



Promoting improvements
in policing to make
everyone safer

HMI Mike Cunningham's assessment of South Yorkshire Police – Transcript

South Yorkshire Police has faced a number of significant challenges since my assessment last year. The impact of these challenges, in combination with the need to provide a continuing service to the people of South Yorkshire, has prompted me to pay particularly close attention to the force's performance throughout the year.

I have some concerns about South Yorkshire Police's approach to preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. Staff are regularly taken away from preventative neighbourhood work to cover more reactive duties.

I am reassured that the force generally allocates crimes to investigators with the appropriate training and experience, and investigations of less complex crime are of an acceptable quality.

I am pleased with the progress that South Yorkshire Police has made since my last assessment in how it keeps vulnerable people safe, but further improvements are needed. The force is now generally good at identifying signs of vulnerability, and it is more consistent in how it handles calls reporting incidents involving domestic abuse. However, the quality of risk assessments made at the scene of domestic abuse incidents is poor. I am also concerned about the quality of the force's investigations of more complex crimes, and in particular those involving vulnerable victims.

I am pleased with South Yorkshire Police's approach to tackling serious and organised crime. It also has effective measures for deterring people from becoming involved in organised criminality.

South Yorkshire Police has a very limited understanding of the current and likely future demands for its services. The force urgently needs to develop a more comprehensive understanding that includes so-called hidden demand, under-reporting of crimes.

The force's introduced an operating model that was built on this limited understanding of the demands for its services, and that this has contributed to the inconsistent service the force is providing to the people of South Yorkshire.

The lack of a comprehensive workforce plan compromises the force's understanding of the costs of providing its services and its ability to match resources to demand.

While the force's financial assumptions are prudent, its financial plans are limited by the inadequacy of its workforce plans and of its understanding of future demands. However, I am encouraged by the force's acceptance of these concerns and the action it is taking to address them.

South Yorkshire Police has a good understanding of the risks to the integrity of the organisation, including signs of potential corruption.

In view of the findings in this assessment, I have been in regular contact with the new chief constable who understands the challenges facing the force. I do not underestimate how much improvement is needed for the force, led by its new chief officer team, to provide a consistently good service to the people of South Yorkshire.