

**Drusilla Sharpling, CBE**  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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3 September 2014

Dear Jeff

**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 This must not be published until this date and time.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**

- Crime prevention is a priority within the police and crime plan, which is reflected in individual strategies such as the force control strategy and supported by a tasking and coordination process. However, there is no overarching crime prevention strategy. This would provide greater clarity to officers, staff and the public, of the importance to the force of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and how it will be achieved.
- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken crime prevention initiatives; for example, the provision of part-funding to the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership which enabled a support package to be provided to over 300 victims of anti-social behaviour, and the Caerphilly Care and Repair Service to provide safety equipment to 29 vulnerable victims.
- HMIC found that the force level daily management meeting (DMM), which is seen as key to the effective leadership and management of resources throughout the force, is not consistent in driving a focused approach to the management of crime and monitoring compliance with agreed actions. The local daily management meeting was found to be comprehensive, directing resources and activity to capture investigative opportunities while also ensuring that crime prevention measures had been considered and implemented, where necessary.
- Organisational learning in relation to preventative policing is not structured or promulgated across the force. There is no single repository of information to inform future activity and capture successful initiatives, thereby ensuring the force retains a corporate memory of good practice. It follows that systematic learning, and dissemination of learning, are limited.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to staff who deal frequently with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. HMIC believes that by providing training, the force would be able to make the most of opportunities to prevent future crimes and provide a better quality of service to the public. The force has advised HMIC that the delivery of its training has been reduced due to financial necessity, with a need to identify and prioritise areas requiring training.

## **Crime recording and attendance**

- The force does not have a deployment policy and does not differentiate between crime and non-crime incidents when considering whether the attendance of a police officer is required. All incidents are considered on a case-by-case basis, to inform the decision whether to deploy a resource: that consideration includes the identification of the threat, risk and harm in relation to the incident reported. The force is seeking to provide a bespoke service according to the needs of the caller irrespective of the crime or incident type, which correlates to a priority within the police and crime plan to deliver the best quality of service to the public.

- The force does not collect performance management data in relation to police officer attendance, or monitor compliance with the grading criteria used to determine response times. Such data would enable the force to understand if officers are meeting the agreed attendance times, establish where necessary any correlation to public satisfaction or complaints from the public; and manage attendance activity effectively, in support of the force's focus to provide a service that meets the needs of the public.
- 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 of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime is recorded by the force, initially by creating an incident on the command and control system 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. HMIC found that, in general, there was clear evidence of officers recording updates of the progress of the investigation and supervisory oversight.
- HMIC found that the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme, in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to their communities, was well-managed. However, the absence of current analytical assessments of the outcomes and benefits of those within and exiting the IOM scheme does not enable the force to demonstrate or evaluate the outcomes or benefits of the model.
- 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 little evidence of active investigation to locate a suspect or supervision. We were concerned that there was insufficient attention paid to the cancellation of wanted individuals on the police national computer following an arrest.

### **Freeing up time**

- The force last restructured the way it operates in 2009 when it changed from three separate borough command units to a single force-wide model, divided into five local policing areas, each covering a different local authority area. Currently it does not undertake a structured and consistent approach to resource modelling. Activity involving the identification of demand is spread across separate projects (by business area), and often arises in response to financial imperatives. HMIC

identified that the force is taking steps to build up a more sophisticated understanding of demand and how its resources are distributed through the 'Staying Ahead 8' programme. This will provide the opportunity to understand the totality of demand, and help inform and support the delivery of priorities.

- 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 was not provided with any analysis to establish how the visible frontline workforce spends its time or how workload is corporately assessed or managed. While the force identified information that the Qlikview system could provide to local supervisors, there was no evidence of it being analysed or collated centrally to inform the force's understanding or management of its staff.
- The force has previously made use of independent management consultancy to support the force in redesigning the processes for dealing with high-volume crime, such as burglary where the whole process from start to finish was examined and an improved process put in place which avoids waste and improves efficiency. This has led to real financial savings in officer time, reported by the force as being £3.175m a year. The force is however unable to demonstrate how much time has been freed up through changes or technology. This is because there is a focus on cost savings and a reduction of staff numbers within particular functions.
- The force has invested in the provision of mobile data, such as Blackberry devices, to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol: however access to such technology is currently limited.

Yours sincerely

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

**Drusilla Sharpling**  
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Wales and Western Region