

Andy Cooke QPM DL

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue
Services

Stephen Watson QPM
Chief Constable
Greater Manchester Police

Cc:

The Rt Hon Andrew M Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester

The Rt Hon the Baroness Beverley Hughes of Stretford
Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire

28 October 2022

Dear Chief Constable Watson,

Greater Manchester Police – PEEL Cause of Concern revisit, September 2022

Background

Between 6 and 17 September 2021, we inspected Greater Manchester Police as part of our PEEL programme. During our inspection, we identified three causes of concern:

On 30 September 2021, we reported one cause of concern, responding to the public, as an accelerated cause of concern. On 3 March 2022, we published the remaining causes of concern (investigating crime, and building, protecting and supporting the workforce) in our [PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#).

Responding to the public

Our inspection found:

“Greater Manchester Police is failing to respond appropriately to some people who are vulnerable and at risk. This means that it is missing some opportunities to safeguard victims and secure evidence at the scene. This enduring service failure has given cause for concern about public safety in Greater Manchester.”

We made the following recommendations:

- The force should immediately develop a plan to promptly improve its capability and capacity to deploy resources to incidents assessed as requiring either an immediate (within 15 minutes) or prompt (within an hour) police response.
- Within three months, the force should review its graded response policy, escalation policy and quality of THRIVE risk assessment to support its ability to provide an appropriate response to vulnerability and risk.
- Within three months, the force should review and implement a command-and-control system which is able properly to identify and allocate resources in a timely manner to meet demand.
- Within three months, the force should introduce a performance framework to support its call handling and despatch staff to improve efficiency and support its workforce.

Investigating crime

Our inspection found: “The force does not investigate crime, supervise investigations or update victims to an acceptable standard.”

Our recommendations were that within three months the force should make sure:

- officers investigate crimes in a timely manner, and investigation plans are completed at an early stage to give direction and establish lines of inquiry;
- investigations are actively and regularly supervised to check progress and to check that all proportionate lines of inquiry are pursued;
- victims are regularly updated in line with the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales](#);
- victims’ personal statements are offered when appropriate and recorded; and
- the force pursues evidence-led prosecutions when appropriate if a victim withdraws support for the investigation.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Our inspection found: “Greater Manchester Police doesn’t currently have the arrangements in place to support and build its workforce.”

Our recommendations stated that within six months Greater Manchester Police should:

- work with its workforce to understand the risks and threats to staff well-being, and use this to inform the actions it takes;
- understand the performance of its workforce, support staff development and deal with poor performance fairly and consistently; and

- fairly and consistently identify those with the potential to become senior leaders and nurture and encourage them to gain the skills for future leadership roles.

Progress review of identified causes of concern

We reviewed progress against the identified causes of concern between 9 August and 23 September 2022. Our revisit was conducted both remotely and by unannounced on-site visits. During the revisit, we interviewed staff from across the force, observed force meetings and reviewed a range of documents and data. A summary of our findings is below.

Responding to the public

I am pleased with Greater Manchester Police's response to the accelerated cause of concern. It declared a critical incident and developed a tactical plan to increase capability and capacity for responding to calls for service. The force arranged [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) peer support, which provided recommendations on how the force could improve its control room. The force introduced a dashboard of performance measurements, along with governance oversight, so it could properly understand demand and the resources required to respond effectively. It implemented a new graded response policy and command and control process in February 2022.

Since then, we have been monitoring the force's performance and found that the force has significantly reduced the backlog of incidents awaiting a response from the 2,700 we found in September 2021 to approximately 600–800 at any given time. This improvement has been sustained since February.

The force has significantly reduced the time it takes to answer both emergency and 101 calls from the public. During our monitoring and revisit, we found that it answered most 999 calls within the national target of 10 seconds, and the average time to answer 999 calls during September 2022 was 7 seconds. The force has also halved the time it takes to answer 101 calls to an average of 1 minute and 4 seconds.

The new graded response policy, supported by the call handler risk assessment THRIVE, has resulted in most emergency calls being responded to within the force's target of 15 minutes. Attendance times at incidents graded as requiring a 'prompt' response (within an hour) has significantly improved since our last inspection. However, this area of performance remains a challenge for the force with the average attendance still taking around 2 hours and 15 minutes. The force has introduced mental health joint response vehicles, staffed by a police officer and mental health professional, in each district. Officers spoke positively about how this supported them when attending incidents involving vulnerable people in crisis.

The force has introduced an appointment system for incidents assessed as low risk. During our review, we found effective management and allocation of resources to meet these appointments with victims of crime.

