



WELLBEING OF INVESTIGATORS SIO RISK ASSESSMENT



College of
Policing



The National Police
Wellbeing Service



NPCC
National Police Chiefs' Council



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INTRODUCTION

The investigation of serious crime presents a range of challenges to investigators. Given the nature of serious crime, there are likely to be many risk factors present, particularly around the victim(s) and witnesses.

There will often be a great deal of pressure to identify the perpetrator quickly, and this pressure will be intensified where there is heightened political, public or media interest. Furthermore, identifying and recovering material will require the application of a range of problem-solving techniques.

It is recognised that investigations are becoming more complex, often requiring the analysis and interpretation of vast amounts of digital media, call data and other intelligence products. Given the nature of demand, these investigations need to be balanced simultaneously.

There is also a need to manage finite resources, considering the abilities and experience of investigators, and the personal wellbeing of individuals engaged.

These challenges are shared throughout all types of serious crime investigation. From local policing CID, to Major Crime. From local serious & organised crime, to regional and national SOC. From local safeguarding, to specialist public protection.

The individual managing this is the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)



ROLE OF AN SIO

The SIO performs the role of officer in charge of an investigation, as set out in the Code of Practice under Part II of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.

Their primary role is team leader, providing investigative focus, coordinating and motivating the team.

They are accountable for every facet of the enquiry, managing a range of internal and external resources to maximum effect, which also sets out requirements for professional development, registration and continuing professional development (CPD).

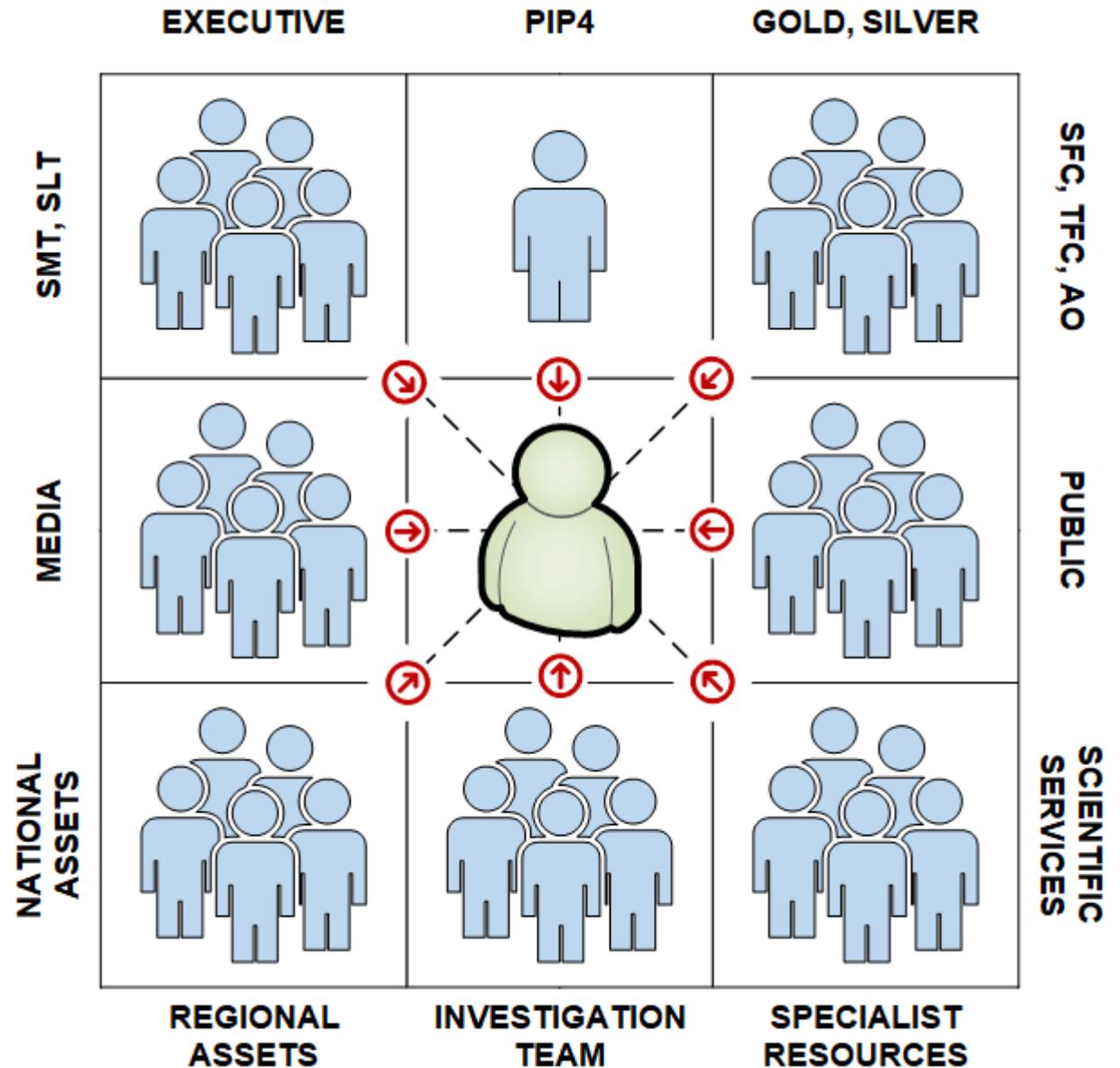
They develop investigative strategies based on the unique circumstances of each case, making effective use of the National Decision Model and continually assess and modify their strategies as new material becomes available.

