



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

# HMIC's approach to monitoring forces

**An overview for the public, forces and local policing bodies**

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# Why does HMIC monitor forces?



Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary (HMIs) routinely monitor the performance of all police forces in order to ensure that:

- emerging problems with the efficiency or effectiveness of individual forces are spotted quickly, and Chief Constables and local policing bodies<sup>1</sup> are aware of those problems and are taking corrective action; and
- if problems with the efficiency or effectiveness of a force are enduring and there is a low prospect of them being resolved, those problems are raised formally with the local policing body, so that they can respond.

Routine monitoring identifies apparent issues for closer scrutiny. Some of these will be outside the control of the force and local policing body, or will already have been tackled; but some may be indicators of systemic or management failings in the force. The decision on whether to follow up with the force and local policing body over any concerns rests with the HMI who leads on HMIC's relationship with that force area.

This document summarises:

- the process HMIs follow in monitoring, and the steps they can take if they have concerns over force performance;
- the questions that HMIs ask about each force as part of routine monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness, and the kinds of information that they use to answer those questions; and
- how HMIC shares information about monitoring, including the role of the Crime and Policing Monitoring Group.

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<sup>1</sup> Police and crime commissioners for police areas outside London; the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime for the Metropolitan Police Service; and the City of London Corporation for the City of London Police.

# HMIC's monitoring process – overview

There are five stages in HMIC's monitoring process:

## 1. Routine monitoring

of all forces

## 2. In-depth analysis and monitoring by regional HMI

of those forces where routine monitoring identifies problems

## 3. Referral to the Crime and Policing Monitoring Group

if the HMI is concerned that a problem is at risk of not being resolved

## 4. Concerns raised publicly by HMIC

if the HMI has serious concerns that are not being resolved

## 5. Concerns escalated to the Home Secretary

in extreme cases, if significant concerns are not being addressed

Where there are concerns with the efficiency or effectiveness of a force, the key tests which the HMIs apply are:

- does the force recognise that there is a problem?
- what is the prospect that the force will succeed in tackling a problem (taking account, for example, of their capacity and capability)? and
- is the problem likely to be short lived, or enduring?

Each of these stages is set out in detail in the chart on the next two pages.

Monitoring process stage	1. Routine monitoring of all forces	2. In-depth analysis and monitoring by regional HMI of those forces where routine monitoring identifies problems
Involves	Reviewing the latest information on every force; highlighting apparent outliers and concerns for more in-depth analysis.	Confirmation or dismissal of apparent problems through in-depth analysis; monitoring of a force's progress in resolving actual problems.
Timescale	Quarterly review of latest information on each force – but supporting information updated as and when available, and HMIs and their teams carry out ongoing scanning for issues.	Not fixed, but in-depth analysis and monitoring not expected to go on for more than two quarters without decision about the need for a review at an external CPMG meeting.
Contact with the local policing body	Routine engagement between HMIs and local policing bodies, and sharing of summary reports and CPMG minutes.	Informal contact to discuss any concerns and understand the local policing body's perspective on them.
Contact with forces	None specifically, beyond routine engagement between HMIs and their teams with forces, and routine sharing of HMIC's summary reports and CPMG minutes.	Informal contact to explore apparent concerns and – where relevant – to monitor progress with resolution of problems. Representations invited from force to inform any decision to refer to a CPMG meeting.
Associated inspection activity	The results from HMIC's ongoing inspection activity feed into the monitoring process.	The results from ongoing inspection activity feed into the monitoring process. Local policing body may choose to commission an inspection.
Information for the public	Published force-level inspection reports and Crime & Policing Comparator website share as far as possible the information used in monitoring (albeit with some time lag).	None in addition to that already provided to reflect routine monitoring.  However, if an inspection is commissioned, results will be published.

### 3. Referral to the Crime & Policing Monitoring Group

if the HMI is concerned that a problem is at risk of not being resolved

### 4. Concerns raised publicly by HMIC

if the HMI has serious concerns that are not being resolved

### 5. Concerns escalated to the Home Secretary

in extreme cases, if significant concerns are not being addressed

Discussion of the HMI's concerns with the Crime & Policing Monitoring Group (CPMG) to ensure transparency and draw on their views.

Subject to HMI decision, but not normally earlier than two quarters after concern initially identified, to ensure that the force has time to respond.

Local policing body invited to the CPMG meeting to participate in the discussion about the force, and share their views with CPMG.

Chief Constable invited to the CPMG meeting to set out their understanding of the problems and describe the actions they are taking in response.

Local policing body may choose to commission an inspection. HMI reserves the right to inspect without a commission if appropriate.