The force has increased the number of call handlers and despatchers in its contact centre, with plans to continue to recruit until April 2023. It also has performance management and support structures for its control room workforce, changes staff spoke positively about.

The force now has a detailed understanding of the demand for service. It understands risk effectively at the time of an initial call and has significantly improved its response to those who are vulnerable. Its call handling and despatch staff commented that they have a greater understanding of vulnerability and risk in the significantly reduced incidents waiting for a police response.

In summary, the force has, in the main, addressed the concerns I had in relation to how it answers calls for service, assesses risk and responds to vulnerable people. We will continue to monitor its performance and look for further improvements as part of our ongoing PEEL programme of inspection.

Investigating crime

At the time of our last inspection, we found that the force had significantly high numbers of open investigations. This meant that officers were overwhelmed with investigations while still trying to address the high levels of incidents still awaiting a response.

The force has improved the understanding of investigation demand and improved governance and performance in this area. It has directed additional resources at the high number of open investigations and focused on completing them. We found that the number of open investigations has been halved since our 2021 inspection to a more manageable level. Officers have more time to focus on the quality of investigations and bringing offenders to justice. The force has increased its number of accredited investigators and has plans to introduce a centralised desk-based investigation team to further reduce front line officer workload and improve the quality of investigations. We will review this during the next PEEL inspection.

During this revisit, most officers told us that their investigation workloads had reduced and were more manageable. In the investigations we reviewed, the quality had generally improved, albeit there is room for further improvement. Most crimes were allocated to the right investigator, as per the force's crime allocation policy. The victim needs assessment was mostly completed by officers attending reports of crime. Most crimes were being progressed at an acceptable rate.

We found a slight increase in the number of investigations with a plan to support officers to follow appropriate lines of inquiry, and investigations were supervised more effectively and regularly. However, both plans and supervision need further improvement.

In summary, I am pleased that there has been some improvement in the investigation of crime by Greater Manchester Police. It has sufficiently improved the timeliness of investigations, so this is no longer an inspection recommendation.

However, the force has more work to do to improve the quality of investigations and in turn improve outcomes for victims. As a result, the recommendations on investigation plans and supervision remain in place and will be further reviewed as part of our PEEL programme.

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

At the time of our 2021 inspection, the chief constable had introduced the force's strategic plan, *Planning our future: Building a new GMP*. Since then, the force has been actively reviewing its operational policing structures and improving its understanding of the capability and capacity of its workforce. There has been a focus on supporting the workforce and improving understanding of staff concerns and well-being.

A new governance and performance framework was introduced as part of the strategic plan. This has continued to develop and is now an established and effective process. There is a dashboard of detailed performance data, which supports chief officers' understanding of force performance and the capability and capacity of its workforce.

The force has invested in recruiting additional senior leaders as well as additional police staff including control room call handlers and despatchers. The force is also on track to meet national targets to recruit new officers. The force had 7,591 officers as of 30 September 2022 and should hit its target of 8,091 police officers by the end of March 2023. The force previously experienced high numbers of leavers, including experienced officers transferring to other forces, but it has supported officers returning and attracted officers from other forces.

Greater Manchester Police has undertaken a peer review of its occupational health unit structure and services and invested in additional welfare and wellbeing professionals to support its workforce. Its well-being board has been reinvigorated with revised terms of reference and membership.

The force has introduced a mandatory performance review process and committed to completing a personal development review, including identifying talented officers and future leaders, for all its workforce by April 2023. An ethical concerns panel has been developed and meets regularly to review and discuss issues, providing the workforce with an opportunity to raise concerns and seek guidance and support.

In summary, I am satisfied that the force has improved its understanding of the risks and threats to its workforce and has put arrangements in place to support and build its capacity and capability. It has made sufficient progress to address the cause of concern in this area.

Further monitoring

In conclusion, I am pleased that Greater Manchester Police is continuing to make good progress since our PEEL inspection. I am satisfied that it has made sufficient progress to address the concerns I had in relation to how it responds to the public and how it builds, supports and protects its workforce.

In relation to investigating crime, I am pleased with the progress the force has made in a short period of time and its plans to continue to improve in this area. However, as there is more to do, we will keep this cause of concern under review.

Additionally, following our discussion on 28 October 2022, I am further reassured by the plans that you have put in place to continue this journey of improvement. In the light of this recent evidence, and while acknowledging that there is still more to do in some areas, I have decided that Greater Manchester Police will be removed from the 'engage' phase of force monitoring, which provides forces tackling enduring problems with additional accountability and support.

From now, the force will revert to our standard monitoring process and be inspected as part of our PEEL continual assessment programme during 2023.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Cooke QPM DL

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services