In some cases, the SIO may be required to manage large teams (over 100), creating challenges around effective team working.

SIOs may also be responsible for a devolved budget, which may include forensic budgets, overtime costs and staff costs such as travel and subsistence.

The SIO is responsible for the conduct of the investigation, in particular their own decision-making. They are not, however expected to be an expert in all aspects of every type of major investigation.

The SIO, operating in their role, is under the spotlight of many interested parties.



RESILIENCE & WELLBEING

The SIO has a responsibility to consider the resilience and wellbeing of the whole investigation team, **including themselves**.

The SIO, and many of their team, will be performing high risk roles where **research has shown there may be a greater risk of staff suffering from stress or mental ill health.**

Serious crime investigation often require teams to work long periods of duty under pressure.

This is most likely during the early stages of an investigation, but may also occur at key milestones, such as suspect arrest and interview. The SIO is likely to want to direct these aspects of the case personally.

Pressure may be intensified by high profile critical incidents that attract public, media and political scrutiny.



SIOs, and those responsible for managing them, should **recognise that this intensity of pressure could have an adverse effect on the SIO and their team's general health and welfare, as well as performance in the role.**

The SIO, together with their line manager / PIP4, should prepare a wellbeing strategy for the investigation, which should: monitor hours worked; encourage adequate rest and leave; psychological risk assessments.

Where possible the SIO should delegate work that does not require their direct management.

In doing this, however, they should ensure they do not overburden others who may also be working under pressure.



Resources and wellbeing should be kept under continual review.



ROLE & RISK ASSESSMENT

The Home Office Risk Assessment Matrix is used to assess the risk presented by roles that should or could be included in the Psychological Screening Programme.

Alongside this, the College of Policing have produced guidance to forces, considering how to assess and manage areas of policing where there is a higher level of exposure to psychological hazards, known to be associated with an increased risk of anxiety, depression, primary and secondary trauma.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work (1999) Regulations state:

