

Zoë Billingham BA Hons (Oxon)
HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

3 September 2014

Mr Adrian Lee QPM
Chief Constable - Northamptonshire Police

Dear Adrian

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

Findings that specifically relate to your force are;

Preventing Crime

- There are references to crime reduction and prevention in some of the force's plans and documents and the force has an "all crime reduction strategy", supported by a number of complementary strategies relating to specific types of crime. However, some of the governance arrangements relating to these strategies could be improved in order to better co-ordinate crime prevention activity across the force.
- 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 are being used well to focus staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The inspection found evidence of some neighbourhood preventive activity taking place; however the force does not have a means of evaluating this work or sharing good practice easily.
- The force has provided some training to officers and staff, in particular to specialist officers in areas such as public protection. However formal crime prevention training has not been delivered to all staff who frequently deal with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Attendance at crimes and incidents

- The force does not have a policy that officers will attend all reports of crimes and incidents. Instead it decides which crimes it will attend on the basis of the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to its attendance policy.
- It was found that call-handlers in the force's call-handling centre do not always identify vulnerable and repeat victims. While relevant staff have received training in the national decision making model and vulnerability, the force needs to ensure that the necessary checks are in place so that vulnerability factors including disability and race are identified.
- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways, either by creating an incident on its command and control system and then by entering the details onto its 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. In crimes such as burglary dwellings, there was clear evidence of effective investigation and supervision. However, for some crime types we found little evidence of effective investigation having been undertaken and limited supervision.
- HMIC examined the arrangements for the Integrated Offender Management scheme, which are in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to the communities. The arrangements are not as effective as they could be as decisions about prioritising offenders are not always made on the basis of threat, risk and harm.
- The force was able to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had either not yet been arrested or having been arrested had failed to answer their police bail. This information suggests that the force has effective arrangements to manage outstanding named suspects and offenders.

- Evidence from a small sample of named suspect files (including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer) suggests that on occasions there had been insufficient investigative activity and/or it had not been properly documented or supervised.

Freeing up time

- The force has a limited understanding of demand and how its resources are best deployed. The force would benefit from taking further steps to build a more detailed assessment of demand, including analysis of incidents and policing activity. The force recognises this and is taking steps to undertake a more detailed assessment of demand through its transformational change programme.
- The force has carried out work with other agencies to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police.
- The inspection found that the force does not have a clear understanding of how staff are spending their time and how effective or productive they are. The management information in this regards is limited.
- 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 being implemented.
- The force has made a clear investment in the use of mobile technology devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, to enable officers to access force systems whilst on patrol.

Yours sincerely



Zoë Billingham

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Eastern Region

Copied to Jan McMillan
HMIC Liaison Officer