



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	19 March 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	HMICS Improvement Plans – Progress Summary
Presented By	Angela Wood, Head of Policy, Audit, Risk and Assurance
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes: Appendix A – Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Improvement Plan Appendix B – Missing Person Final Improvement Plan Appendix C – Briefing Paper Missing Persons March 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Policing Performance Committee with an overview of progress against selected improvement plans developed to address HMICS recommendations.

Members are invited to discuss the progress detailed within the report.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 There are currently 22 active improvement plans comprising a total of 129 open recommendations. 14 recommendations have been closed and 2 new improvement plans (Missing Persons and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Custody - together comprising 15 recommendations) have been added since the last progress report to this Committee. See Appendices: -

- Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Imp Plan
- Missing Person Final Improvement Plan
- Briefing Paper Missing Persons March 2025

Operational Support Division are in the process of standing-up a project to address the 11 recommendations which were made in relation to Roads Policing in November 2024. The PPA has been shared with HMICS.

There are 5 inspections ongoing at various stages:

- Tools of the Trade (Frontline Focus Review)
- Drug Harm Reduction (Thematic Inspection)
- Citations (HMICS/IPS joint inspection)
- Conduct (Assurance Review)
- Best Value (HMICS/Audit Scotland joint Inspection)

2 CLOSURES WITHIN REPORTING PERIOD

2.1 Below is a summary of the actions taken to close the aforementioned recommendations.

Publication	Date	Remaining	Closed since last meeting
Events	May 2019	2	1
Hate Crime	June 2021	1	2
Domestic Abuse	Jan 2023	10	2
Workforce Planning	Aug 2022	5	1
Mental Health Demand	Oct 2023	12	2
Custody (D&G)	Nov 2023	1	2
Lanarkshire	April 2023	4	2
Tayside	July 2023	1	1
Fife	Mar 2024	9	1

Events	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
R3 – Police Scotland should introduce a robust method for recording the full impact of events on policing, including a post event review of the resource deployed to determine if it was proportionate and necessary.	<p>A forward-looking events and football coordination group has been established focussing on high-demand events. From this, engagement with Commanders and Local Policing Divisions aim to ensure proportionate resourcing profiles, which has seen a reduction in resources allocated to some events. This is supported by a new organisational learning framework which ensures learning from events is shared and considered, helping to achieve consistency in planning.</p> <p>This more sustainable, adaptable approach to the resourcing of events will help to maintain effective service delivery across communities while events are taking place and could contribute to improved officer wellbeing through reduced abstraction and shift changes.</p>

Hate Crime	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
R5 – Police Scotland should ensure that it maximises the benefits of strong partnership relationships and shares the knowledge of diversity issues developed by police officers and staff working in Safer Communities roles at national and local levels.	Through the creation of Policing Together (PT), led by the force executive and with an ACC directly responsible there has been clear and continued focus in this area, with PT as the primary conduit between national and local delivery. Shared learning and good practice is freely available through various forums and groups maximising opportunities to engage with communities and helping to promote and maintain public safety and confidence.
R13 – Police Scotland should review its approach to dealing with hate crime experienced by police officers and	There are now consistent mechanisms for recording hate related incidents and crime which provide accurate data in relation to repeat victims and trends.

<p>staff on duty and providing effective support. Data should be collected to identify the volume, nature and extent of hate crime perpetrated against police officers and staff.</p>	<p>There is also increased awareness of the importance and actions to be taken and support available for officers and staff who experience hate. Hate Champions across all policing divisions support our response alongside a new Dashboard which can provide supervisors and senior managers an at-a-glance breakdown of relevant data and trend information.</p> <p>This more structured and focussed approach enables impact to be closely monitored and supports early intervention and improved welfare provision where necessary.</p>
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Domestic Abuse	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
<p>R2 – Police Scotland should expand the availability and use of third-party sites within community settings and work collaboratively with them to ensure they are properly equipped to support and assist victims to report.</p>	<p>Police Scotland do not view the expansion of TPR sites within community settings as a preferred option and instead continue to maintain strong links with established partner agencies who are well placed to provide the necessary victim-orientated advice, safeguarding and advocacy in respect of TPR. Police Scotland also intend to maximise the user experience and accessibility of our online reporting services available via the Police Scotland Website, which provide a safe, discreet alternative reporting option for victims.</p> <p>These alternative reporting channels help to support victims by providing consistent trauma-informed support and victim orientated reporting options.</p>

<p>R6 Police Scotland should urgently take steps to ensure there is a clear and consistent process for recording victim safety plans, supported by additional training in risk assessment and safety planning for all relevant officers, staff and supervisors. This should be accompanied by guidance and pro-forma documentation to ensure all aspects are considered and to achieve consistency across the organisation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What safety provisions are available to officers • What information should be contained with a safety plan • Where safety plans should be recorded so they are accessible to those who may need to review/access them 	<p>A consistent national pro-forma template which will be securely stored within relevant iVPD records has now been produced. Safety plans will now be readily accessible to all and help ensure all relevant risks and considerations have been taken into account. This has been supported through the dissemination of additional guidance and internal communications to raise awareness.</p> <p>These improvements will provide consistent standards and a tailored and professional level of care and support, based on individual needs at an early stage of engagement.</p>
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Strategic Workforce Planning	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
<p>R6 – Police Scotland should develop a unified and expanded data science capability within the Demand and Productivity Unit</p>	<p>Data science capability and capacity has been increased through the appointment of data scientists, assistant scientists, data engineers and improved coordination within the Chief Data Office.</p>

