation leaders requested in order to increase efficiency

The employees at PKC share the view of those previous investigations suggesting that operators at PKC should be authorised to

[21] Traffic and narcotics crime are excluded from the definition in this investigation as these types of crime are often cleared up in connection with their discovery.

[22] Conversation about ongoing and urgent cases shall be handled by LKC, whilst non-urgent cases shall be handled by PKC.

interrogate the caller reporting the crime. This would facilitate both the decision to launch a preliminary investigation and the ongoing crime investigation. A proposed amendment of a law in order to facilitate this is also currently being handled within the Government Offices.

Those employed at PKC also feel that the preliminary investigation leaders at PKC should have their authorisation extended to allow them to decide whether an investigation should be initiated or not for all county police authorities – not just those that belong to their own county, which is the main rule today. If they could immediately make the decision to close cases that are not investigable, the cases would not need to be examined by additional persons or placed in a queue[23] before being written off. In this way the number of handovers would decrease, and both working hours and administration time can be shortened. The reason that the preliminary investigation leaders at PKC do not yet have authorisation to make decisions on a national level is often said to be that the police officers at the authority in question have knowledge of the local crime situation and that they are therefore better able to determine whether or not a case is investigable. In addition, the authority's police officers may benefit from an overall picture of the crime activity in their area and thereby discover any connections that might exist between cases.

Finally, those working at PKC would like to see the goals more clearly highlighting the investigative aspect of their work. Currently, PKC's performance is measured primarily on how quickly the operators answer calls. They would also like their ability to obtain key information in reports to be taken into account when their activities are followed up. It is otherwise difficult for the individual operator to justify the extra time it takes to make a report as useful as possible in the following investigation process.

Small differences in the proportion of investigated cases and final reports in a comparison of reports to PKC and to police stations

Brå found no marked differences between the cases reported by phone to PKC and those reported to a police station, in terms of the proportion of these that are investigated, especially when taking into consideration the time from offence to report and the seriousness of the offence. Overall, the result was the same in terms of the number of cases with a final report.[24] The proportion of preliminary investigations launched and the proportion of cases

[23] Swedish: Ärendebalanser. Due to lack of time, some cases are placed in a queue pending examination.

[24] Swedish: Slutredovisad. A final report means that the case has been referred to the prosecutor.

with a final report, on the other hand, are higher when the report is established by police officers on patrol duty. They on the other hand have other potential to be cleared up, as there is an opportunity for initial investigation measures conducted directly on the crime scene in a way which differs from other report procedures. Online reports appear to have the lowest percentage of investigations and final reports when studying comparable reports (as far as is possible).

Lack of time for investigative initiatives on the crime scene

Initial investigation measures[25] require the presence of a patrol on location. Whether or not a patrol is to be sent out to respond to a case is determined by the Police command center (LKC).

The interviewed personnel at LKC feel that there has been an increase in the number of urgent reports that are made to the police by phone. At the same time, they feel it has become more difficult to get hold of patrols in the event of an emergency as the number of patrols has not increased and a large proportion of them are wholly or partly committed to other tasks and are not to be disturbed. These other tasks may include planned crime prevention work or plainclothes surveillance. This is in line with Brå's first report, which reveals that overall, LKC does not have more patrols primarily responding to emergency calls today than it did prior to 2006. This is also in line with the results of the survey, where the majority feel that the low clearance rate of volume crime can be explained by a lack of time for initial investigation measures at the crime scene.

Cases that the personnel at LKC are forced to de-prioritise include those that do not concern ongoing crimes. In interviews, it was found that in some cases the police are not dispatched to these locations despite the fact that it might have been rewarding to collect evidence at the crime scene.

Initial investigation measures are often not followed through

Apart from a lack of patrols in certain cases, it is also not uncommon for a patrol not to take initial investigation measures – or to not sufficiently follow them through– when sent to the scene of a crime. When patrols are sent to a crime scene, the operators

[25] Swedish: Förstahandsåtgärder. Initial investigation measures include interrogating suspects and questioning the injured party and witnesses, as carried out by patrols on location. Other examples are searching for suspects, door-to-door searches or photography of the crime scene and any injuries to persons/damage to objects.

explain that they avoid interrupting them to give them a new assignment, unless they receive a higher prioritized emergency call that requires immediate attention. According to the operators, if the patrols do not always fully follow through on the investigation measures, it is due to the patrols hurrying on their own initiative. However, the inspectors on duty in Brå's study, i.e., those at LKC responsible for how patrols are used, feel that in general the patrols do not have time to carry out extensive investigative measures at the scene of the crime due to a large workload.

