



Operation Phoenix

**violence is
preventable
not inevitable**

VIOLENCE
reduction unit

Violence is preventable, not inevitable.

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Introduction

Operation Phoenix is Scotland's first murder database, developed by Strathclyde Police and the Violence Reduction Unit. The system is a unique tool which provides a platform to record and share specialist knowledge and best working practices identified through the investigation of murder and suspicious deaths.

Specialists can only be taught so much in a classroom: the real learning comes from working on live enquiries. By sharing experience and knowledge there is an opportunity to not only avoid pitfalls, but also to identify shared issues and concerns and find resolution. Sometimes learning comes out of failure; investigating homicides is a complex task with Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) having to make hundreds of decisions on a daily basis, and even those with years of experience will encounter new issues and challenges.

This practice note provides a brief guide to Operation Phoenix

The Phoenix rises

During Operation Trinity (2004) a homicide database was developed to examine possible links between a series of unresolved murders from the 1970s. It was felt this information could prove valuable in future investigations and used in a wider context. This would allow forces to collaborate and share information on homicides in a new way.

As a result, a working group was set up, chaired by Detective Chief Superintendent Colin Field, to explore how this idea could be developed further. The working group involved officers from Strathclyde Police, analysts from the national Violence Reduction Unit and specialist IT personnel. This resulted in the formation of Operation Phoenix.

Currently live in Strathclyde, Operation Phoenix has now been mandated as an ACPOS National Project and is currently going through the business change process to enable it be rolled out nationally. Once complete, Scotland will be home to the world's first ever National Homicide Database - a system which will help to further enhance the quality and excellence of murder investigations across the country.

How does it work?

The wealth of information stored within the Operation Phoenix System can be accessed in two ways. Investigators can access the system through a web based application which provides round the clock access to the information, whilst analysts can interrogate and examine the data in the system through i2 Analyst's Workstation, which facilitates the creation of network charts, time lines, maps and graphs.