	This enables research and projects directly aimed at improving service delivery and Officer wellbeing, helping to find innovative approaches to future challenges while contributing towards our strategic outcomes and plans
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Mental Health	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
R7 – Police Scotland should conduct a full training needs analysis for policing mental health, reflecting its published strategy, to include (but not necessarily limited to) all public-facing roles across the service.	A training needs analysis for policing mental health has now been completed. This has included a review of existing training provision, and the analysis has helped identify training and skills gaps in respect of all public-facing roles and aligned to published strategy and other existing decision making and risk assessment tools, such as the National Decision Model and THRIVE model. Engagement with key stakeholders and dependencies will continue as development of the training programme and future “business as usual” training activity now takes shape.
R14 Police Scotland and the SPA should put in place measures to monitor progress on the development and implementation of the mental health strategy and the recommendations and areas for development outlined in this review, including recommendations from the VOX lived experience report.	A comprehensive range of governance and oversight measures are now in place to drive and monitor progress across each of the stated areas.

Custody D&G	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
R13 – Police Scotland should ensure that custody staff are provided with appropriate training in relation to the administration of medication and that this is provided and refreshed in accordance with national guidance and best practice.	Significant detail around the administration of medication is already contained in the Care and Welfare SOP and is covered during the Custody Officer Induction Course. Custody officers and staff also complete an annual first aid and Officer Safety refresher. In furtherance to this, a medications management training package has been developed for dissemination to all custody staff which should help embed good practice.
R9 Dumfries and Galloway HSCP must work together with Police Scotland to ensure emergency equipment is maintained in accordance with manufacturer’s guidelines and ensure that checks are recorded appropriately.	Guidance developed to ensure appropriate maintenance and checks of AEDs and Naloxone. Maintenance of other medical equipment is the responsibility of NHS, is kept within the medical rooms. Annual testing is completed by medical staff.

Custody Lanarkshire	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
R8 – Police Scotland should ensure that environmental cleaning standards are maintained within medical rooms in line with clinical standards.	Cleaning guidance is now on display and all cleaning products are in place and used accurately with audits/logs being kept. External providers have provided a deep cleaning schedule. Staff are aware where the cleaning products are kept and how to access them and the processes for replenishment of products. This falls within the responsibility of the CSO team leader / custody officer.
R13 Police Scotland should ensure that safe and lockable storage is available and used	Guidance has been circulated to staff highlighting the importance of securing medication within locked medical

<p>consistently for controlled drugs brought in by detainees</p>	<p>cabinets. Photos have been captured and guidance within SOPs displayed. Following the correct procedures will eliminate issues with medication for individuals in custody being stored securely before and after consultation with a medical professionals.</p>
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Custody Tayside	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
<p>R2 – Police Scotland should ensure that clear lines of accountability are defined and stipulated for custody supervisors in the event of an adverse incident resulting in serious harm to a detainee.</p>	<p>Protocols and roles and responsibilities have been reaffirmed through workshops and published reminders which have been tested during adverse incident exercises. Training has been provided including input from external providers such as PIRC. An interactive partnership event has also been held.</p>

Custody Fife	
Recommendation	What we did and the impact
<p>R2 – Police Scotland should examine the extent to which local policing may at times use custody as an alternative to identifying an appropriate place of safety, and address any issues identified.</p>	<p>Clear criteria are in place in relation to the use of custody centres as a Place of Safety. CJSD, Policing Together, NHS custody health care and Scottish Government have worked together leading to specific guidance in relation to persons who are not under arrest being outlined within the new Mental Health Index.</p> <p>The document has clarified our position and reinforced the need to prioritise healthcare needs over criminal justice processes and provides Custody Officers and NHS partners with formalised guidance that they can highlight to colleagues should a person be inappropriately brought into police custody.</p>

The improvement activity undertaken to address all of the aforementioned custody recommendations enhances compliance with Health and Safety and the provisions of the Care and Welfare of Persons in Police Custody SOP and thereby reduces risk to persons in custody.

3 OTHER OPEN RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Senior Officers are responsible for ensuring improvements are prioritised within their respective areas of ownership, meaning work can progress concurrently and independently across all areas without the need for prioritisation between workstreams. Given the scale of work ongoing it is impracticable to update on all progress and therefore below represents a selected sample of recommendations from several improvement plans.

Many of the recommendations require complex organisation-level systemic and cultural change in order to be competently addressed, often dependent on the capability and capacity of multiple enabling stakeholders beyond those assigned ownership. Again, this report can only provide a snapshot of the work undertaken and being progressed.

3.2 The original target dates are shown for each; however these have all since been revised, and the remaining work is currently being assessed to accurately identify timescales.

