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HM Inspector of Constabulary

Mr S Finnigan
Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary

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Dear Steve

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

- Although the inspection found references to crime reduction and prevention in some of the force's plans and documents, 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 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. The youth engagement work taking place in Blackpool is a positive initiative.
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), whilst still in early formative development is enabling the constabulary and partners to take early action to prevent vulnerable people becoming victims of crime.
- The force use of social media, (face book, twitter, and 'in the know scheme') to inform and update the community is positive with a good appreciation of reaching hard to reach communities with strong prevention messages.
- Although the inspection found evidence of crime-prevention in neighbourhoods, the force does not have an electronic database to assist officers and staff. This means that the force does not have a platform to effectively evaluate work or share good practice easily.
- Whilst some formal crime prevention training has been delivered to new recruits, other staff working within neighbourhood teams told us that they had not received crime prevention training and were reliant on their own knowledge and experience to advise members of the public on these issues. 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 service to the public.

Crime recording and attendance

- The force does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents. It has a policy based on a series of considerations that consider an assessment of the vulnerability of the victim. This assessment is facilitated by the use of the National Decision Model to determine whether a crime or incident will be attended. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy.
- In recognising that the National Decision Making model is a central factor in decisions around deployment across the constabulary, HMIC found that all staff were confident in applying the model to inform considerations around threat, risk and harm and its use was well embedded in the control room.

- The use of Automatic Resource Location System (ARLS) was inconsistent within the communications centre. HMIC found that operational and specialist staff not updating their status to the control room is affecting the ability of control room staff to deploy the right resource to an incident.
- During discussions and observations in the force's call-handling centre, the inspection team identified that the force has clear policies and procedures to enable it to consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- HMIC found that the constabulary has re-introduced specialist staff with skills back into a core response role to meet the demands of communities.
- Crime is recorded by the force, initially through creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system. The force has systems in place to identify how many crimes that it attends.
- Fifty unattended crime reports were examined. Thirty four of those files contained no evidence of any investigation, 35 had no evidence of any form of supervisory input and 35 were filed within 24 hours.
- HMIC reviewed a further sample of 50 undetected investigations - 10 each from the categories of burglary dwelling; burglary other than dwelling; assaults with injury; criminal damage and thefts from motor vehicles. In the main there was evidence of investigation plans and supervision in the more serious cases of burglary dwelling and assaults. However of the other 30 cases 13 had no record of any investigation, 19 had no record of supervision and 19 were filed within 24 hours.
- 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.
- Owing to the limitations within the current constabulary IT infrastructure, the constabulary was unable to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects who had yet to be arrested or interviewed. The constabulary reported that there were 227 suspects who had failed to answer their bail and were still outstanding.
- A small sample of ten crime records which contained information which identified a named individual as a suspect was examined. Only 6 of these records showed clear evidence of the crime being investigated appropriately, including active supervision and some form of resolution. The absence of supervisor direction on the four

remaining files may be an indication that some crimes where there is a named suspect are not being identified as such and not adequately supervised.

- A further small sample of files regarding named suspects who had been circulated as wanted on the PNC was examined. In four of the cases there were no updates on the files since the individual had been circulated.

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 and by using the neighbourhood needs index to inform appropriate service level requirements, new shift arrangements and the re-design of the local policing model.
- The inspection found that the constabulary has developed an expansive internal review programme to consider how activities can be more streamlined to increase efficiency, levels of service and reduce costs.
- The Early Response Officer scheme has significant potential benefits around service improvement and releasing resources to core police duty.
- The force has established effective working arrangements with other agencies and is engaged to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police to ensure the best service is provided to the public by the most appropriate agency.
- The inspection found that the force does not have a thorough understanding of how staff spend their time when performing duty away from the police station. Although some basic management information is available, supervisors told us that they were mainly reliant on their own personal observation in assessing officer's performance.
- 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, although HMIC recognise that work is underway within the constabulary to ascertain this information.
- HMIC found that the constabulary had not yet introduced an electronic case management system and there was only limited use of mobile technology by patrol officers. HMIC found that the constabulary were aware of these issues and had long-term plans in place to introduce technology to provide greater efficiency and improved flexibility in these areas.

Yours sincerely



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HM Inspector of Constabulary