Finally, when Brå asked the police officers themselves, they confirmed that LKC does not actively interrupt them when they are on location, and that they in fact *do* take initial investigation measures when sent to the scene of a crime. But that they feel that often there is not enough time to do the job thoroughly.

A "time sink" that many officers mention is the administrative tasks following an emergency callout. They specifically mention the shortcomings of the IT systems used for reporting crimes.

The fact that initial investigation measures are not followed through to the desired extent is confirmed by investigators and preliminary investigation leaders. They refer primarily to:

- interrogations not being held and shortcomings in those interrogations that are held
- contact information for the parties and witnesses being incomplete
- occasional lack of debriefing memos.

The answers from Brå's surveys also show that a quarter of the officers routinely forgo taking initial investigation measures for certain types of crime. Examples of types of crimes that are deprioritised are bicycle theft and vandalism.

Three main problems concerning initial investigation measures for volume crime are discernible among the responses from participants in the study:

1. There is a lack of patrols to send on all of the cases.
2. The patrols do not carry out initial investigation measures in volume crime cases to the extent expected based on PNU.[26]
3. There are shortcomings in the initial investigation measures that are carried out.

[26] PNU is the Swedish abbreviation for the National Investigative Concept of the Police, which has been developed by the National Police Board and the county police authorities with the purpose of increasing the low detection rate and increasing the efficiency of the investigative work. The idea is that PNU will be used as a common method for investigating volume crime in all police authorities.

Increased demands for forensic evidence increase the workload – yet they have no clear impact on the clearance rate

One factor that affects the probability to prosecute suspects is how high the requirements for forensic evidence are. It is a common perception that the demands for forensic evidence made by prosecutors and courts have increased over the studied period (2006-2012). One sign of this is that the amount of volume crime cases received by the Swedish National Laboratory of Forensic Science (SKL) has increased by two thirds since 2006. The results of our study also indicate that requirements for other types of "forensic evidence", which the police produce, have increased, e.g., requests for images from security cameras.

Meeting these requirements entails extra work in the investigation process and an extension of the time taken to complete the investigation as a result of waiting for a response from SKL, for example. The preliminary investigation leaders in our study confirm that more time is now spent on searching for forensic evidence. However, their view of whether the increased work on forensic evidence leads to a higher or lower clearance rate is very much divided. The preliminary investigation leaders also feel that the patrols often do not collect the forensic evidence from the scene of the crime that would have been possible to obtain. This includes photos or security footage of the crime scene, those involved and any injuries.

In order to unburden those working in the field and raise the quality of the work, the number of local crime scene investigators27 has increased during the 2000s. Their competence is appreciated, but they are perceived as seldom available on evenings and nights, times when high frequencies of crimes are committed.

Several shortcomings in the ongoing investigative work

In an open question in the survey sent to the police officers concerning the reason for why the clearance rate for volume crime is not higher, a quarter of the respondents mentioned shortcomings in the investigative work, as well as in initial investigation measures. The most common answers were:

- that many handovers from one instance to another are time consuming and delay the investigations
- that serial crime is left uncovered due to poor coordination of crime efforts
- that volume crime cases become old before they are investigated, and therefore are more difficult to clear up
- that too many investigable cases are closed

[27] Swedish abbrev. Lokus

- that some preliminary investigation leaders de-prioritise too many reports.

Volume crime is not prioritised in practice

When asked why the clearance rate for volume crime is not higher, an inadequate distribution of human resources is the most common explanation from respondents. Most respondents mentioned that more police officers are required on patrol duty for volume crime cases. The general picture is that the Government's investment in more police officers has not led to an increase in the number of patrols for emergency matters and initial investigation measures.

