

## Chief Constables' Council

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### Title: Information Disorder: Mis, Dis & Malinformation Portfolio Update

#### Agenda Item: Session 1 - Regional

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<b>Force/Organisation:</b>	NPCC Strategic Hub, on behalf of the Mis, Dis & Malinformation Portfolio
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<b>Coordination Committee:</b>	Operations
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Information Disorder: Mis, Dis & Malinformation
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When completing the Chief Constables’ Council submission template the below 3D model agreed at the December 23 meeting should be reviewed and the paper written against for completion and final submission to the respective Coordination Committee and then onward to the NPCC Business Support team managing Chiefs’ Council via CCC [ccc@npcc.police.uk](mailto:ccc@npcc.police.uk)

Decision	Discussion	Dissemination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the item is for decision, what is/are the decision(s) that are sought from council?</li> <li>• Has it been through the relevant Committee first? Is the decision appropriate for delegation?</li> <li>• Has it been through the Regional process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the item is for discussion, is it for discussion with Chief Constables, all Chief Officers, Heads of Departments, a particular Committee?</li> <li>• If it is for a group other than Chief Constables, use the relevant forum. If it is for Chief Constables, be clear on the points for discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the item is for information only, who is it for? Can it be disseminated via another route than CCC, such as ChiefsNet, email, or an All Chief Officers Day?</li> <li>• If it is purely for Chief Constables, be clear on why it needs to come to CCC for dissemination.</li> </ul>

Please indicate what the paper is requesting: **Dissemination through Regional Process**

**1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update Chief Constables’ Council on the activities of the Mis, Dis and Malinformation (MDM) portfolio; including recent requests from forces for support (within the **\*\*S31(1)\*\*** survey) and the MDM portfolio’s activity to begin drafting key support and guidance documents.
- 1.2. Following the **\*\*S31(1)\*\*** survey sent to all forces in November 2025, the MDM portfolio commissioned the NPCC Strategic Hub to review responses (related specifically to MDM) and begin development, in conjunction with the portfolio, of NPCC Operational Guidance to support forces planning for and responding to MDM, as well as drive national consistency around MDM challenges.
- 1.3. Appropriate consideration has been given to the development of an MDM Approved Professional Practice (APP) including engagement with the College of Policing. However, in line with the future strategic direction for APP, and in recognition of MDM presenting as a dynamic operational challenge, across multiple disciplines, it has been decided the development of NPCC Operational Guidance is the preferred option. In addition, as part of the College of Policing’s review of APP, we will work to ensure all relevant APPs include an appropriate reference to MDM and a link to the latest version of the Operational Guidance. This will allow for subject matter experts to be directed to the MDM guidance, from the relevant APP, and for the guidance to be both dynamic in its development and constantly updated.

#### 1.4. The paper therefore includes:

- a working example/policy template to support forces in drafting of local policy documentation, where required (Appendix 1. NPCC Force Policy Guidance for Information Disorder v.1.1).
- a fully drafted 'Strategic Risk Guidance', ready for forces to review and consider adoption of risk entries to local registers (Appendix 2. NPCC Strategic Risk Guidance for Information Disorder v1.1).

#### 1.5. The paper does not include work in development, including:

- An operational aide memoire, designed to provide guidance in how to respond to MDM, utilising the National Decision Model. This is currently in draft and out for consultation with subject matter experts. It is therefore not ready for consideration by CCC. It will however be taken into the National Operations Coordination Committee on 11 March, and it is requested, subject to the support for this paper, the NOCC sign this additional guidance off for distribution (As requested at point 4 of para 1.8 below).

#### 1.6. Papers have been discussed in detail on 13 February 2026 with the NPCC Mis, Dis and Malinformation Working Group and received feedback and endorsement.

#### 1.7. Finally, to better reflect the full scope and complexity of the work, the Mis, Dis and Malinformation portfolio is proposing a change of title to 'Information Disorder', which is a globally recognised term that encompasses Mis, Dis and Malinformation, across online contexts, where the creation spread or misuse of info causes harm, risk or abuse on or offline. The revised title provides greater clarity, aligns with the broader national discourse, and more accurately represents the strategic risks the portfolio is designed to address.

#### 1.8. Chiefs are therefore invited to:

1. adopt the proposal to change the name of the portfolio from 'Mis, Dis & Malinformation' to 'Information Disorder'.
2. review the progress of ongoing work of the MDM portfolio, making recommendations or requests for further activity,
3. review the support documents provided within this paper [see appendices] with consideration of adoption/utilisation of the support documents in force,
4. recognise the approach taken in the development of NPCC Operational Guidance, as opposed to APP, and endorsed the continued iterative development of this guidance to be governed via the National Operations Coordination Committee (NOCC).

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Strategic Context

- 2.1.1. Instances of widespread MDM continue, particularly online and in relation to socio-political issues; where false narratives are created, adopted and spread rapidly.