None at this stage, beyond the information provided to reflect routine monitoring – on the grounds that information will be published if the HMI decides to escalate their concerns. However, if an inspection is carried out, the results will be published.

HMI writing formally (publicly) to the local policing body to set out their concerns and supporting evidence.

Subject to HMI decision, but normally only expected to be considered at the earliest following second review by the CPMG.

Local policing body invited to the CPMG meeting to participate in and hear the discussion about the force, and share their views with CPMG. HMI then decides whether to write formal, public letter following the meeting.

Chief Constable invited to the CPMG meeting and to make written representations. HMI then decides whether to write a formal, public, letter to the local policing body following the meeting.

Local policing body may choose to commission an inspection. HMI reserves the right to inspect without a commission if appropriate.

Public letter, covering the HMI's report setting out their concerns and the supporting evidence.

Escalating concerns to the Home Secretary so that he or she can consider whether to use powers of direction to prompt concerns to be resolved.

Subject to HMI decision, but normally only expected to be considered at the earliest following second review by the CPMG.

Correspondence with the Home Secretary shared with the local policing body.

Correspondence with the Home Secretary shared with the Chief Constable.

Local policing body or Home Secretary may commission an inspection.

To be decided on a case-by-case basis.

# The key questions HMIC asks in monitoring forces

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## Effectiveness : Crime and Public Protection

- How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?
- How effective is the force at investigating offending?
- How effective is the force at protecting those at greatest risk of harm?
- How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?
- How effective is the force at tackling serious, organised and complex crime?
- How effective is the force at meeting its commitments under the Strategic Policing Requirement?
- How effective is the force at proactively ensuring public safety?

## Effectiveness : Legitimacy

- What are the overall public perceptions of the force?
- How effective is the force at responding when a member of the public calls on them for service?
- How well is the force meeting its responsibility to treat people equally and without discrimination?
- Does the force's workforce act with integrity?
- Is the data and information that the police provide about their work of a high quality?

## Efficiency

- Is the force maximising the efficiency of its operational resources?
- Does the force have a secure financial position for the short and long term?
- Does the force have a sustainable workforce model for the Spending Review Period and beyond?
- Does the force have the leadership capacity that it needs?



# The information HMIC uses in monitoring forces

The key questions provide a guide to HMIs and their teams on the things to consider in monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of each force. Each key question we ask in monitoring is underpinned by a 'framework' which helps us answer that question. Each of these frameworks includes:

- more detailed 'diagnostic' questions, setting out what we would need to know, ideally, to make a basic assessment of the performance of a force in that area;
- a list of the potential indicators of the answers to those questions;
- where we might find information for those indicators – e.g. from analysis of routinely collected data; from our scheduled inspection programme; from our ongoing interactions with forces and local policing bodies; or – in some cases – only through targeted inspection work;
- guidance on how we might interpret the information we gather, so that we can distinguish between apparent performance (i.e. what some data analysis might indicate, e.g. a rise in crime) and actual performance (i.e. what is really going on, e.g. a change in crime recording practice, or an actual rise in the occurrence of crime).

With the help of the questions and indicators described in these frameworks, along with other information at their disposal, the HMIs form a view about whether they have any concerns with the performance of each force in each area of policing business.

The key questions and the detailed frameworks that support them are expected to develop over time, for example as a result of feedback on their use (from within and beyond HMIC), or as a result of the changing focus of the HMIC inspection programme. Furthermore, some of the frameworks are more detailed than others, reflecting the complexity of the area concerned, the availability of information, or the progress HMIC has made so far in developing our approach to monitoring in that area.

For more information about HMIC's approach to monitoring, and to find out more about the monitoring frameworks described above, go to [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk) and search for "monitoring".

# How HMIC communicates its approach to monitoring

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## For the public

- We publish our approach to monitoring on our website, along with the frameworks we use to underpin monitoring.
- We publish basic analysis of much of the data we use in routine monitoring on our Crime and Policing Comparator website.
- Where we have significant concerns about a force's performance, we say so publicly.

## For forces

- We share our approach to monitoring, along with the frameworks we use to underpin monitoring.
- We share analysis of key data we use in routine monitoring on a regular basis, highlighting where a force is an outlier.
- HMIs and their teams visit forces regularly.

## For local policing bodies

- We share our approach to monitoring, along with the frameworks we use to underpin monitoring.
- We share analysis of key data we use in routine monitoring on a regular basis, highlighting where a force is an outlier.
- HMIs meet regularly with local policing bodies and discuss force performance.

## For other organisations

(For example, the national policing business areas, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office and the College of Policing)

- We hold a Crime and Policing Monitoring Group meeting every three months to discuss HMIC's latest views on the performance of forces, and any concerns that the HMIs might have. Local policing bodies and forces are also represented at these meetings.



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