

Police and Crime Panel

16th October 2020

HMICFRS Inspections

Report of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner



Purpose

1. To brief the Police and Crime Panel on the findings of the recent inspections by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that have required a PCC comment, listed below:
 - Joint inspection- Evidence Led Domestic Abuse Prosecutions
 - Durham/ National- Child protection inspection
 - A joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management
 - Counter-terrorism policing- An inspection of the police's contribution to the government's Prevent programme
 - State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2019
 - A call for help - Police contact management through call handling and control rooms in 2018/19
 - Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales
 - PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards – Police to police collaboration

The different inspections that have taken place are set out below, along with the findings to each of those inspections.

Individual inspections and findings

Joint inspection- Evidence Led Domestic Abuse Prosecutions

2. This inspection focused upon the issue of when victims of domestic abuse decide not to support a prosecution, police and prosecutors should consider whether it is possible to bring a prosecution without that support. This held particular attention over whether the guidance and policy on evidence led domestic abuse is widely understood by both police officers and prosecutors and whether they seek to build viable evidence led prosecutions where appropriate.

3. Below will detail a summative assessment of each of the eight reports, with a link to the supplementary Section 55 letters, in which the specific actions from the recommendations cited are held.
4. On 23rd January 2020, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HMICFRS published the findings from its joint inspection into Evidence Led Domestic Abuse Prosecutions. Consequently, giving a series of recommendations for the Constabulary to respond to.

Inspectors found that at all levels in the police and CPS there was a clear recognition that domestic abuse is a priority area of work and there is a desire to achieving the best possible outcome for victims. It was emphasised that officers and prosecutors should take particular note to ensure that, at the outset of a case, consideration is given to how to prosecute should the victim withdraw support. In turn, this would lead to a more in depth investigation at the scene.

Durham/ National - Child Protection Inspection

5. This inspection is part of the rolling programme of inspections on child protection. The report examined the effectiveness of the decisions made by the police at each stage of their interactions with or for children, from initial contact through to the investigation of offences against them. The report also scrutinised the treatment of children in custody, and assess how forces are structured, led and governed, in relation to their child protection services.
6. On 17th March 2020, HMICFRS published the findings from its Durham Constabulary Child protection inspection. Consequently, giving a series of recommendations for the Constabulary to respond to.
7. The report highlighted several other examples of good practice, including:
 - well-structured governance and oversight procedures for child protection matters, across all five regional commands;
 - good use of body-worn video when responding to incidents involving risk to children; and,
 - consistently good engagement with local young people, and a clear focus on diverting children at risk of offending away from crime.
8. However, the report did also highlight several areas of concern, including:

- an inconsistent response to missing children;
- management of registered sex offenders by neighbourhood officers, with visits going overdue and sometimes completed by untrained officers;
- a failure to collect and record information to ensure that there is a focus and understanding of each child's needs and risks; and,
- underdeveloped approaches to collecting performance information (which would allow the force to evaluate its child protection arrangements).

Joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management

9. This inspection aimed to examine how IOM has been operating since the implementation of Transforming Rehabilitation (2014) and in a climate of reduced police numbers. HMI Probation and HMICFRS visited seven different IOM schemes in England and Wales (of which Durham was not one), selected to provide a cross-section of urban and rural locations.
10. On 28th February 2020, HMICFRS published the findings from its joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management. Inspectors looked at a sample of cases from seven regions and found almost 40 per cent involved offenders who pose a high or very high risk of harm to others. Domestic abuse was a concern in more than half of the inspected cases.
11. Inspectors found the decision-making process was unclear at times and case files did not always record why police and probation officers used this approach to manage an offender. Around two-thirds of inspected plans did not spell out what individuals would be required to do as a result of being managed through a scheme. Inspectors found less than half of the offenders in the inspected sample had access to the drug or alcohol misuse services they needed.
12. The multi-agency approach in IOM for individuals who cited; drug misuse and lack of accommodation as key factors in their offending was deemed to result in better quality of supervision.
13. The report calls for greater national leadership to ensure proper oversight of the programme. The two inspectorates have also recommended improvements to data-gathering and evaluation.

Inspection of the Police's Contribution to the Government's Prevent Programme

14. The inspection was part of HMICFRS's counter-terrorism inspections programme, they carried out an inspection to examine how effective the police are in contributing to Prevent.
15. On 9th March 2020, HMICFRS published their inspection of the police's contribution to the government's Prevent programme. Inspectors found that forces in general were meeting their Prevent duty and working effectively with other organisations, using policies and effective processes designed to protect people from being radicalised.

State of Policing: Annual Assessment

16. The 'State of Policing: Annual Assessment' examines the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales based on the inspections carried out between May 2019 and March 2020'. This year's assessment provides insight to the policing response to Covid-19 and the wider demands faced throughout the previous year, 2019.
17. On 2nd July 2020, HMICFRS published their State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2019 report.
18. The findings of this report in relation to the Covid-19 emergency were that while some rare inconsistencies surfaced in application of Covid-19 powers, these were eclipsed by the commendable sensitivity and proportionality of officers towards their fellow citizens, through explanation and encouragement well before enforcement. The emergency has also encouraged greater cohesion of national leadership and this should be continued.
19. Further reform was supported in order to meet demand. There is an important role for the Home Office to play, particularly in making regional and national functions work more efficiently and effectively, whilst respecting local conditions and priorities.