- 2.1.2. Mis, dis and malinformation has increasingly impacted on UK policing operations, delivery, priorities and public perception; with recent examples of MDM contributing to social tensions and public disorder, increased threat, risk & harm and vulnerability/safeguarding concerns.
- 2.1.3. There is a risk that continued instances of MDM (particularly unmanaged occurrences) will continue to impact policing operations/delivery. With failure to address these challenges having the potential to erode public trust, hinder effectiveness during crisis, and leave policing vulnerable to the impact of public misunderstanding, and purposeful manipulation by malicious actors. This could ultimately compromise public safety, damage community relations, and undermine the legitimacy of law enforcement in the UK and globally.
- 2.2. MDM has become a key driver of community tension, protest mobilisation, fear, reputational harm, and operational pressure. Recent policing experience across the UK has shown that false or misleading narratives can rapidly escalate - from small messages in community groups to widespread public belief; fuelled by misinterpretation, deliberate manipulation, lack of fact checking or information gaps.
- 2.3. In recognition of the need to respond to this emerging risk to public safety, the NPCC created the Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation portfolio. The strategic aim of the portfolio is to develop policy, guidance, public education and engagement strategies to enhance trust, transparency, and resilience in policing. The portfolio is focused on delivering sustainable outcomes that will provide a framework for policing, ensuring a consistent and robust response to misinformation, disinformation and malinformation.
- 2.4. All activity is being coordinated under three primary workstreams: prevention, ethics & legal principles and response. This is in recognition of the reality that MDM is a complex area of business which requires a broad system approach, with proactive and reactive elements, and these are the main themes which will shape our ability to identify, assess and respond.
- 2.5. The MDM Working Group consists of a range of subject matter experts from over 22 NPCC portfolios, government bodies and partner agencies.
- 2.6. The portfolio has defined the parameters which govern when the police respond or attempt to influence narratives being fuelled by mis, dis and malinformation. To support this, the below problem statement has been developed and is now included in the Policing Problem Book
- “How can policing minimise the risk of crime, public disorder and harm arising from misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, in a context where these risks are amplified by digital platforms, AI-enabled content, geopolitical interference, and societal vulnerabilities – while balancing legal, ethical, and operational principles?”
- 2.7. We have also collaborated with Assistant Commissioner Pippa Mills to support the work being done on **\*\*S31(1)\*\***, specifically in relation to the mis, dis and malinformation workstream linked to asylum and immigration concerns.
- 2.8. As part of a survey circulated to forces in November 2025 in support of **\*\*S31(1)\*\***, a series of questions were posed focusing on the force’s position, experience and response to MDM:

2.8.1. **\*\*S31(1)\*\*** questions:

- Does your Force have a policy or guidance document governing your response to misinformation, disinformation and / or malinformation?
  - If 'Yes', please state the department or function that is responsible for the policy
- Is misinformation, disinformation and/ or malinformation recorded on your Force's Strategic Risk Register?
- Does your Force collect reports of cases of misinformation, disinformation and/ or malinformation?
  - If 'Yes', does your Force analyse and review opportunities for learning from these cases?
- Does your Force have an established misinformation, disinformation and/or malinformation contingency plan?
- Does your Force have previous examples of instances where misinformation, disinformation or malinformation has generated activity such as protest and disorder, or has required a policing response?

## 2.8.2. Survey responses were as below:

- **Policy/guidance in place:** 13 forces (32%) indicated having a policy.
- **MDM on Strategic Risk Register:** 5 forces (12%) record MDM as a strategic risk.
- **Collects MDM reports:** 12 forces (29%) collect reports.
- **Analyses MDM cases:** 10 forces (24%) analyse/review cases.
- **Established MDM contingency plan:** 7 forces (17%) have an established plan.
- **Previous MDM incidents requiring response:** 22 forces (54%) report prior incidents.

2.9. A substantial number of responding forces (30 of 41 respondents) reported having some involvement in MDM incidents or existing force considerations, however, comparatively few forces indicated that they have formal processes or activity in place.

2.10. This gap between operational experience and formal processes suggests a maturing but inconsistent posture: forces know MDM is generating demand, but organisational structures may lag behind operational experience.

2.11. Opportunities for Support:

2.11.1. As part of the **\*\*S31(1)\*\*** survey forces were asked to suggest what support might be useful to assist them in responding to MDM.

2.11.2. In order to better understand the reality in force, the SPP team were tasked to assess the responses in more detail, reaching out to forces to understand and seek examples of existing documents.

2.11.3. The responses from forces, to the follow-up queries (requesting copies of documents, policies, points of contact etc) highlighted a lack of clarity from respondents, who were often unsure of who had originally responded (to the **\*\*S31(1)\*\*** survey) and/or where any existing documents may be held.

2.11.4. The responses demonstrated a potential lack of join up within forces, or transparency of ownership for MDM related activity.

