

Agenda Item 05

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

30 November 2017

HMICFRS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide members of the Committee with oversight of HMIC recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

Since the last meeting in September, HMICFRS have been consulting forces on the introduction of Force Management Statements, which they hope will form part of an integrated PEEL Inspection from next year. This consultation has come to PCC's as well as forces and is running until 22 December.

The force has now received a definitive list from HMICFRS of the recommendations held by them against WMP. Work is in hand to reconcile this list with records held by the force to update and sign off as many recommendations as possible.

Inspections completed since the last meeting

HMICFRS were in force between 25 and 28 September conducting fieldwork for the PEEL Effectiveness Inspection. HMICFRS inspecting the force in relation to Vulnerability, Serious & Organised Crime and Specialist Capabilities.

A hot debrief was held on 6 October when initial findings and updates to previous recommendations were discussed with the inspectors. It is anticipated that the force will receive the inspection report for pre-publication checks at the end of January, and that the report should be published in March.

Inspection reports received since the last meeting

Abuse of position for a sexual purpose

On 5 October, HMICFRS published a national report following a national cause of concern being identified in forces' ability to seek intelligence on potential abuse of position for sexual gain. HMICFRS assessed forces' plans on a number of criteria and found inconsistent progress across the country. The force has received a letter setting out HMICFRS's assessment of WMP's plans.

HMICFRS found that the plans submitted in response to their recommendation were comprehensive, although they felt that they did not fully reflect the national strategy agreed at the National Police Chiefs' Council in April 2017. They found evidence of a review of the capability and capacity of the counter-corruption unit, improvements to IT systems' monitoring capability and initiatives to seek intelligence from those organisations that support vulnerable people. At the time of the review these pieces of work had yet to begin.

HMICFRS will return to the topic in 2018 and beyond.

Stolen freedom: the policing response to modern slavery and human trafficking

This is a national report that was published on 24 October following a commission from the Home Secretary to inspect the police's response to the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in England and Wales.

Fieldwork was carried out in ten police forces as part of the inspection. WMP was one of those visited, between 27 February and 1 March this year. The report contains the following recommendations for all police forces.

Leadership

Within twelve months, forces should review their leadership and governance arrangements for modern slavery and human trafficking, to ensure that:

- senior leaders prioritise the response to modern slavery and human trafficking;
- every incident of modern slavery identified to police is allocated appropriate resources with the skills, experience and capacity to investigate it effectively;
- forces develop effective partnership arrangements to co-ordinate activity in order to share information and safeguard victims; and

- performance and quality assurance measures are in place to allow senior leaders to assess the nature and quality of the service provided to victims.

Intelligence

Within six months, forces should have in place active information-sharing agreements with other agencies to facilitate speedy exchange of intelligence 86 and in order to safeguard victims better and to identify suspects as early as possible

Victim identification and initial response

Immediately, forces should ensure that all victims carrying out criminal acts under compulsion attributable to slavery or exploitation are afforded the protection of early and continuing consideration of the applicability of the section 45 defence.

Immediately, forces should take steps to ensure they are fully compliant with the NRM process as it evolves and are implementing the requirement placed upon them under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to notify the Home Office of any individual suspected to be an adult victim of modern slavery or human trafficking.

Crime recording

Immediately, forces should take steps to ensure they fully comply with national crime recording standard (NCRS) requirements for offences identified as modern slavery and human trafficking and that sufficient audit capacity is available to the force crime registrar to provide reassurance that each force is identifying and managing any gaps in its crime-recording accuracy for these types of offences.

Investigation

Immediately, forces should ensure that allegations or indications of modern slavery and human trafficking are thoroughly investigated and effectively supervised by teams and individuals with the skills and experience to undertake them (this should include the use where appropriate of joint intelligence teams and other means to obtain intelligence and evidence from agencies overseas).

Prevention

Immediately, forces should review their use of preventative powers under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to ensure that opportunities to restrict the activities of those deemed to pose a clear threat to others in respect of modern slavery and human trafficking offences are exploited.

PEEL Efficiency

The national and force PEEL Efficiency reports were published on 9 November.

There was one all forces recommendation, which was:

- By September 2018, chief constables should produce an ambitious plan to improve digitally-enabled services within their force. The Home Office, National Police Chiefs' Council and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners should support the development of these plans by establishing a national framework which allows for the provision of digitally enabled services across force boundaries.

In addition there was an Area for Improvement for the force, as follows:

- The force should ensure that it has sufficient resources available in the control room to fulfil its resourcing model, and so to meet its demand, while also taking into account the wellbeing of its workforce.