A Call for Help - Police Contact Management through Call Handling and Control Rooms in 2018/19

20. This inspection highlighted the challenges that police services face in handling calls with smaller budgets and fewer people. It finds that as the demand on control rooms increase, careful management is needed to make sure that police services do not become overwhelmed.

21. On 9th July 2020, HMICFRS published the findings from its 'A call for help - Police contact management through call handling and control rooms in 2018/19' report. The report detailed that:

- inconsistencies in how forces manage complex demand and resolve calls without deploying officers;
- that many forces don't have effective systems in place to manage the risk and volume of work increased demand creates;
- there are still inconsistencies in how the police respond to vulnerable people; and,
- that some forces do not offer and trauma support to call handlers.

Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales

22. The Roads Policing inspection examined how effectively the road network of England and Wales is policed. HMICFRS sought to establish:

- are national and local roads policing strategies effective?;
- does capability and capacity match demand?;
- do the police engage effectively with the public and partners?; and,
- how well police officers are trained to deal with roads policing matters?

23. On 15th July 2020, HMICFRS published their 'Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales' report. The findings of this report are as follows:

- some good initiatives, but too often the effect of these was unclear due to a lack of analysis and evaluation;
- when it was identified, good practice wasn't shared across forces in an effective manner;
- support provided to national road safety campaigns wasn't consistent, which adversely affected their effectiveness; and,

- too often we found officers that hadn't been given the appropriate training and support to allow them to carry out a critical role.

PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards – Police to police collaboration

24. The 'PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards – Police to police collaboration' examined collaboration between police forces in England and Wales with neighbouring forces to share resources and core functions. These collaborations were brought in to help forces create efficiencies and provide a better service for the public. However, nationally forces are spending over a quarter of a billion pounds on collaborations every year without achieving the desired results.

25. On 21st July 2020, HMICFRS published the findings from its 'PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards – Police to police collaboration'. These are as follows:

- too many collaborations do not have a clear purpose or objective that is understood by all involved;
- some forces are not tracking the benefits of collaboration and fail to think beyond financial savings;
- complicated and bureaucratic decision-making undermines the effectiveness of many collaborations; and,
- some forces are failing to put people with the right skills in their collaborations and are not effectively sharing learning.

26. Please find below the following link which will direct you to the Section 55 responses presented to HMICFRS by the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Darlington and Durham:

<https://www.durhampcc.gov.uk/YourPCC/Accountability/HMICFRS-Inspections.aspx>,

These will provide members of the Panel with all of the associated Durham Constabulary updates in relation to HMICFRS reports.

Comment on inspection reports

27. The inspection reports detail both national and local themes respectively. We take all Recommendations and areas for improvement seriously. I am confident that these are being dealt with appropriately, with the aim to improve methods of working and the effectiveness and efficiency of Durham Constabulary. Where the Force may operate

differently to some recommendations, I am satisfied that there is a strong rationale behind doing so.

Known inspection schedule 2020

28. Some elements of planned thematic inspections for 2019/20 may be integrated into the PEEL all-force inspection programme; some may also be included in the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Plan. It is important to note that thematic inspections are still an essential part of the programme of work and will continue to take place alongside the PEEL inspections.

2020/21 inspection programme:

- The policing response to COVID-19 (Durham Constabulary have already been selected for this);
- joint inspection of the investigation and prosecution of rape cases;
- proposed investigation area of super-complaints; and,
- Initial scoping for potential thematic inspections for 2021/22 which will potentially include issues of race and disproportionality (issues surrounding these areas will inevitably be touched upon throughout the current inspection programme).

29. HMICFRS will also continue their rolling programmes on child protection, Youth Offending Teams and crime data integrity. Crime data integrity inspections assess whether police forces record and categorise crimes correctly. This current programme of inspection is due to finish this financial year. Additionally, HMICFRS started thematic work on county lines and TACT (Terrorism Act custody suites) in 2018/19.

30. The force are expecting an integrated PEEL assessment in 2020, but this is not yet confirmed.

31. The force have submitted their Force Management Statement 3, which simplifies, strengthens and streamlines the information that forces are asked to provide to HMICFRS.

Recommendations

32. That the Panel notes the content of the inspection report.

33. The Panel notes that all HMICFRS inspections were postponed due to the initial Covid-19 emergency, but they are due to resume in October 2020.

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

N/A

Staffing

N/A

Equality and Diversity

N/A

Accommodation

N/A

Crime and Disorder

N/A

Children's Act 2004

N/A

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

N/A

Environment

N/A

Collaboration and Partnerships

There will be a renewed focus upon ensuring collaborations are working as effectively as possible and in line with national guidance measures.

Value for Money and Productivity

N/A

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The emergence of Covid-19 and its impacts upon policing will have an impact upon future Police and Crime Plan priorities.

Commissioning

N/A

Other risks

N/A

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