- 2.11.5. Where forces have previously made reference to existing policy or had indicated they did not have a policy place, the subsequent engagement often revealed that MDM was at least a 'thread' or a 'consideration' within broader documentation e.g. 'Corporate Comms Strategy'.
- 2.11.6. The lack of consistent documentation, standardised approaches, terminology etc, supported the finding, and request for support from the initial survey and the Strategic Hub has worked with the MDM portfolio to begin the creation of key support documentation.
- 2.11.7. Provided in the appendices of this paper are included:
- a fully drafted 'Force Policy Guidance', ready for forces to review and consider a working example/policy template to support forces in drafting of local policy documentation, where required (Appendix 1. NPCC Force Policy Guidance for Information Disorder v.1.1).
  - a fully drafted 'Strategic Risk Guidance', ready for forces to review and consider adoption of risk entries to local registers (Appendix 2. NPCC Strategic Risk Guidance for Information Disorder v1.1).

**3. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISK – What are the strategic, operational and/or tactical opportunities, benefits and risks associated with the funding request and the proposed strategy/deliverables outlined above?**

**3.1. Opportunities**

3.1.1. The MDM portfolio is proactively engaging with the wider NPCC and forces to provide support and direction to operational responses through local and national activity, continued engagement from chief officers and relevant force leads is essential to ensure this support is effective.

3.1.2. Recording Incidents

- There is a significant opportunity for policing to establish a standardised and collective approach to recording incidents related to MDM.
- A unified recording framework would enable the service to build a comprehensive, accurate understanding of the most prevalent themes and emerging issues affecting policing. This enhanced visibility would support forces in identifying the types of MDM most likely to impact their operations and in implementing effective preventative measures.
- Consistency in recording and categorisation would also strengthen coordination of responses across police forces, ensuring that similar issues are addressed in a coherent and aligned manner. Moreover, a standardised approach would facilitate the timely escalation of cross-force issues to national level, helping ensure that relevant government bodies are appropriately informed and able to provide targeted support to policing.
- The portfolio will work with the NPCC Strategic Hub to explore options for recording templates/processes to best support i) forces in capturing MDM incidents for local learning and development of best practice, ii) national collation and consideration of emerging trends and strategic implications.

### 3.2. Risks –

- 3.2.1. Instances of widespread MDM continue, particularly online and in relation to socio-political issues; where false narratives are created, adopted and spread rapidly.
- 3.2.2. Mis, dis and malinformation has increasingly impacted on UK policing operations, delivery, priorities and public perception; with recent examples of MDM contributing to social tensions and public disorder, increased threat, risk & harm and vulnerability/safeguarding concerns.
- 3.2.3. There is a risk that continued instances of MDM (particularly unmanaged occurrences) will continue to impact policing operations/delivery. With failure to address these challenges having the potential to erode public trust, hinder effectiveness during crises, and leave policing vulnerable to the impact of public misunderstanding, and purposeful manipulation by malicious actors. This could ultimately compromise public safety, damage community relations, and undermine the legitimacy of law enforcement in the UK and globally.

### 3.3. Risks (Key Events) -

- 3.3.1. Key national events in 2026 are expected to create periods of elevated MDM risk. The May 2026 elections will generate heightened socio-political engagement and scrutiny, increasing opportunities for MDM to influence public discourse, shape public perception and trust in policing, and potentially contribute to protests or unrest.
- 3.3.2. Recent annual trends indicate that the summer months consistently correlate with increased anti-social behaviour and public disorder, driven by higher levels of outdoor activity and larger public gatherings; and the risk landscape is further heightened during major public and sporting events, which attract significant crowds and increased public attention.
- 3.3.3. These conditions heighten the likelihood of online engagement that can enable the rapid spread of harmful or misleading narratives, and subsequent threats to public safety.
- 3.3.4. Forces should anticipate a period of elevated exposure to MDM-related risks over summer months, and may wish to consider proactive forward planning, enhanced monitoring, strengthened preparedness and coordinated policing responses, alongside contingency planning for surge demand or potential flashpoint events.
- 3.3.5. In response to these risks, the MDM portfolio and the NPCC Strategic Hub risk team recommend that all forces consider adoption of MDM related risks to strategic and/or operational risk registers as a matter of urgency.

**4. CONCLUSION (incl DECISIONS REQUIRED)**

**4.1. DISCUSSION:**

4.1.1. **CCC is invited to provide any comment or recommendation on the ongoing activity of the Information Disorder portfolio, the current proposals and future activity.**

**4.2. DISSEMINATION:**

4.2.1. **Please see the appendices for review and consideration of adoption within force.**

**4.3. DECISION:**

4.3.1. **Agreement is sought to amend the portfolio name to ‘Information Disorder’.**

CCC, NPCC and force colleagues are invited to contact to the SPP team to provide strategic risk concerns for consideration/inclusion in the SRA reporting planned for submission to the next CCC.

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