

Improving oversight of covert law enforcement

It is essential that senior police officers have a comprehensive oversight of covert law enforcement. However, due to the range and quantity of covert policing activity within a police force, it can often be difficult to keep track of what is happening, leading to a risk of patchy oversight and greater potential for mistakes and deliberate corruption.

abmpegasus offers a way of improving management oversight of the covert arena by improving the ability to quickly review operations currently in progress, the workloads of individual officers and the financial impacts of covert operations.

abmpegasus improves the ability for officers to **manage covert activity** and **officers' workloads**. A management dashboard provides a quick and easy way to see exactly how many cases each officer is working on and how many he/she has completed. These statistics not only give an indication of the performance of individual officers, but can help management to identify areas of concern. The homepage also provides officers with a list of outstanding messages and tasks, such as authorisations and incomplete applications, helping to manage his/her own workload.

Managing authorisations can become a time consuming activity due to their sheer quantity and turnover and the need to review on a regular basis. abmpegasus not only provides a centrally retrievable and updatable record of all authorisations (as required by RIPA/RIP(S)A 2000), but reminds the relevant officers when reviews are due, ensuring that the Force continues to operate fully within the boundaries of the law.

Covert units are increasingly required to demonstrate their **financial accountability**. In certain areas of covert activity, this has been notoriously time consuming and difficult to achieve. Payments to protected persons and CHIS, for example, are areas that require careful oversight to reduce the opportunity for corruption. However, control procedures can have the potential to create a heavy and unmanageable administrative burden.

abmpegasus allows officers to easily record all financial transactions, helping management to keep track of the cost of individual operations and sources as well as the overall spending of the department. Additionally, management can prove the cost effectiveness of operations with the ability to input the value of confiscated goods.

Effective **risk management** is key to safe operational effectiveness. abmpegasus adds assurance to managers that applications are properly risk assessed. Electronic risk assessment forms make it easier for staff to complete risk assessments and, therefore, more likely to complete them with the necessary attention to detail.

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Having an understanding and oversight of the **intelligence** picture gained from covert operations is crucial to realising the full benefits of covert activity. abmpegasus improves the ability to access and understand intelligence by storing it in one central database with full search functionality and the ability to visualise the intelligence picture through charting and briefing tools.

Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) represent a high risk area of covert policing. abmpegasus includes a number of features to improve the oversight of these valuable but potentially treacherous resources. Firstly, abmpegasus facilitates full recording of all details relating to the CHIS from first contact to cessation of any agreements. The system guides officers through the application and authorisation process, including risk assessment. Authorising Officers are able to quickly check that the safety and welfare of the CHIS has been properly considered, in accordance with RIPA/RIP(S)A 2000 obligations. Following authorisation, all contact, rewards and transactions with the CHIS can be recorded on the system to give a thorough account and history of all interaction. As with all information entered into the abmpegasus system, gathered intelligence is allocated a Unique ISR (Intelligence Source Register) Reference Number to protect the provenance of the intelligence. As such, the true identity of the CHIS is known only on a strictly need-to-know basis, facilitated by abmpegasus' role-based access.

The **protection of people**, including **witness protection**, is another area which necessitates careful oversight. abmpegasus records all contact with people under police protection and keeps an audit trail of all decisions made with regard to providing protection and, just as importantly, recording justification when support is not provided. Details of new identities, address details and financial debt are recorded as well as any communication with third parties (such as lawyers, psychologists etc.). The system helps to maintain integrity by recording justification for all financial transactions to ensure that protected people are not benefiting beyond the protection provided.

In summary, abmpegasus provides the crucial oversight of covert operations needed to assure senior officers that procedures and policies are being followed in compliance with legislation and duty of care to the public.

References

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