Fig.1 - Web Based Application

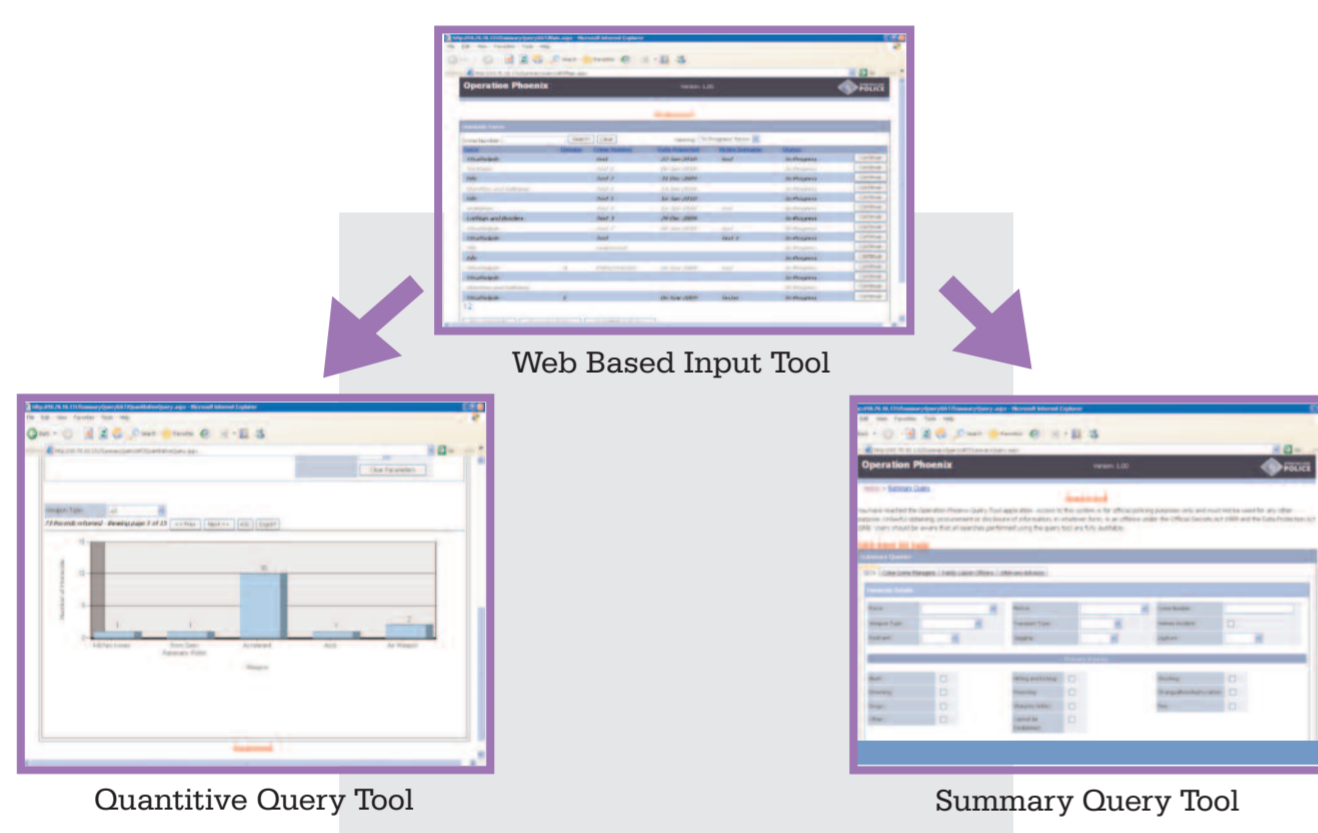


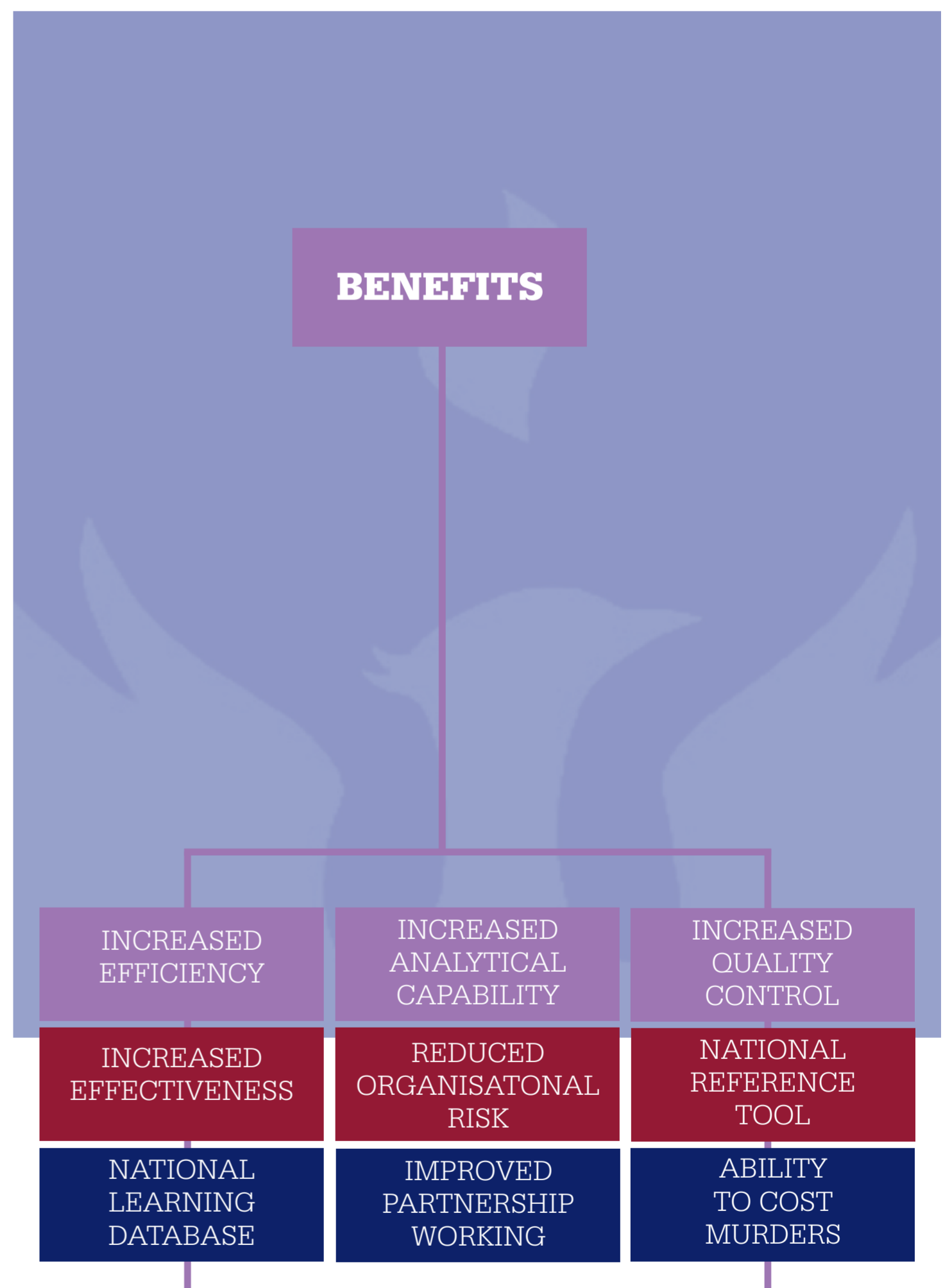
Fig.2 - i2 Analyst Workstation



Phoenix will alter the way murders are investigated by:

- Creating a virtual learning network aimed at practitioners
- Providing real-time knowledge and information – immediate assistance and direction
- Creating a central repository for learning, knowledge and information, enabling exploration of connections between cases to help solve current and historic murders
- Enabling identification of any deficiencies in staffing knowledge and experience and addressing shortcomings by means of training and instruction
- Influencing future detective training - moving towards a national investigative standard, Operation Phoenix carries a myriad of benefits, as illustrated below

How is it of benefit?



Operation Phoenix is relatively inexpensive as the system uses, and has been developed to use, existing technology already in place within the police IT systems. The main costs are in relation to staffing to allow for the consultation and development process, the historical input and conversion of cases.