



Agenda Item 07

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE
28th September 2020

HMICFRS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. BACKGROUND

Since the last report HMICFRS engagement with the force has increased. HMICFRS intends to resume significant activity in October 2020.

The force has been notified of two forthcoming inspections. The first inspection is in relation to Covid-19 which will assess and identify the following:

- (a) How policing is responding to the Covid-19 crisis;
- (b) What is working well and what is being learnt;
- (c) How the sector is dealing with the problems it faces; and
- (d) Opportunities to make sustainable improvements to the service.

HMICFRS will highlight good practice, identify areas for improvement and make national recommendations.

All forces will be required to participate in sharing key documents and also be required to carry out a self-assessment. A number of forces will also be identified for further inspection.

The second inspection that is relevant to this force is a joint thematic inspection into the police and CPS response to rape. The lead inspectorate is HMICFRS and they will be working with Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI). The inspection will be conducted in two phases:

Phase one: What are the barriers to the progression of rape reports up to the decision to charge? WMP is one of six forces that will be inspected in phase one. The force has been asked to provide a number of documents and a case file review will be undertaken in November 2020.

Phase two: What are the barriers to the progression of rape reports in the criminal justice system following charge?

Inspections completed since the last meeting

Since the last committee meeting there have been no inspections in force.

Inspection reports published since the last meeting

The following inspection reports have been published since the last committee meeting:

The State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales in 2019 report was published 2 July 2020. In his annual assessment of policing in England and Wales for 2019, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary Sir Thomas Winsor recognised the sensitivity and dedication of the police service in collaboratively responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. He encouraged police forces to continue to work in collaboration in order to provide a more effective and efficient service to the public.

There was recognition that demand changed during the Covid-19 emergency with increases in the number of crimes reported online rather than in person. Criminals also used technology during this time to defraud people and by Mid-April Google reported blocking over 18 million scam emails about Covid-19 each day.

It was acknowledged that there will be many lessons for policing and other Criminal Justice systems to learn from this pandemic as new ways of working were quickly identified to ensure that justice was being delivered.

Planned increases in resources need careful handling, as although the police service will be able to meet more of the demands it faces, there should be caution that police effectiveness is not solely measured by the number of officers or by percentage changes in the volume of recorded or detected crime and that success needs to be measured more intelligently.

There was recognition that recruiting and training officers in high numbers will present challenges for forces.

There was also acknowledgment that there are deep rooted problems with the funding formula which the uplift funding won't address.

There was a view that at its core, the demand for policing considerably outstrips supply. Sir Thomas expressed his view that the 43 force structure needed reform in order to meet modern policing challenges and obtain true effectiveness and efficiency with policing and other public services needing greater integration.

There was recognition that evidence based sustainable approaches were needed to solve policing problems.

The A call for help – Police contact management through call handling and control rooms in 2018/19 report was published 9 July 2020. This was a thematic report that addressed call handling and control room management for all police forces.

The report summarised common areas where forces were not performing well and general themes in control rooms such as call demand, complexity of calls and caller's needs, sickness levels within control rooms, retention of staff and consistent application of risk assessments. HMICFRS outlined eight steps that all forces have been asked to progress. Whilst these are not recommendations, progress will be assessed during the PEEL 2021/22 inspections.

An inspection of the National Crime Agency's criminal intelligence function report was published on the 14th July 2020 whereby HMICFRS examined the National Crime Agency's (NCA) effectiveness at meeting one of its two core responsibilities, the criminal intelligence function. The report contained four recommendations which were all for the NCA to progress.

The Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales report was published on the 15th July 2020. HMICFRS examined how effectively the road network of England and Wales was policed. They sought to establish whether national and local roads policing strategies were effective, did capability and capacity match demand, does the police engage effectively with the public and partners and how well are police officers trained to deal with roads policing matters?

West Midlands police was one of seven forces that were visited by the inspectorate. The force was cited positively three times within the report namely that Strategic leaders, officers and staff were all able to demonstrate a strong commitment to roads policing and the positive effect that this had on road safety, HMICFRS were pleased to find that senior officers clearly recognised the benefits of analysis and recognition that the force had made a considerable investment in its analytical resources, to make sure that enough were dedicated to roads policing.

The PEEL spotlight report: The Hard Yards – Police to police collaboration report was published on the 21st July 2020. HMICFRS assessed six police collaborations: The seven Force Strategic Alliance (7F), The South West tri Force and Major Crime Investigations Team (MCIT), The East Midlands Criminal Justice Service (EMCJS). All Wales, the North Western Underwater Marine Unit and the North West Motorway Police Group (NWMPG). HMICFRS visited the forces in 2012 and then again in 2018/19 to assess how well the collaborations were working.

It highlighted that nationally, forces are spending over a quarter of a billion pounds on collaborations every year but that too many police collaborations are failing, or not giving the results they should, costing forces money, time and effort.

The report identified good practice and areas for improvement for forces to take into consideration. There were two recommendations for the NPCC, College of policing and Home office.

3. FORCE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Work continues on the Force Management Statement – FMS3 and it is anticipated that this will be completed by October 2020.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The force is reviewing its recommendations and their rag status.

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS