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Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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3 September 2014

Dear Mark

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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, and is seeking to align this strategy to local policing areas.
- Messages relating to crime prevention have been promulgated across the force.
- HMIC found good examples of innovative work being undertaken with local authorities. This includes tackling crime prevention on landlord licenses for houses of multiple occupancy where the landlord is required to take reasonable steps to secure their properties: for example, the provision of window locks and security lighting in accordance with the licence conditions. Failure to comply with the conditions enables the relevant local authority to revoke the licence.
- In addition, HMIC found that daily management meetings provided good oversight and focus on local issues and resourcing requirements. Briefings are concise and include details of reported crimes and daily plans regarding suspects and response to specific crime types. These plans incorporated some forecasts of the likely demands on force resources.
- There is no single repository of information for preventative policing within the force to capture successful initiatives and facilitate promulgation of learning, thereby ensuring the force retains a corporate memory.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to staff who frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. HMIC believes that by providing focused training, the force would be able to make better use of opportunities to prevent crime and thereby provide a better quality of service to the public.

Crime recording and attendance

- The force's policy does not require officers to attend all reports of crimes and incidents. Instead, it considers the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community to assess the most appropriate resource deployment. In addition, the force has a mandatory list of crime types for which officer attendance is required. Incidents of reported crime that do not require the deployment of a resource are managed by the investigation support team (IST), who will conduct telephone-based, proportionate investigations of low level crimes.
- Currently the force is piloting a process known as the 'Flintshire experiment' where the county of Flintshire has dedicated handlers and dispatchers within the force communications centre (FCC) managing all calls for service in that area. This has provided a more focused and joined-up approach, providing staff with greater knowledge of the geographic area, crime problems and local services. This is complemented with joint briefings for each shift with the FCC staff and locally-based officers, supporting the force ethos of a one team approach.

- HMIC found that systems within the force control room do not routinely identify repeat or vulnerable victims at the first point of contact. The force needs to ensure that the necessary checks are in place so that all potential vulnerability factors are identified and considered.
- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways:
 - creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering details onto the crime recording system; or
 - directly recording crime onto the crime-recording system, without creating an incident first.
- Although the force is able to identify how many crimes are recorded directly onto the crime recording system, it is not able to identify how many of those crimes it attends subsequently.
- During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations including reports of crimes that were not attended. HMIC found that all contained appropriate investigation plans where required, which were then overseen and signed off by supervisors.
- 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. The programme uses an '8 Ways' scheme which refers to eight categories of service which individuals within the IOM cohort can access to address and support their needs. It is a collaborative partnership involving police, probation and housing, supported by mental health and the drug interventions programme (DIP). Data generated through IOM activity does not currently have a dedicated analytical resource available, to apply a sophisticated and advanced interrogation and interpretation of available information. Such a resource would inform future planning and support future commissioning opportunities.
- The force 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.
- A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer, provided limited evidence of activity to locate a suspect or keep the victim updated and had not been properly supervised in a number of cases.

Freeing up time

- HMIC found clear evidence that North Wales Police identifies not just current, but also future demand (predictive analysis and planning). This work clearly has an impact on freeing up police time and allows resources to be better deployed towards identified areas of risk to the public.

- However, more work can be done in relation to identifying and addressing demand that is not believed to be the responsibility of the police. There are a number of forums where the chief constable and police and crime commissioner (PCC) engage with partners at a strategic level such as the North Wales Regional Leadership Board (NWRLB). The engagement in, and reviewing of, partnership activity, particularly where the chief officer team and PCC are involved, is viewed as both necessary and positive, particularly in criminal justice and community safety environments.
- HMIC found some evidence of a culture of scepticism towards special constables, with staff in some cases seeing them as a burden. Staff did not appear to accept or value their role within policing. Some officers expressed a view that they were not effectively managed and therefore were not being appropriately deployed.
- The force has adopted business improvement techniques to understand how individuals and functions work so that duplication can be removed and new more effective ways of working introduced. It is also developing a new way of working to make best use of its resources which is being trialled in one area with a view to extending across the whole force if successful.
- There is limited evidence of evaluation of how officer time has been freed up and where this has been re-invested, apart from an emphasis on cashable savings. Benefits of freeing up time for officers appear to be recognised early on but not well tracked, realised or communicated.
- The use of mobile devices (such as tablets and mobile phones) to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol is limited, owing to the age of the equipment. There is an opportunity for additional functionality to be deployed in response to business need by using new hardware and software. However, it is recognised that the geography of the area does have an impact on some technological solutions.

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