



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner



Agenda Item 6

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

7 January 2021

HMICFRS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. BACKGROUND

Since the last report, the force has carried out a comprehensive review of its HMICFRS recommendations through a number of panel meetings which were chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. 98 recommendations were reviewed overall, 6 are rag rated red, 54 are rag rated amber and 38 are rag rated green. A number of the recommendations have been signed off internally by the panel as they have either been completed or have transitioned into Business as Usual practices. These will be subsequently shared with HMICFRS for sign off by the Inspectorate too.

This process shall be repeated every six months.

Inspections completed since the last meeting

Since the last report there are have been three inspections that have taken place.

The first inspection was in relation to Covid-19 which assessed and sought to 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. Although not selected as one of the forces to have a full inspection, West Midlands police has provided a comprehensive set of documents which have been assessed by HMICFRS and will inform the report that is likely to be published next year.

The second inspection was an urgent thematic inspection commissioned by the Home Secretary looking into how effectively the police manage protests. This was in advance of the Protection of the Police and Public Bill, the introduction of which is currently scheduled for January 2021 and which is likely to include proposals for additional police powers e.g. to seize 'lock-on' equipment. The inspection looked at areas such as management of intelligence, planning and preparation and collaboration. The preliminary findings for the force were that the WMP manages protests very well, there is good use of intelligence and partner working and the force provided a proportionate response to the protests.

The third inspection was a joint thematic inspection into the police and CPS response to rape. The lead inspectorate was HMICFRS who were 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 was inspected in phase one. The force was asked to provide a number of documents and a case file review was undertaken in November 2020. The preliminary findings of the inspection identified a number of points both positive and developmental which the force is reviewing and progressing through its dedicated force lead.

Phase two: What are the barriers to the progression of rape reports in the criminal justice system following charge? This will take place next year and HMICFRS has indicated that they will be inspecting a different set of forces.

Inspection reports published since the last meeting

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

HMICFRS Published the **National Crime Agency inspection - An inspection of the National Crime Agency's relationship with regional organised crime units** on the 12th November. They sought to establish how effectively the NCA works with the ROCU network to tackle serious and organised crime and found that these two organisations work well together in some areas, including the specialist services. HMICFRS made seven recommendations that are all for either the NCA or other agencies to progress.

The Pre-charge bail and released under investigation: striking a balance report was published on the 8th December which had the findings of the HMICFRS and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service inspection of the police and CPS's responses to pre-charge bail changes and the use of 'released under investigation'. There are ten recommendations, six solely for other agencies, two for police forces and one jointly for forces and other agencies. The latter three will be progressed in force through a nominated department and lead.

This report was published in conjunction with the **Research into victim and suspect experiences of changes to the Police and Crime Act 2017** report. HMICFRS commissioned Britain Thinks to carry out qualitative research exploring victim and suspect experiences of changes made as a result of the Policing and Crime Act (PCA) 2017. The research supported the HMICFRS inspection, and aimed to explore:

- knowledge and awareness of the application of pre-charge bail or release under investigation (RUI); and
- The perceived impact of changes to the use of pre-charge bail in the PCA 2017 on victims and suspects.

The findings of this research reflected the views of 27 victims of crime and 20 professional representatives.

This research also provided wider insights into victims' experiences of the police and the criminal justice system.

The Committee is asked to note that HMICFRS has confirmed that the West Midlands police PEEL inspection will take place between the 14 June and 10th July. However, there will be much activity with the force between now and the inspection which is aimed at providing a better understanding of the force.

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

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS