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HM Inspector of Constabulary

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T/Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police

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Dear Dee

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 This must not be published until this date and time.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

- The force is one of the few forces in England and Wales that has an overarching crime prevention strategy.
- 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 were being used well to focus staff towards crime prevention activity.
- The force demonstrated a strong preventive approach to areas of priority crime such as burglary and those that present the highest risk to the community.
- The force has a volume crime force Crime Prevention Strategy which does not appear to be well known or driving business.
- Protective Services Operations provide a very good, well led flexible resource to assist in the reduction and prevention of crime.
- There is a strong focus on identifying and problem-solving issues with regards to vulnerable members of the community. There is a sophisticated risk assessment process which was well managed.
- Although the force has an electronic database, that is updated with information that helps officers and staff prevent crime in neighbourhood, it is not being used as effectively as it could be. While we did find evidence of problem-solving, areas such as thorough evaluation and sharing of good practice were absent.
- 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 future crimes and provide a better quality 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. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy.
- 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. The force needs to ensure that the necessary checks are in place so that all potential vulnerability factors, such as disability or race, are identified.

- There is Strong evidence within the call handling centre (CCC) that the needs of the caller are considered appropriately by staff.
- CCC supervisors have a clear and effective quality assurance and development process for individual operators based on their professional judgement and experience.
- There is a clear graded response policy with excellent performance at emergency and priority grade.

Crime is recorded by the force, initially through creating an incident on the command and control system and then subsequently entering the details onto the crime recording system. Although the force is able to identify how many crimes are recorded directly onto the crime recording system, it is not able to identify how many of those crimes it attends subsequently.

- There is an effective and expedient recovery process, within the CCC, resulting in immediate dissatisfaction being dealt with in a timely and professional manner.
- The command and control of resources is often inefficient due to the poor use of status codes by operational resources and its lack of supervision which does not result in a 'ask not task' policy but is reliant on negotiation by the control rooms. 'Any patrol available' continues.
- The efficient and effective use of scheduled appointments appears patchy district by district and would benefit from a corporate approach.
- 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, some cases were found to have little evidence of meaningful investigation or supervision.
- HMIC examined the arrangements for the Integrated Offender Management scheme, which was 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. The force should aim to standardise its approach to offender management and evaluate the effectiveness of the way it uses the scheme.
- The force was able to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects that are yet to be arrested or interviewed, as well as those who had failed to answer police bail. Although it appears the force has an effective way to oversee those suspects wanted for priority crimes (such as burglary in a dwelling and violent crime), there is not the same level of scrutiny for those suspected of committing other crimes.

- A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer, provided little evidence that activity had been documented or properly supervised in a number of cases.

Freeing up time

- HMIC identified that 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.
- 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.
- The inspection found that the force does not have a thorough understanding of how staff are spending their time. Although some basic management information is available, staff are unclear about what is expected of them.
- The force is not able to identify 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.
- Productivity and poor performance is not challenged consistently across the force i.e. Unsatisfactory Performance Procedure.
- Information Technology strategies are clearly aligned to the overall objectives of the force.
- 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 although, connectivity is an issue in some areas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Roger Baker', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Roger Baker
HM Inspector of Constabulary