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Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

3 September 2014

Ms S. Davenport
Chief Constable
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Dear Suzette

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

- Preventative policing is a key theme in the police and crime plan. Each of the plan's priorities contains preventative elements and road shows have been held with staff to ensure they understand how they contribute to the force priorities in their day-to-day roles. The police and crime commissioner and chief officers are looking to embed prevention activity in the new operating model. An overarching crime prevention strategy may provide greater clarity to officers, staff and the public on the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and how improvements will be achieved.
- HMIC found some good examples of where the constabulary has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. For example, in Tewkesbury the co-location of police and key partners clearly contributed to the prevention of crime and ASB. In addition, HMIC found that the daily management meetings in the constabulary were being used well to focus staff on crime prevention activity. There is an efficient briefing process at two levels; the victim, offender, location, time model (VOLT), prioritises issues at a local level and is supplemented via the force-wide briefing system.
- Although HMIC found evidence of good neighbourhood preventative activity taking place, the constabulary does not have a database to assist officers and staff. This means that the constabulary cannot effectively evaluate work or share good practice easily.
- Although the constabulary has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to all staff who deal frequently with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. The constabulary is in the process of formulating a strategy to deliver phased training which would promote opportunities to prevent crimes and provide a better quality of service to the public.
- The constabulary does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, but one based on a series of considerations including the identification of the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. HMIC understands that the force has had some consultation with the public in relation to this policy.
- During discussions and observations in the call-handling centre, the inspection team found that call-handlers did not consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims. The constabulary needs to ensure that the necessary checks are in place so that all potential vulnerability factors, for example, relating to disability or race, are identified. This was also highlighted in our inspection of the constabulary's approach to dealing with domestic abuse (December 2013). In our re-inspection in June 2014 this area was being addressed as part of an action plan.

Crime recording and attendance

- Crime is recorded by the force, initially by creating an incident on the command and control system, STORM, and subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system. The force has systems in place to identify how many crimes it attends.
- 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, there was limited 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 their communities, was well-managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk. The value and implications of the integrated offender management could be better marketed to the wider organisation to exploit its potential.
- The constabulary was able to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed, as well as those who had failed to answer police bail. The inspection team found that the force has clear, robust arrangements to manage its outstanding named suspects and offenders.

Freeing up time

- The constabulary has a limited understanding of demand and how its resources are distributed. The constabulary acknowledges this and has established a new post, working to the deputy chief constable, to take steps to build a more detailed insight into demand, particularly in relation to analyses of incidents and policing activity. Additionally, more work can be done in identifying and addressing those tasks that are not believed to be the responsibility of the police.
- Work to address demand profiles is being undertaken as a part of the new operating model programme which seeks to understand the force's demand profiles in detail; an early part of the work has been the establishment of the incident assessment unit, which aims to improve the investigation and management of crime by the early identification of appropriate investigative resources. Thirty officers with investigative experience have completed a one month training programme and start providing a 24/7 initial investigation service on the 24 July 2014.
- Although some basic management information is available, the constabulary does not have a thorough understanding of how staff are spending their time; staff would benefit from greater clarity about what is expected of them.

- The constabulary is not able to identify the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes or new technology.
- The use of mobile devices (such as tablets and mobile phones) to enable officers to access constabulary systems while on patrol is currently limited.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Sharpling', written in a cursive style.

Drusilla Sharpling
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Wales and Western Region