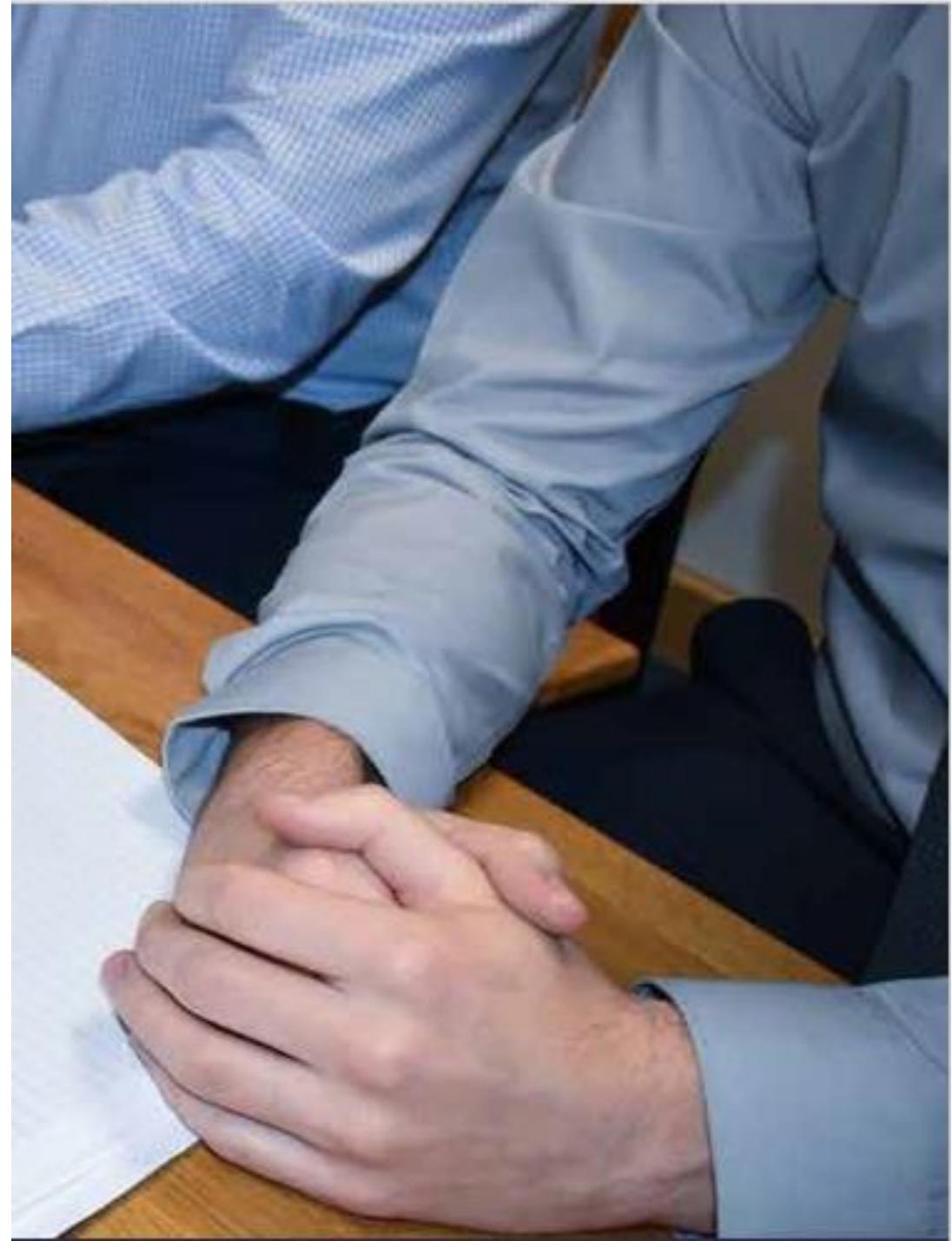
“Every employer shall ensure that his employees are provided with such health surveillance as is appropriate having regard to the risks to their health and safety which are identified by the assessment.”

The College of Policing recognises that some officers and staff are exposed to a higher level of distressing experiences, materials and/or information and acknowledge that this exposure can affect mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

It is the duty of each force to assess these psychological hazards and put in place reasonable controls to mitigate and manage the psychological risk to employees.



