

HMI Zoë Billingham's assessment of Northamptonshire Police – Transcript

Hello. I'm Zoe Billingham and I'm Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Northamptonshire Police. I am one of five inspectors of constabulary, and our role is to inspect police forces on behalf of the public. Each year we produce an annual assessment of how each force is performing.

I am satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Northamptonshire Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime, but there are also areas in need of improvement if the force is to provide a consistently good service.

Northamptonshire Police requires improvement in the way it prevents crime, and tackles anti-social behaviour and serious and organised crime. There are weaknesses in the way the force allocates crime cases for investigation that are causing unacceptable delays. This means that offenders may not be brought to justice quickly enough and victims may lose faith in the system. More positively, I have been monitoring closely the hard work the force has been undertaking to tackle violent crime and I am encouraged by the progress that has been made.

I am also pleased by the way the force works with partners, such as local councils, to protect vulnerable people. Northamptonshire Police has developed strong relationships with other organisations and shares information well, helping it to keep some of the most vulnerable members of its communities safe through this joint working approach. While investigations of missing and absent people and child sexual exploitation are of a good standard, I have some concerns about how the force safeguards victims of domestic abuse who are at the highest risk of harm.

I am encouraged that the force has balanced its budget and has a good track record of achieving savings. However, the force needs to improve its understanding of the demand on its services and will need to change its structure and processes significantly to meet those demands.

I welcome the leadership shown by the new chief constable. He has set a clear direction for the force and I am reassured by some very encouraging signs that performance is starting to improve.

I look forward to seeing continued improvements in the coming year.

In the year ahead, I will be interested to see how the force responds HMIC's findings. I will be particularly interested to see how the force reduces violence against the person offences, how it improves the quality of it's crime investigations.