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The audit and strategy process is essentially a piece of research; therefore it is important that it is based on sound research principles. This guidance is designed to introduce these principles, giving practical examples of how they can be followed within the audit and strategy process.

This audit and strategy guidance covers the following areas:

- **Why do an audit and strategy?**

Places the audit and strategy process in context and explains its purpose.

- **Who should be involved?**

Specifies those that should be involved in the audit and strategy process and introduces their roles and responsibilities.

- **What should an audit look like?**

Looks at the audit as a piece of research, introducing and expanding upon the core principles that all research should aim to follow and include, these are:

- An **Introduction** to the research
- The **Methodology** used
- The **Findings** of the research
- A **Discussion** of these findings
- Inclusion of any relevant **Appendices**
 - Annex A contains information about crime types and thematic areas
 - Annex B contains more information on the links to the National Drug Strategy Performance Management Framework and specific sources of information for drugs data.

- **Consultation**

Provides an introduction to doing consultation as part of the audit and strategy process. This section is still under development and is due to come on line in June. An outline of the information that this part of the guidance will cover can be downloaded.

- **What should a strategy look like?**

Sets out the key areas that should be included within the strategy document, these are: including the development of priorities and performance management issues. This part of the guidance sets out:

- An **Introduction** to the strategy document
- A **Summary** of the audit findings and the **development of priorities**
- The **Performance management of priority areas**

▪ **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Introduces the concept of ongoing monitoring as a means of managing the strategy and looks at the development of action plans.

▪ **Information Sources**

Provides details of existing guidance and sources of further information that will assist in the audit and strategy process. It is important to note that **this guidance is not designed to replace the existing guidance**, but should be used alongside it.

How to Use this Guidance

This guidance is designed to be flexible for the user. It is structured so that can be read straight through from start to finish or readers can dip in and out of the sections that they require. The guidance can be accessed interactively through the Audit and Strategy Toolkit on the Crime Reduction website; it can also be downloaded in its entirety.

Each part of the guidance is structured in the same way:

- Each section of the guidance begins with a grey box summarising the key headings that will be covered within that section. These can be used as a quick checklist.
- These key headings are then expanded in more detail within the text.
- "Issues for Consideration" are then highlighted where relevant.
- "Further Information" specific to the areas covered in that section is then referenced.

The guidance has been written and designed by a consortium of stakeholders from the Regional Government Offices, the Research community, Practitioners and the Home Office.

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