Three quarters perceive that volume crime is prioritised in principle, but the open answers reveal that this is often a prioritisation on paper which is not noticed out in the field. Many preliminary investigation leaders and investigators feel that resources are all too often used for other matters. Furthermore, almost all respondents in the survey say that the work with volume crime has a low status. This is also reflected in the open answers, where volume crime and units that work primarily with volume crime are described in negative terms.

A need for increased knowledge

Other than a desire to have more time to work with volume crime, many police officers in the survey mentioned that those on patrol duty working with these crimes need more experience and knowledge. One thing that came up was that police officers on patrol duty must have better knowledge of how to thoroughly follow through initial investigation measures. Many respondents see it as a problem that the majority of police officers in intervention work are relatively newly qualified and often switch duties fairly quickly. However, previous research point out that there are not only disadvantages to newly qualified police officers. They are often very motivated and driven, and have valuable knowledge that would be of benefit for the police force to harness (Holgersson 2005).

Most respondents feel that preliminary investigation leaders and investigators are competent. Interviews with preliminary investigation leaders also found that there is a desire for the operators at PKC to receive more legal education in order to increase the quality of the reports.

Restrictive climate and little feedback

In previous interview studies with police officers, it is clear that they perceive regular feedback to have a positive effect on the individual officer's development, whilst it can also lead to a more

effective investigation process. In the same interview studies, however, it is shown that it is uncommon within the police force to provide feedback on work and that it is also uncommon to receive feedback from prosecutors (Holgersson 2005, Brå 2009:1). Furthermore, in the Swedish National Audit Office's report on the handling of volume crime, it is made known that the quality of the feedback varies (RiR 2010).

Our study confirms these results. Just 16 per cent of those working in the field say that they regularly receive feedback from their superiors for initial investigation measures they have carried out. An even smaller proportion – eight per cent – say that they receive feedback from investigators and preliminary investigation leaders for these measures. Less than half of those who receive feedback feel that the feedback is constructive. Interviews with operators at PKC display a somewhat more positive picture, they feel they receive regular feedback from investigation offers at PKC. However, the quantity of feedback from investigators and preliminary investigation leaders at a later stage is very limited.

In addition, many police officers feel that there is a restrictive climate within the authority. Only some 60 per cent of those that responded to the survey agree with the statement: *I feel that suggestions for improvements are welcomed*. Even fewer – a quarter – agree with the statement that *I am able to point out errors and shortcomings within the authority*. This is in line with the results from the Swedish Police Union's member survey from 201228 and the Police's own employee survey from 2013 (SCB 2013), both of which indicate that there is a need for development concerning an open dialogue within the Police.

Police officers are content and motivated ...

Despite the shortcomings identified in this study, most respondents state that they are happy in their workplace and feel that their work is rewarding. Whilst only half feel they are doing the kind of work they really want to do, most state that they are motivated to do a good job.

... but the management and operational goals do not contribute to heightened motivation

Though most employees of police authorities in the survey state that they are motivated, they are less satisfied with how their superiors motivate them. Most believe they have received good information about the operational goals set for them. They do not feel, however, that the operational goals are presented in a motivational

[28] http://www.polisforbundet.se/nyheter/PF_2012_Medlemsunders%C3%B6kning.pdf [2013-11-13]

way. Only a fifth feel that superiors and management can adequately explain why they have these operational goals.

Brå's assessment

One of the primary goals of Brå's studies of the investment in the police is to gain an overview of the extent to which operational results have been improved as a result of the investment, and if there is no improvement, what the reason for this is. In this interim report, the focus is on investigation of and prosecution for volume crime. The reason why the clearance rate for this type of crime has not increased was explained in our first report; the increase in resources was in practice not very large, and the Police essentially did not use the allocated resources to prioritise work that generates higher clearance rates for volume crime (Brå 2013:12). In this report, we move on to hear what the employees of the police authorities feel stands in the way of higher clearance rates, irrespective of the investment.

The employees of the police authorities have responded positively to the first report. The predominant reaction is that "what everyone known has finally been brought to light". In this report, the de-prioritisation of resources for work with volume crime is also what most mention as the biggest problem related to low clearance rates. One of the main points brought up is that there are too few police officers responding to emergency calls. But the respondents also mention the lack of resources in other parts of the core activities, e.g., for investigators of volume crime.