Being an SIO is a High Risk role.



SIO RISK ASSESSMENT - NATURE OF ROLE

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Potential for deployment to potentially distressing or traumatic incidents and viewing of content of a highly graphic nature (e.g. extremist videos and indecent images) or Regularly exposed to scene of a graphic nature or distressed member of the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIOs will attend scenes, including scenes of homicide • At scenes, staff will look to the SIO for guidance, bringing additional pressures • Bereaved or traumatised individuals will be encountered and the SIO may meet with these people, face to face 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Potential for deployment to potentially distressing or traumatic incidents and viewing of content of a highly graphic nature (e.g. extremist videos and indecent images) or Regularly exposed to scene of a graphic nature or distressed member of the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing case files will involve repeated viewing of graphic material (e.g. Post Mortem photography) • SIOs will immerse themselves in emotional trauma, by studying ABEs or reading statements • Increased risks of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue 	3

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT - FREQUENCY OF INVOLVEMENT

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	High frequency of exposure e.g. Daily and weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the investigation, the SIO will become the focal point of attention from a multitude of angles • This can be overwhelming, particularly in serious, complex or high profile cases • Local Policing, or Divisional, SIOs are likely to be subject to extreme volumes of work 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	Moderate frequency of exposure e.g. Fortnightly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the initial phase eases, there will still be multiple demands on the SIO • High demand roles (e.g. Main Office) will see multiple demands layered with multiple investigations, as SIOs juggle multiple cases 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – DIRECT / INDIRECT

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Face to face contact with victims / perpetrators or distressed members of the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In homicides, SIOs will usually wish to meet with next of kin / relatives of the deceased • At scenes, SIOs will become face to face with victim, perpetrators and distressed members of the public • As the centre of the investigation, the SIO is likely to be exposed to all these elements 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Telephone contact with victims / perpetrators or distressed members of the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the initial phase eases, contact will be maintained with these groups, but usually via telephone or similar • As the centre of the investigation, the SIO will continue to be exposed to all these elements 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – RISK OF MEDIA COVERAGE

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>High chance that the work undertaken will be covered by the media or the possibly of needing to discuss work with the media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIOs are only usually appointed in the case of serious incidents and, therefore, attract media and public interest 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>High chance that the work undertaken will be covered by the media or the possibly of needing to discuss work with the media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, which can continue through the life of an investigation 	3

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – SECURITY / SAFETY

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Medium risk work - Moderate concern about being identified in role or targeted. Not able to discuss content of work with friends or family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the management of serious crime investigation, SIOs are placing themselves at risk of targeting by serious and organised criminals • As key decision makers, they are potentially targets for corruption • Given the serious nature of investigations (that require an SIO), the ability to discuss work with family is significant reduced 	2
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Medium risk work - Moderate concern about being identified in role or targeted. Not able to discuss content of work with friends or family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above, which doesn't abate through the life of an investigation 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – TEAM OR ISOLATED

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Infrequently part of a team but some ability to discuss work and concerns with management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst part of (and leading) a team the SIO has a different, and often isolated, role • There are opportunities for concerns to be aired with managers but frequently SIOs are “left to get on with it” • The SIO, by definition, carries the risk of decisions and actions undertaken and can be quickly isolated in a ‘blame culture’ 	2
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Infrequently part of a team but some ability to discuss work and concerns with management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – LENGTH OF TIME IN ROLE

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Has carried out this role previously but infrequently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This criteria doesn't fit neatly with a "generic" SIO profile, but in essence presents a medium (2) risk • Mitigation (why this isn't high) is because SIOs are not usually put into that position unless they have experience and the capability to carry out that role • However, this is medium because of a vulnerability to experiences of compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious and secondary trauma 	2
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Has carried out this role previously but infrequently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – PRESSURES OF WORK

