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By email.

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Dear Bernard

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

- **The force is one of the few forces in England and Wales that has an overarching crime prevention strategy.**

The inspection team found that the strategy, which is jointly owned with MOPAC, is seen by staff as key to achieving reductions in crime types such as burglary. The strategy is supported with a commissioning process in place to access funding for initiatives and a governance structure to ensure that projects are delivered and effective. The inspection team found numerous examples of prevention activity in support of the strategy. One such example is the reinvestment of money recovered from the seizure of untaxed cars into a force wide rollout of traceable liquids that can be used to identify property.

- **HMIC found some examples of good practice 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 inspection team found that crime prevention was discussed and action taken as part of the daily management meetings. An example of this was the tasking of PCSOs to provide preventative advice to a specified number of households in the vicinity of a recent burglary. This prevention activity is taking place across all boroughs and is monitored as part of the performance framework.

- **Although the force has a database which helps staff to solve problems and support decisions on preventing crime in neighbourhood policing, it is not being used as effectively as it could be. While we did find some evidence of a problem-solving response, elements such as evaluation and the sharing of good practice were absent.**

The inspection team found that as a result of a force restructure, the officers undertaking neighbourhood problem solving are likely to be junior in service. This makes the sharing of good practise particularly important however a process for capturing it was not in existence.

- **Other than an input to new recruits, no formal crime prevention training has been delivered to staff who frequently deal 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 service to the public.**

Crime recording and attendance

- **The force has a policy that says that officers will attend all reports of crimes and incidents where a victim wishes attendance. It also sets out a series of considerations which includes identifying the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. In addition to this, there are specific occasions when crime is reported, where the force will always aim to attend. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted specifically with the public in relation to this policy.**

The inspection team found that the Commissioner has made a personal commitment for the police to attend all reports of crimes and incidents where a victim wishes. The inspection team found that the results of public consultation and satisfaction surveys are taken into account on an on-going basis as part of the Metropolitan Police's performance management regime and MOPAC's performance oversight role.

- **During observations and interviews in the call-handling centre, the inspection team identified that the force has clear policies and procedures to enable them to identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour in a consistent way.**

The Inspection team found that Metropolitan Police Service has to undertake a risk assessment and flagging process to identify vulnerability by asking the caller a series of questions and manually cross referencing on internal computer systems. A quality assurance process is in place to ensure consistency. The Metropolitan Police are aware that their computer system does not currently support them in identifying repeat and vulnerable victims. As part of the IT strategy this was prioritised and a new command and control system is being integrated in October 2015. This aims to provide benefits to both identify and then respond to victims needs.

- **Crime is recorded by the force, initially by creating an incident on the command and control system, and then by entering the details onto the crime recording system. The force has good systems in place to identify how many crimes that it attends.**

The inspection team found in its reality testing that there is a well designed system that could easily interrogate the command and control system. This allowed analysis of incidents to be performed by numerous different search criteria. Testing found that officers are adhering to the policy on attending all crimes if requested by the public. Where police did not attend, the rationale was recorded on the incident log.

- **During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations, including reports of crimes that the force did not attend. HMIC found that there was evidence that officers recorded the progress of the investigation and gave supervisory oversight.**

The inspection team found that the Metropolitan Police use the CRIS computer system to record crime investigations. This system generates a template investigation plan and thus HMIC found in all crime investigations that it examined had an initial plan completed by a supervisor. Supervisors from the Safer Neighbourhood teams reported that they would like additional training in the investigation and management of crime to provide an enhanced level in this area of their work.

- **HMIC examined the arrangements to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities as part of the Integrated Offender Management scheme. These were found not to be as consistent as they could be. HMIC considers that the force could improve this by a more corporate approach and by putting in place measures to better understand the effectiveness of the scheme.**

The inspection team examined the work of one Integrated Offender Management (IOM) which was found to be working effectively. However, there did not appear to be a pan-London IOM strategy in place and this allows different approaches to be adopted in different boroughs. The absence of a strategy that set out how the work of IOM should be adopted across all relevant teams and units within each borough resulted in the IOM meeting with resistance from the other units of officers to engage in activity that would help reduce reoffending – the other officers did not see it as a priority for them.

- **The force was able to provide the number of named suspects that are yet to be arrested or interviewed, as well as those who had failed to answer police bail. However, the inspection team found that the force does not have consistent, robust arrangements to manage its outstanding suspects and offenders.**

The inspection team found that the grip and pace centre managed and co-ordinated the search for the most serious offenders wanted. However, it was not evident how officers from the local policing teams would be able to ascertain who was wanted in their community if the offenders did not meet the criteria of those managed through grip and pace. Reality testing in this area demonstrated that identifying who was wanted for a specific crime types, like shoplifting, was difficult.

Freeing up time

- **HMIC identified that the force is taking steps to build up a more sophisticated understanding of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity. However, more work should be done in relation to identifying and addressing those tasks that are not believed to be the responsibility of the police.**

The inspection team found considerable work has been done to understand the demands on the force and to organise the response, local policing team, CID and borough functions accordingly. This has brought about more streamlined processes, with certain functions such as resource management and intelligence being brigaded into central hubs. It also found that the force is negotiating with other agencies to reduce the demand from calls for service that should be met by the other agencies, but fall to the police to undertake. These negotiations have yet to result in a demonstrable reduction in this sort of demand.

- **The force is working towards developing a greater understanding of staff productivity. At present basic information is available. This needs to be enhanced if the organisation to measure and understand staff productivity effectively.**

The inspection team found that the workload of staff on each borough is recorded on numerous different systems. Work has been commissioned to begin to understand how productive staff in specific teams could be measured and then compared. The data currently collated is basic and will need to be enhanced if it is to provide any meaningful analysis of productivity at an individual level.

- **The force is not able to identify the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of new technology being implemented.**

The inspection team found that the Metropolitan Police was not able to identify quantifiable savings in staff time that have been made as a result of technological developments. It was recognised that the most significant technological developments have yet to be rolled out.

- **HMIC identified that the use of mobile technology devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, to enable officers to access force systems while they are on patrol is currently limited.**

The inspection team found that most visible frontline officers and staff in the Metropolitan Police do not have access to mobile data terminals. The Metropolitan Police recognised this as an issue and the provision of mobile data to the right staff is a key part of the force's IT strategy. The relatively few staff that does have access to tablet devices were positive about them, explaining how they allowed them to spend more time on the street.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Otter
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