

**HMICFRS response to
consultation on *Policing
inspection programme and
framework commencing
April 2022***

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Introduction

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces in the public interest.

We recently consulted on our proposed programme for policing inspections for the 3 years from April 2022. The purpose of this consultation was to make sure we continue to focus our inspection work on what matters most to the public. It asked for views on whether we included the right themes and areas of policing. In particular, we sought responses to the following:

Question 1: Do the proposed thematic inspections cover the areas that are of most concern to you at the moment? Which do you believe are of greatest importance or urgency?

Question 2: Are there any significant new or emerging problems in policing that HMICFRS should consider when it inspects individual police forces?

Question 3: How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take account of current circumstances and risks to public safety?

HMICFRS is grateful for all the responses to the consultation. Throughout this process, our objective has been to make sure that we continue to focus our inspection work on what matters most to the public. While we outlined our proposed framework of inspection activity in the consultation, we were open to considering other priorities and ways of working.

A clear majority of respondents agreed with our proposed thematic inspections. Most also felt that they cover the areas of most concern and issues considered to be more urgent. Although the emerging issues raised by our respondents have broadly been considered in the planned inspections, further consideration will be given to inspection design to reflect these concerns where possible.

Overview of respondents

The consultation period ended on 18 March. We received 44 responses: 20 from police forces; 7 from police and crime commissioners; 7 from other organisations; and 10 from members of the public.

Summary of responses

Question 1: Do the proposed thematic inspections cover the areas that are of most concern to you at the moment? Which do you believe are of greatest importance or urgency?

The majority of responses from the consultation agreed that the proposed thematic inspections cover the areas that are of most concern.

Although some of the responses were neutral, no respondent indicated they were opposed to the proposed programme of activity.

Respondents were also asked which of the proposed thematic inspections were of the greatest urgency. The themes most mentioned as a priority were:

- confidence and trust in the police;
- ethnic disproportionality in the criminal justice system;
- recruitment and retention of the police workforce, including diversity within police forces;
- violence against women and girls;
- crime prevention, particularly violent crime; and
- changing demands.

Question 2: Are there any significant new or emerging problems in policing that HMICFRS should consider when it inspects individual police forces?

The majority of the themes raised in response to this question reflected those already included in our planned inspections set out in the framework. These are:

- demand management and meeting changing demand;
- workforce recruitment and retention;
- investigations; and
- crime prevention.

There were some additional themes raised by respondents. We will consider them either in the design of other planned inspections, or as new priorities which have been factored into our programme:

- fraud;
- cybercrime;
- increased demand placed on the police because of reduced partner resilience;
- recovery of services from the pandemic; and
- managing risks associated with legal firearm possession.

The detailed scheduling of inspections will consider factors including any statutory requirements, the level of public risk in this area, stakeholder interest, and the overall coherence of our programme. The timing will also depend upon our funding and capacity.

Question 3: How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take account of current circumstances and risks to public safety?

Multi-year framework

None of the respondents was opposed to the inspection framework covering the next three years and some favoured a multi-year approach.

Changes to the way we inspect

The majority of forces who responded supported a hybrid approach to inspection, blending remote and on-site fieldwork.

Engagement

A small number of responses stated they would welcome:

- more engagement with civil society groups, grassroots organisations and the public when designing inspection methodology;
- increased use of workforce and public surveys, including further seeking victim experiences;
- consideration of using the other audits and scrutiny that forces undergo to feed into our understanding when conducting inspections; and
- the sharing of good practice.

Our [2021–2025 strategy](#) is designed to address greater engagement. It focuses even greater attention on consulting and working with others, and on assessing how well interdependent systems are working to improve public safety.

We will publish a short review annually on our progress against the programme over the preceding financial year. This will also set out inspection plans for the remaining years of the programme, reflecting any new commissions.

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