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Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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3 September 2014

Dear Jane

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

- Although the inspection found references to crime reduction and prevention in the police and crime plan and some of the force's plans and documents, there is no overarching crime prevention strategy. At the time of inspection, the force was preparing a prevention strategy to assist in providing greater clarity to officers, staff and the public on the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and how this will be achieved.
- Staffordshire Police has a dedicated crime prevention and reduction team that provide advice and support to local policing teams and partners. The force is moving to a model of eight dedicated crime prevention and design advisors. In addition, a manager will advise on crime prevention and architectural liaison matters.
- HMIC found good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives. Several well-established force operations focus prevention activity around specific seasonal events and vulnerable groups. In addition, HMIC found that the daily management meetings in the force, supported with well-established intelligence, briefing and patrol arrangements, were being used well to focus staff on crime prevention activity.
- Although the force has an electronic database that is updated with information that helps officers and staff prevent crime in local neighbourhoods, it could be used more effectively. The force would benefit from greater evaluation of initiatives in this area and the identification of good practice.
- 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 training, the force would be able to make the most of opportunities to prevent crimes and provide a better quality of service to the public.

Crime recording and attendance

- The force does not have a policy to attend all reports of crimes and incidents, but one based on a series of considerations including identifying the threat, risk and harm to the victim, caller or community. The policy has been agreed in consultation with the community and partners and is regularly assessed to ensure it meets force demand in accordance with policing priorities.
- During discussions and observations in the force's call-handling centre, the inspection team identified that the force does not consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims. Although appropriate systems and processes are in place, the force needs to ensure that they are followed consistently so that all potential vulnerability factors, such as those relating to disability or race, are identified.
- Crime is recorded by the force, initially by creating an incident on the command and control system and subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system. The force has systems in place to identify how many crimes it attends.
- During the inspection, HMIC reviewed a number of crime investigations including reports of crimes that were not attended. In certain cases, for crimes such as

burglary dwellings, there was clear evidence of investigation and supervision. However, for other offences, such as theft from a motor vehicle, many of which were not attended, there was limited evidence of meaningful investigation or supervision.

- HMIC found that the Integrated Offender Management scheme in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to their communities was well-managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risk. The information sharing with partners (E-CINS) allows a much richer assessment of an individual offender and their offending behaviour.
- The force was unable to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects that are yet to be arrested or interviewed. Without this information, the force is unable to ensure that it has effective arrangements to manage outstanding named suspects and offenders.
- The force was able to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had failed to answer police bail. A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer (PNC) was reviewed as part of the inspection. There was limited evidence that activity had been documented or properly supervised in a number of cases. The force has introduced a new policy to improve quality assurance and supervision of suspects circulated as wanted on the PNC.

Freeing up time

- HMIC identified that the force is taking steps to develop a more sophisticated understanding of demand and how its resources are distributed. Its approach included an analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.
- The force has carried out some work with other agencies to identify and address those tasks that are not the sole responsibility of the police. Work has been completed with mental health services and hospital emergency departments to try to reduce the amount of officer time spent responding to health related incidents.
- The inspection found that the force is developing a clearer understanding of how staff are spending their time through task analysis and case profiling technology. Reviewing this information at a force level and disseminating to teams better assists staff to understand what is expected of them. This should be supported with consistent workload management practices.

- The force has some understanding of the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes or new technology it has introduced.
- HMIC identified that the force has made a clear investment in the use of mobile devices (such as tablets and mobile phones) to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol.

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