A recurring response to Brå's first report from county police authorities, which Brå has been in contact with, is that both the county administrations and the National Police Board perceived the resource increase as larger than it actually was and that they therefore saw opportunities to establish services and groups that there were previously insufficient resources for. They have been established partly based on the needs identified by the Police and partly based on a continuously expanding commission to the Police. This has lead to the increased resources being insufficient for the outermost core activities.

Previously known problems

tAlthough the focus of this report is shortcomings in the investigative work and how to address this, Brå wishes to initially highlight the fact that in the work on the study we have gained the impression that the police force currently functions well overall and that its employees are devoted. Just as with all operations, however, there is room for improvement. The reader should also keep in mind that the conclusions are based primarily on results from four

of the country's police authorities and that many of those who received the survey did not respond to it.

The problems surrounding the investigative work which, in addition to the resources, is brought up in the recently completed study are in many aspects not new; they have been highlighted in previous studies. What is interesting is that they remain. This can be interpreted in two different ways. Either the Police has not worked to solve the problems or the solutions that have been produced, such as the National Investigative Concept of the Police (PNU), have not had the desired effect. The fact that the effect has not been achieved can in turn be interpreted in two different ways. Either the measures to solve the problems have been implemented but not proven to be effective, or the measures have not been implemented in the authorities in practice. Irrespective of what the explanation is, the Police must now continue working to solve problems that appear to stand in the way of higher clearance rates. Below, a number of measures that Brå considers to be interesting in this context are discussed. The proposals are arranged based on the chain of investigation and not the priority.

Shortcomings in initial investigation measures

Brå identifies two problems with initial investigation measures related to the *lack of resources*. One is that with current means of using the resources, there is no time to send out patrols to many volume crime cases. Another is that even when a patrol is sent out to the scene of a crime, it will seldom carry out extensive investigative measures in volume crime cases in the manner described in PNU. The inspectors on duty that responded to the survey feel that the primary reason for this is the high workload for those working in the field.

In addition, respondents point out that the patrols do not have enough *knowledge* on how initial investigation measures should be carried out in order to best contribute to the investigation. Preliminary investigation leaders and investigators say that there are often shortcomings in the initial investigation measures taken. A large proportion of respondents associate this with lack of experience, as the majority of those working on patrol duty are rather newly qualified.[29]

It can also be the case that the *motivation* to carry out extensive investigative measures at the scene of the crime is not very high, considering that the inspectors do not feel in general that there is time for extensive initial investigation measures and that the preliminary investigation leaders and investigators seldom or never provide feedback on the investigative measures carried out by the

[29] More information on why the intervention workforce consists primarily of newly qualified individuals can be found in report 2013:12.

patrols. This would most likely give the patrols the idea that initial investigation measures are not a prioritised area.

In this context, it should also be noted that the lack of time not only affects the investigative measures at the scene of the crime, but also the personnel's work environment. Several of the officers interviewed have stated that one of the reasons those working on patrol duty are applying for more attractive positions such as special units or investigation at an ever earlier stage is that the work is periodically stressful. The creation of new positions and services during the investment period also enabled the employees to switch duties after only a few years of service.

Possible solutions for better initial investigation measures

Brå had already in the first interim study emphasised that more of the resources should have been allocated to patrols responding to emergency calls. Brå's perception is that the police authorities should first of all prioritise the outermost core activities and that special units and specialist competencies should then be established when possible. For this to be possible, the Police must also centrally set reasonable demands on which groups and roles must exist within the police authorities. In this context, it is also desirable for the Swedish parliament and the Government to review whether the scope of the police's commission can be reduced. Many of the specialist competences established in recent years reflect the expansion of the police's duties.

Within the intervention work too, there are duties that cannot be seen as core duties, and where it would be desirable to review whether they can be reduced. One example is other authorities' request of assistance with transportation,[30] which has increased drastically in recent years and takes up more and more of the patrols' time.

