

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

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Mr Giles York
Chief Constable - Sussex Police

Dear Giles

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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 specially relate to your force are:

Preventing Crime

- There are references to crime reduction and prevention in some of the force's plans and documents. However, the force does not have an overarching strategy and as such it is possible that crime prevention activity is fragmented.
- 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 in order to direct staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The inspection found evidence of neighbourhood preventive activity taking place. However, while the force does have a shared partnership database to assist officers and staff, this system is not yet in place forcewide. This limits the ability of the force to effectively evaluate work and share good practice easily.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, 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. There is inconsistency when deciding to resolve a crime on the telephone and on occasions the decision-making is poor. The force has identified certain crimes that should always necessitate an officer attending. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to its attendance policy.
- The force has clear policies and procedures to enable call handlers to consistently identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Crime is recorded by the force initially by creating an incident on its command and control system, and then by entering the details onto its crime recording system. The force has systems in place to identify how many crimes that it attends.
- 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.
- The force was unable to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects who had not yet been arrested for the alleged offence. It was also unable to provide HMIC with the number of suspects who had failed to answer their police bail. Without this information, the force may be unable to ensure that it 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 has not been properly documented or supervised. Cases are also often passed between officers causing delays in progressing investigations.
- 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. These were found not to be as effective as they could be. However recent changes have given greater responsibility to local

officers in managing IOM subjects, and the force is currently in the process of reviewing its IOM arrangements.

Freeing up time

- The force has a relatively good understanding of demand, and is taking steps to build up a more detailed insight of demand and how its resources are distributed. This includes analysis of different types of incidents and policing activity.
- There is a clear structure to assist supervisors in assessing the workload and performance of front-line officers and staff.
- The force has an understanding of the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes introduced or as a result of new technology it has implemented.
- The use of mobile devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, to enable officers to access force systems while on patrol is currently limited.

Yours sincerely



Zoë Billingham

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Copied to Kathy Wrathall
HMIC Liaison Officer