A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse

This national report, which was published on 14 November, is the third in a series of thematic reports which consider the response the police service provides to victims of domestic abuse. In 2014, HMRCFRS found significant weaknesses in the police response to victims of domestic abuse.

In 2015, HMICFRS found that the police service had come to see tackling domestic abuse as a priority – with domestic abuse increasingly becoming everyone's business. But they concluded that there was still more to be done.

This third report draws on the 2016 PEEL effectiveness inspection findings, and highlights continued improvement. HMICFRS observed a continued desire to improve the service provided to victims of domestic abuse. Increasingly, officers and staff feel that domestic abuse is a priority.

However, this inspection has highlighted areas in which performance has declined since 2015. Forces need to identify and understand the causes of decline and the actions required to correct it. Many forces still do not have a good understanding of their performance in responding to domestic abuse incidents.

The variation in performance in relation to domestic abuse rates and outcomes suggests inconsistency across the service in the understanding and provision of the response to domestic abuse. HMICFRS will continue to monitor the response of the service to domestic abuse in 2018.

There were no recommendations from this report.

Outstanding recommendations currently graded Red

There is one recommendation that is currently graded as Red:

PEEL Effectiveness 2016

Cause of concern

The force's response to domestic abuse is a cause of concern to HMIC. The force policy which allows an officer discretion to complete a DASH risk assessment in some crimes and incidents does not provide confidence that risk is always assessed appropriately. This is an enduring cause of concern from HMIC's report on vulnerability in 2015 and is one of the recommendations from HMIC's report on its domestic abuse inspection in 2014 that still needs to be implemented. In cases where a DASH risk assessment is not completed the officer should record an assessment on the crime management system. HMIC found that officers are not consistently completing a DASH in circumstances where force policy requires that they should do so. This means that some victims of domestic abuse who may be at risk of harm are not being appropriately risk-assessed.

Recommendation

To address this cause of concern, HMIC recommends the force should immediately take steps to ensure that:

- **there is effective supervision of the initial risk assessment process, specifically in relation to the completion of DASH risk assessment in appropriate cases.**

This recommendation is addressed by the force as part of the wider Vulnerability Improvement Delivery Plan, led by Chief Superintendent Bell. The latest progress update from the plan is as follows:

“The Force Executive Team agreed on 25 July that we would risk-assess all DA incidents. A Task & Finish group has been set up and a full implementation/project plan, policy rewrite and communications plan is now completed. The policy is now signed off and in place with an implementation date of the end of October.”

Overview of reports for review

Policing in Austerity – Meeting the Challenge

This was a national inspection, with an additional local focus for each force, which was published in July 2014.

The overall judgement for WMP was that the force was outstanding, however there were the following all force recommendations made:

- All Chief Constables and PCCs should review their plans to deliver savings to ensure they are doing all they can to continue to reduce crime and protect the front line while balancing their budgets. They should use the data and information contained in this report, and in HMIC's Value for Money profiles, when conducting their reviews

- Chief Constables and PCCs in forces planning to deliver less than 10% of their savings through collaboration should assess whether there is scope to improve on this position. HMIC will follow up the assessments in the autumn.
- Chief Constables and PCCs in forces that are planning to reduce the proportion of their workforce and/or police officers on the front line should assess whether they have taken the decisive action seen in many forces in order to maintain their crime fighting capacity. HMIC will follow up the assessments in the autumn.
- In preparation for the next spending round period all Chief Constables and PCCs should review their plans for collaboration. In particular they should consider whether there is scope to deliver better value for money and improved capability and capacity through joint working with other forces, the public and/or the private sector.

The force position was that these different aspects of the recommendation would be addressed holistically as part of the WMP2020 Programme. The recently received and updated list of recommendations shows that no further action is required by HMIC in relation to the recommendations from this report.

The reason for this is that this area of activity has subsequently been inspected each year, most recently in HMICFRS's PEEL Efficiency inspections. The Efficiency report has already been mentioned above.

West Midlands Police: Crime Data Integrity inspection 2017

This report was published on 7 September 2017. The overall judgement of HMICFRS was that the force was Inadequate.

There were four recommendations and two areas for improvement from the report, which have been allocated to the Force Crime Registrar, C/Insp Howat.

The force progress in respect of these recommendations was sent to the OPCC on 2 November in order to inform the 56-day response to the publication of the report. That response is attached for information.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee to note the contents of the report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Force Response – CDI Report 2017