Apart from the option to redistribute resources so that a larger proportion of available positions are allocated to emergency operations, Brå also see other possible solutions which would increase the number of extensive investigative measures carried out at the scene of a crime. The solution closest to hand is to have more clear control of when the police patrols actually work. Whilst some of the authorities have worked on the issue, it appears that the lack of patrols still varies at different times of day and on different days of the week. Within a number of the police authorities, the

[30] This means that the police authority assists another authority with the transportation of an individual. This may for example involve taking in an individual who refuses to go to the hospital but who is at risk of becoming violent without medication or an individual who is to be deported and requires transport to the airport due to the risk that they will flee.

police should take an additional step in the direction of the officers planning their working hours so that they to a greater extent work during the hours with the highest crime rate.

One alternative which does not involve a redistribution of resources, neither over time nor between services, is to reprioritise the duties of those working in intervention. The parallel report on the police's crime prevention work, which is presented at the same time as this (Brå 2013:21), can according to Brå serve as a basis for discussion on how much resources should be invested in general patrolling without any planned focus, which is seen as a relatively common duty for the intervention workforce in their daily work. The research in this area provides no support for this type of crime prevention work. One possibility would be to allow part of the time used for patrolling to instead be used for extensive investigative measures in connection with volume crime. The freed up time could for example be used for investigative measures at the scene of the crime in cases which due to a lack of time could not be directly responded to. In some of those cases, it may prove fruitful to carry out investigative measures at the crime scene when there is sufficient time to do so.

An additional measure to improve the situation, which according to Brå is close at hand, is to reduce the patrols' time for administration. The administrative tasks in connection with the reporting of a case are very time-consuming – time which could be put to better use. The fact that the IT systems must be improved is another matter highlighted by the Government. For this reason, the Swedish Agency for Public Management was commissioned in September 2013 to audit the Police's management and administration surrounding these issues (Ju2013//PO).

Reluctance to give feedback is a trend that must be broken

Having a large proportion of newly qualified personnel can in many aspects be seen as an asset as they are often highly motivated. The disadvantage is that they lack experience. In the study just carried out, it is revealed that those working in the field seldom or never receive feedback on initial investigation measures they have carried out and that their competence therefore is not developed in a way that would otherwise be possible. Previous studies show that there is a culture within the police force of not giving one another feedback (Granér 2004, Holgersson 2005, Brå 2009:1).

Preliminary investigation leaders and investigators seldom receive feedback on their work from prosecutors. In the same way, the respondents in the parallel study on the police's crime prevention work point out that they seldom receive feedback in their work. This counteracts individuals' professional development and

most likely the motivation of employees as well. When interviewing superior officers and preliminary investigation leaders about the reason for not providing feedback, they often state that it is not common practice to do so. Brå believes that it is important to address this reluctance to give feedback on others' work and provide guidance on how to give constructive feedback that the individual can learn from.

Furthermore, the lack of constructive feedback appears to go both ways. The study reveals that the majority of respondents do not feel they are able to point out faults and shortcomings among superiors and management. This is a culture that counteracts development within the police force. It is important that the Police take measures to address this issue.

Extended authorisation and greater responsibilities for operators at PKC

Within the Police, there have been concerns that employees at PKC would be less good at filling in reports than personnel at a police station. The introduction and expansion of PKC in recent years would thereby have contributed to clearance rates not increasing. In the research carried out, Brå has not found anything to support this assumption. There is nothing indicating that the quality of cases registered by PKC would be worse than those registered at the police station.

That is not to say that PKC cannot improve. Since most reports today – almost 60 per cent – are established by them, small investments in PKC should also have an impact on the police's performance on the whole. Based on our observations at PKC and interviews with those concerned, we see clear potential to raise the quality of the reports. This can be achieved through a more extensive basic training for the operators. It can also be achieved by means of giving the civil operators the right to question the callers, which does however require constitutional amendments. These two measures should also help to make the work more stimulating and thereby lower the mobility among operators.

Coordination of crime cases is important – but must not be a burden

Once the reports are actually established, the coordination of crime[31] – i.e., case coordination and crime analysis – is an important stage in the process. The majority of those who responded to the survey do not feel, however, that the coordination of crime cases works well at present.

[31] Swedish: Brottssamordning.

One of the advantages of a functioning coordination of crime is the ability to unburden the investigation units by closing cases that are not investigable. This does however require the presence of a clear function that carries out the tasks and that the results are actually used. The risk is otherwise that the coordination delays case handling instead, and time is an important factor in producing investigation results.

