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HM Inspector of Constabulary

Mr D Crompton
Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police

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Dear David

**Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time**

Between January and April 2014, HMIC carried out inspection fieldwork across all 43 forces in England and Wales. This inspection, called 'Making best use of police time' (now known as 'Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time') assessed three areas of police work. These were:

- how well forces are preventing crime and anti-social behaviour;

- how forces respond to reports of crime, including investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice; and

- how well forces are freeing up the time of their staff so they can focus on core policing functions.

Attached is an embargoed copy of the national thematic report for this inspection which will now be published by HMIC on Thursday 4 September 2014 at 00:01. This must not be published until this date and time.

The findings that specifically relate to your force are included in this letter. The initial findings were previously sent to you for factual accuracy checks and, where appropriate, have been amended following your response.

The majority of the inspection findings contained in the national thematic report do not identify individual forces. However electronic versions of the national report will link to the HMIC website where data on each force can be viewed.

We will revisit some of the evidence gathered during the 'Core business' inspection as part of the crime inspection for HMIC's Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) interim assessment.

All forces will be given the opportunity to provide an update. This updated evidence will be considered as part of the PEEL interim crime inspection, which is due to be published at the end of November.

**Preventing crime**

- The force is one of the few forces in England and Wales that has an overarching crime prevention strategy.

- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. In addition, HMIC found that the daily management meetings in the force were being used well to focus staff towards crime prevention activity.

- In addressing serious organised crime, the Force has adopted a hardened targeted approach which addresses the culture of guns and gangs through proactive engagement in all secondary schools across the Force area.

- The use of 'Optimal' as a crime prevention approach to reduce burglary dwelling is well embedded across the Force.

- HMIC noted the forces positive partnership arrangements in the delivery of preventative services based at the Lifewise Centre.

- The current intelligence process and products are not as strong as they could be, recognising the intelligence review is being implemented and is intended to improve the service provided.

- Although the force has an electronic database, that is updated with information that helps officers and staff prevent crime in neighbourhood, it is not being used as effectively as it could be. While we did find evidence of problem-solving, areas such as thorough evaluation and sharing of good practice were absent.

- HMIC found that the force have provided training to officers and staff who frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- The force would benefit from assessing the quality and quantity of prevention activity to ensure that prevention is given the appropriate level of activity in the force in comparison for example to detection and investigation.

- The force does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, but one based on a series of considerations including identifying the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy.

- HMIC found during reality testing that the lack of an attendance policy coupled with districts being able to prioritise different requirements can lead to a degree of confusion for call handling staff which may affect the quality of service to members of the public.

- HMIC observed that Automatic Resource Location Software (ARLS) is not being used to full capability within the FCR to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources and found a culture of 'Ask, not task' operating which is not the most efficient and effective way to deploy resources to incidents.

- HMIC found that the forces National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) data indicated a compliance rate of 69% (from a previous 27%) but the force do have an action plan in place to further improve on this position.

- The decision taken to close some crimes at the first point of contact would benefit from a re-examination as evidence was provided of crimes being re-opened and by district staff.

- The difficulty in integration between systems i.e. the incident system and crime system may present a risk to decision making at the first point of contact.

- During discussions and observations in the force's call-handling centre, the inspection team identified that the force does not consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims. The force needs to ensure that the necessary checks are in place so that all potential vulnerability factors, such as disability or race, are identified.

- HMIC could find no apparent link between the identification of repeat or vulnerable callers and any checking mechanism as to whether these are followed up by the districts.

**Crime recording and attendance**

- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways:

  Creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system; or directly recording crime onto the crime recording system, without creating an incident first.

  Although the force is able to identify how many crimes are recorded directly onto the crime recording system, it is not able to identify how many of those crimes it attends subsequently.

- HMIC found that the force has good checking and quality assurance processes in place in respect of calls and incident logs.

- During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations, including reports of crimes that were not attended. In certain cases, for crimes such as burglary dwellings, there was clear evidence of investigation and supervision. However, for other offences, such as theft from a motor vehicle, many of which

were not attended, some cases were found to have little evidence of meaningful investigation or supervision.

- HMIC found that the Integrated Offender Management scheme, in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities, to be well managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk.

- The force was unable to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail. Without this information, the force may be unable to ensure that it has effective arrangements to manage outstanding named suspects and offenders.

- A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer, provided clear evidence that activity had been documented and properly supervised in a number of cases.

**Freeing up time**

- HMIC identified that the force has a relatively good understanding of demand, and is taking steps to build up a more detailed insight of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.

- The force has carried out some work with other agencies to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police.

- HMIC found that the force needs to improve its processes for scanning for significant events that increase crime and ASB and put in place prevention plans, this appears a particular issue at musical events at medium size venues.

- HMIC noted that the resource allocation formula was last run in April 2013 and it is determined not just by demand but also takes into account factors such as political, financial, deprivation and the turnover of resources.

- The inspection found that the force does not have a thorough understanding of how staff are spending their time. Although some basic management information is available, staff are unclear about what is expected of them.

- The force has positive ways to recognise good performance from its staff and officers. However, HMIC found UPP is viewed by some staff as problematic and exceedingly bureaucratic with a perceived lack of support. HMIC understands this is recognised by the forces who are looking to address the issue.

- The force is not able to identify the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes introduced or as a result of new technology it has implemented.

- HMIC noted that the forces District Review Team have identified and commenced implementation of 62 recommendations to reduce failure demand. These recommendations have followed the 'systems thinking' methodology and included consultation with staff.

- The use of mobile devices, (such as tablets and mobile phones) to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol is limited.

- HMIC notes that the force, in partnership with Humberside Police, has recently identified suitable funding streams to purchase and implement 300 new tablets to pilot improvements in the forces use of mobile devices.

- HMIC were informed by staff that they have not been involved in the consultation and introduction of new technology and the Mobile Information Programme appears to have not been fully communicated to the frontline.

- HMIC were told by frontline staff that whilst the use of body worn video (BWV) is identified as a positive move there is a frustration at the pace of implementation and availability which they see will enhance their role.

- HMIC were informed by staff that they felt the existing force IT infrastructure is in need of improvement prior to any additional functionality being added. HMIC witnessed the time delay to log onto a desktop computer and focus groups quoted up to 46 minutes to complete this task in some areas.

- HMIC found that the introduction of direct deployment via force issue Blackberry's as opposed to airwaves can lead to confusion and has an impact on the capacity of the Blackberry battery.

Yours sincerely

**Roger Baker**
**HM Inspector of Constabulary**