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>High pressure of work - little time for breaks and unrealistic time scales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial stages of a serious investigation are relentless and the SIO is unlikely to be able to have many opportunities for rest and, in some cases, sleep • Pressure will be brought to bear by senior managers, public and the general teams • In the initial stages of the investigation this pressure will be immense 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Moderate pressure of work little time for breaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above, though the intensity of this pressure will diminish through the passage of time 	2

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – RISK / SAFEGUARDING

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Significant levels safeguarding issues or risk associated with the role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIOs are making decisions and directing activity against some of the highest risks in policing • At commencement, these decisions will be made in the absence of complete information and are, therefore, a form of risk taking 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Significant levels safeguarding issues or risk associated with the role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the information picture increases, assisting informed decision making, the levels of risk (in terms of decisions) does not diminish 	3

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – PROSECUTIONS

STAGE:	RELEVANT MATRIX TEXT:	NARRATIVE:	SCORE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	<p>Likely need to give evidence or be part of prosecutions or is the specialist for the case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIOs are likely to have their decisions (policies) scrutinised by legal professionals, as part of case management • This could include being required to give evidence in Court, justifying why certain decisions were made • The SIO is a specialist for the case and a key component in the prosecution 	3
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	<p>Likely need to give evidence or be part of prosecutions or is the specialist for the case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	3

SIO RISK ASSESSMENT – TOTAL

STAGE:	TOTAL SCORE & GRADING	NARRATIVE:
COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION	27 – A1	 <p>Being an SIO is a high risk role, opening the individual up to significant risk of harm</p> <p>This is especially the case at the commencement of an investigation</p>
SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION	24 – A1	

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

KNOW THE RISK

- The Risk Assessment on the previous pages clearly sets out the challenges facing SIOs and how their role is High Risk
- This risk encompasses a number of elements including: police & community; physical; psychological; political; legal and moral.
- Know that SIOs perform a high profile and demanding role, with a necessity to present a 'brave face'.
- As more general health issues become better known, consider the lesser known risks e.g. Compassion Fatigue.

OWN THE RISK

- Forces should benchmark SIOs as high risk, recognising the risks the role encompasses.
- Recognise & reward SIOs for the role that they choose to perform.
- Staff wellbeing should be central to core force principles

MANAGE THE RISK

- Support your SIOs (see next page)
- Clearly identify support pathways for SIOs
- Put in place mechanisms to support a learning environment and remove barriers and factors that can breed a 'blame culture'.



SUPPORT

- Occupational Health
- Wellbeing of Investigators Toolkit
- Oscar Kilo
- College of Policing



SUPPORTING YOUR SIOs

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING

- Recognise that some roles can be extremely emotionally demanding, psychological screening is a supportive measure to ensure the wellbeing of staff
- Recommended by the College of Policing as a health monitoring process
- Involves a set of questionnaires to understand any changes in symptoms regarding mental health

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Develop an environment that destigmatises mental health and encourages reporting concerns.
- Provide debriefs, impact monitoring and supervision at regular intervals as appropriate
- Individuals should be able to raise concerns with their line management, peers, welfare staff or occupational health at any time and expect to be supported
- Forces should adhere to and promote a culture where psychological effects are not seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence in any circumstance

ENGAGED LEADERS

- Stress related hazards include lack of control and support
- Acknowledge vulnerabilities (e.g. gender, personality, pre-existing disorders), which have been shown to increase the impact of an exposure to a hazardous event and need to be considered when providing support.
- Promotion processes should place more value on compassion and emotional intelligence and less value on transactional linear management.
- A positive leader who provides recognition, positive engagement, clear direction and openness will provide an atmosphere where there is an enhanced level of resilience.
- Utilise supporting mechanisms for managers who struggle with emotional conversations (e.g. Wellness Support Plan).



SUPPORT

- TRiM
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Federation
- Wellbeing of Investigators Toolkit
- Pause Points
- Peer Support Programme
- Mental Health First Aid

