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Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

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3 September 2014

Dear Pat

**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 This must not be published until this date and time.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 some of the force's plans and documents, there is no overarching crime prevention strategy. This would provide greater clarity to officers, staff and the public, of the importance the force attaches to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and how improvements will be achieved. However, the force has recently appointed a senior crime prevention lead to coordinate and direct the crime prevention business area.
- HMIC found some good examples of where the force has undertaken long-term crime prevention initiatives, including a specific knife crime initiative. HMIC found that the daily management meetings in the force were being used well to focus staff towards crime prevention activity. Crime analysts produce effective and detailed intelligence packages which influence preventative work, for example, the identification over 90 serial perpetrators of violence (SPOV) and predictive policing analysis.
- The force has an electronic database that is updated with information that helps officers and staff prevent crime in neighbourhoods but it could be used more effectively. We did find evidence of problem-solving practice but this was mainly localised and there was limited evidence of sharing of good practice across the force.
- Although the force has provided some training to officers and staff, formal crime prevention training has not recently been delivered to staff dealing with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. HMIC believes that by providing focused training to specified staff, the force would be able to make better use of opportunities to prevent crime and thereby 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 assesses all incidents based on an analysis of threat, harm and risk, with supporting mandated question sets for vulnerability. HMIC understands that the force has not consulted with the public in relation to this policy but is in the process of doing so.
- Crime is recorded by the force in one of two ways:
  - creating an incident on the command and control system and subsequently entering details onto the crime recording system; or
  - directly recording crime onto the crime-recording system, without creating an incident first.
- 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 then goes on to attend. The force was able to provide attendance rates for incidents recorded via the command and control system, the 'live incident management tool.'

- During discussions and observations in the force's call-handling centre, the inspection team identified clear policies and procedures to enable the force to identify vulnerable and repeat victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 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 little evidence of meaningful investigation of supervision.
- HMIC found the Integrated Offender Management scheme, in place to manage those offenders likely to cause most harm to their communities, to be well managed. There are regular meetings with key partners and a structured approach is used to identify and assess risks.
- The force was unable to provide HMIC with the number of named suspects yet to be arrested or interviewed. Without this information, the force may be unable to ensure that it has effective arrangements to manage all of the outstanding named suspects and offenders.
- A small sample of named suspect files, including those circulated as wanted on the police national computer, provided little evidence that activity to locate and apprehend them had been documented or properly supervised.

### **Freeing up time**

- HMIC identified that the force was taking steps to build up 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, particularly around mental health issues. The introduction of joint service desks and multi-agency campus sites highlights the strong commitment of the force to freeing up police time. This approach is fully supported by the police and crime commissioner.
- HMIC found that the force does not have a thorough understanding of how staff are spending their time. Although some basic management information is available, more detailed information would help supervisors direct their staff. Supervisors and staff would then have a better understanding of how patrol time duties should be spent.

- The force is not able to identify the amount of savings in staff time that has been made as a result of changes or new technology it has implemented.
- 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.

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Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary  
Wales and Western Region