

Police and Crime Panel

19th July 2021

HMICFRS inspections

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner



Purpose

1. To brief the Police and Crime Panel on the findings of the recent inspections/ report by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that have required a PCC comment, listed below:
 - An inspection of how effectively the police deal with protests
 - The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020/ Custody services in a COVID-19 environment
 - Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic- 2021
 - Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the police response to victims of modern slavery

Individual inspections and findings

An inspection of how effectively the police deal with protests

2. The inspection's overarching findings are as follows:
 - Ensuring that police forces consider the levels of disruption or disorder above which enforcement action will be considered;
 - Improving the way that police assess the impact of protests, to help them understand fully the impact on local residents, visitors to the area, businesses, and the critical infrastructure;
 - Improving the quality of police intelligence on protests, particularly intelligence about those who seek to bring about political or social change in a way that involves unlawful behaviour or criminality;
 - Supporting forces to use live facial recognition technology in a way that improves police efficiency and effectiveness, while addressing public concerns about the use of such technology; and
 - Equipping police commanders with up to date, accessible guidance, and a greater understanding of human rights law.

3. The inspection report details national themes. Durham Constabulary currently adhere to all national guidance and regulations regarding the policing of protests. There is also a command dedicated to strategic policing requirements and organisational resilience.

The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020/ Custody services in a COVID-19 environment

4. The inspection's overarching findings are as follows:
 - Forces must immediately make sure that police officers understand and correctly implement guidance for managing registered sex offenders during the pandemic;
 - Forces must immediately ensure they are following self-isolation guidance when staff come into contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms; and
 - Within six months, forces must assess the sustainability of any temporary measures made during the pandemic that change the way they work.
5. Durham Constabulary were one of the forces inspected and feedback and findings have been positive.

Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic- 2021

6. The inspection's overarching findings are as follows:
 - immediately review why so many domestic abuse cases are discontinued, and whether more can be done to support victims who are particularly vulnerable;
 - ensure that domestic abuse victims who are waiting for court hearings are safeguarded and can continue to access support;
 - work with partners and domestic abuse victims to understand why many victims choose not to report to the police, and to breakdown barriers to reporting; and
 - ensure that new practices adopted during the pandemic, such as online contact with victims, are properly monitored for quality and safety.
7. Durham Constabulary work closely with the OPCC on victim care for victims of domestic abuse. A range of mechanisms are, and have been in place, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which enable the OPCC to monitor the response by both the Police and our commissioned service providers in relation to domestic abuse. Returns are also being submitted to the Ministry of Justice on a regular basis in respect of any issues being experienced by our commissioned services. Additionally, the Domestic Abuse Best Practice framework works to address disengagement, vulnerability, and evidence led prosecutions. There has also been an increase in the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and additional remote evidence link capability which has increased accessibility for victims.

Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the police response to victims of modern slavery

8. The report's overarching findings are as follows:
 - ensure staff have access to training and specialist knowledge, and understand victim support arrangements;
 - allocate modern slavery investigations to teams and individuals with the right skills and experience; and
 - work together with police and crime commissioners to understand what support victims of modern slavery need.

9. Durham Constabulary are working to provide further assurance on the topics raised in the report. There are a series of work strands ongoing and while the numbers of Modern Slavery Human Trafficking victims are small, the importance to support and investigate is acknowledged. The Force continue to work closely with the PCC on these issues and awaits further national guidance which will further facilitate addressing issues.

General comment on inspection reports

10. 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.

11. 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: [HMICFRS Inspections | Durham Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner \(durham-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://durham-pcc.gov.uk/HMICFRS%20Inspections%20-%20Durham%20Police,%20Crime%20&%20Victims'%20Commissioner)

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

Proposed inspection programme and 2021/22 consultation

12. HMICFRS currently have a proposed inspection programme and are now out to consultation for scoping the next set of thematic inspections.

13. 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 new model integrated PEEL inspections.

2021/22 proposed thematic inspection focuses:

- Rape;
 - Domestic abuse;
 - Digital Forensics;
 - Advancing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in policing;
 - Ethnic Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System; and
 - Serious Youth Violence.
14. At the time of writing there are no confirmed thematic inspections for Durham Constabulary.
15. The Force is currently undergoing an integrated PEEL assessment.
16. 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.

Changes to HMICFRS methodology

17. HMICFRS have changed the methodology of the PEEL inspections to move to a rolling programme of force inspections rather than an annual publication for every force. The intent is that forces will be inspected in groups of 3 forces at a time with a corresponding rolling programme of publications.
18. HMICFRS will be using a continuous assessment methodology and referral to the Force Management Statement to gather evidence and insight about the force.
19. Durham is in the first inspection group following a group of 3 pilot forces. As part of this process, all pillars of PEEL (Effectiveness, Efficiency, Legitimacy and Leadership) will be assessed in one integrated inspection and covered as considerations in each of 12 specific question areas (see Appendix 1 below). The 12 questions are grouped into 3 areas of Organisational, Operational and Public Service.
20. A grading will be given to each question individually as part of the assessment with no single grading. HMICFRS have also moved to a 5-point grading system from a 4-point scale:
- Outstanding
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Requires Improvement
 - Inadequate

Recommendations

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

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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