Queues are too long

The officers responding to the survey also mention problems with long case queues[32] and a lack of investigators of volume crime. A recurring comment in the surveys is that normal volume crime cases end up being put on hold, due to prioritised cases – i.e. cases in which an individual has been arrested. The opportunity for investigators to work with fresh cases is crucial for a good investigation result. In the next interim study, Brå intends to take a closer look at the amount of cases put on hold and to what extent the police are able to work with fresh volume crime cases.

”Volume crime specialists”

The work with volume crime appears to have a low status within the police force. For three out of four of the investigated authorities, the picture seems to be that volume crime is prioritised in theory but not in practice. This can make it difficult to recruit talent and also means that many apply for other positions. In Brå’s opinion both the police training and police management could focus more on raising the status of work with volume crime. One way of achieving this could be to develop further training for investigators of volume crime. To even allow volume crime a specialist status could remove the preconception that this work is less important.

Motivational goals

One important factor for being motivated at work, other than feedback, is understanding and sympathising with the goals of the operations. It is also important from a management perspective that the goals, which reflect the intentions of the management, are firmly rooted and have legitimacy among operative personnel (Granér 2004). The survey therefore also contained questions about how the police view the operational goals.

The majority feel they have received solid information on *what* the operational goals are, though only a fifth feel that superiors and management are able to provide a satisfactory explanation for *why* these goals exist. Even fewer feel that the operational goals

[32] Swedish: Ärendebalanser. Due to lack of time, some cases are placed in a queue pending examination.

are presented in a way which increases their motivation. Overall, the responses show that this is an important area for development for the Police. In many respects, it is a matter of communicating what the Police are trying to achieve – all the way down to the last link in the chain – instead of simply explaining how to get there. This applies to both crime investigation and crime prevention work.

Reasonable expectations

Other than time and resources, responses to the question of why the clearance rate is not higher often relate to matters which are difficult or impossible for the police to change. The respondents mention that many volume crimes cannot be cleared up or that it would require unreasonable investigative measures in relation to the severity of the crime. Their perception seems to be that criticism of the low clearance rate and the demands to raise this is made without any accurate awareness of what is realistically achievable.

In this context, the question of to what extent external factors have contributed to increased difficulties clearing up crimes is raised. In the final report on the investment in the police, Brå will also present a more comprehensive analysis of this. The total distribution of various types of crime, for example, will be highlighted. Is it the case that the proportion of crimes that are difficult to investigate is higher now than previously? This is something touched upon by several of the respondents in the study.

In this study, examples of factors beyond the police's control have also been highlighted. A recurring conception is that the requirement for forensic evidence has increased. Brå's assessment is that this is the case and that it has a negative impact on the total clearance rate. However, the preliminary investigation leaders in Brå's study are divided in their view of whether the greater demands for forensic evidence will result in more or less cases referred to the prosecutor. The picture they provide is that it differs from one type of case to another. If the demands relate to cases in which it is possible to collect forensic evidence, the result may be that a perpetrator who could not otherwise be linked to the crime can be prosecuted. On the other hand, it is not possible in the majority of crimes reported retrospectively to produce forensic evidence. In such cases the requirement is something of a burden and means that where it previously would have been enough with a witness, for example, the final result is that the case must be dropped due to lack of forensic evidence. A desirable development in this area, according to Brå, would be to take advantage of forensic evidence when possible but not to have higher demands in general on this than previously set.

It is important that the demand for a higher clearance rate is based on a realistic picture of what is achievable. Brå's overall assessment, based on this and previous studies, is that there is potential to increase the proportion of cleared up cases within several categories of crime, but that the increase in question is often only a few percentage points. It is important that this is communicated to the public and to decision-makers. Brå therefore intends to highlight in the third and final report just exactly what realistic expectations of the police are and to review whether or not there are fairer ways to measure the police's work with investigation and prosecution than those currently employed.

Finally, Brå also wishes to point out that several of the proposals we have discussed are not only intended to increase the clearance rate. They are also about creating a better workplace for employees of the police authorities, with a more even distribution of labour and increased motivation. Last, but not least, their endeavours are also intended to achieve a higher rate of "customer satisfaction"; i.e., greater contentment among citizens who come in contact with the police.