Contact Assessment Model (CAM) 2022	
Recommendation	Position
R3 - Police Scotland and the SPA should capture the failure demand rate through the C3 and force performance framework and outcomes, to ensure the quality of service delivered to the public through CAM is monitored	<p>This is the last remaining of 8 recommendations made in August 2022. C3 are working continuously to identify and reduce inefficiencies contributing to unnecessary demand.</p> <p>C3 has invested in training for staff, designed to reduce failure demand by ensuring that the needs of the public are understood and met accurately from the outset, and this is potentially reflected in the high user satisfaction survey data included within C3 performance reporting. Failures within processes such as local</p>

	<p>appointments and the transfer of unresolved incidents between C3 and Local Policing (SC07) have been examined and steps taken to improve and standardise service levels and reduce unnecessary touchpoints.</p> <p>Compliance is being measured through daily and weekly reporting.</p> <p>The recommendation remains open while work is ongoing to consider how best to identify, record and measure failure demand within the context of C3.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was May 2023.</p>
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Domestic Abuse 2023	
Recommendation	Position
<p>R1 - Police Scotland should take action to ensure it is meeting its standard of service statutory obligations in offering the gender of interviewing officers to victims of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to improve iVPD recording compliance. Work has also been instigated to explore the eventual solution which will likely be delivered through the evolution of COS national crime recording.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Sept 2024.</p>
<p>R5 - Police Scotland should streamline the policing response to diary appointments through promoting and embedding a 'getting it right first-time approach' and defining parameters of acceptable performance. It should also put systems in place to obtain data and management information on the use and compliance of diary appointments.</p>	<p>HMICS have acknowledged that improvements have been made in respect of 'getting it right first time' as outlined within Police Scotland's response to several of the CAM recommendations.</p> <p>Improvements in relation to the second part of the recommendation; putting 'systems in place to obtain data and MI on the use and compliance of diary appointments' remain outstanding.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was March 2024.</p>

<p>R7 Police Scotland should review the role of officers involved in risk assessment and safety planning for domestic abuse incidents to provide national consistency, based on the optimum model, and ensure they are given the appropriate training and support.</p>	<p>The Public Protection Development Programme (PPDP) are currently developing delivery detail around an approved future operating model with the intention to pilot in April/May 2025. The new model will include national risk assessment and safety planning training and new standardised processes. The tier 2 safeguarding role will also be reviewed.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2024.</p>
<p>R8 Police Scotland should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all domestic abuse training incorporates an element of lived experience of victims. • as a matter of priority, introduce a programme of mandatory CPD on key topics for all operational officers, supervisors and managers. <p>Key topics for the first year should include: DASA offences, to improve officers' understanding and use of the legislation; trauma informed practices, to improve engagement with victims; and lived experience of victims, to address problematic attitudes and behaviours.</p>	<p>Significant work has been undertaken to address this recommendation. All training has for some time now been developed based on and incorporating elements of lived experience. Among the various steps taken to continue to raise awareness and improve understanding in relation to DASA, 6 new domestic abuse CPD modules have been produced and published. Although these are not presently mandatory, they have been well publicised internally and all frontline officers and staff and supervisors have been encouraged to undertake these modules.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to make changes to the modules, necessary for it to become mandatory.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2024.</p>
<p>R9 Police Scotland and the SPA need to ensure that investigative opportunities for digital evidence capture are improved and maximised for domestic abuse offences.</p>	<p>The Cyber Crime Knowledge hub was launched in Dec 2024 containing information and links to all relevant guidance documents including guidance in relation to the use of Cyber Kiosks and the Examination Request Form, including</p>

	<p>flow charts explaining the steps and journey of a device.</p> <p>Numerous internal communications have also been circulated and a comprehensive first-responders guide is now available to inform officers and staff when interacting with victims, witnesses and suspects in circumstances where the capture of digital evidence is a consideration.</p> <p>The newly developed CPD modules also provide advice on this matter.</p> <p>Evidence is currently being collated for submission to HMICS and proposed closure.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was June 2024.</p>
<p>R10 Police Scotland must, as a priority, introduce a robust system for allocation and monitoring progression of domestic abuse investigation packages at local, regional and national level to ensure there are clear channels of ownership and to improve service to victims. With the introduction of the new national crime recording system, Police Scotland should introduce a consistent national standard for domestic abuse packages, to include storage in an accessible and auditable format.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing in collaboration between DACU and the Digital Enhancement Team APU to explore the capability of COS UNIFI to house domestic abuse 'to-trace' packages. APU have agreed to develop this dashboard however it is yet to commence due to existing backlog.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was April 2024.</p>
<p>R11 Police Scotland should develop and implement effective processes for communication with victims</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to consider how best to introduce a method for recording the victim's preferred method of contact and standardise and improve the way in which</p>

<p>of domestic abuse that are victim focused and include acceptable timeframes for providing updated information. Such processes should include clear recording of preferred methods of contact, which can be accessed by relevant personnel.</p>	<p>victims are kept apprised of information while matters are being investigated.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2023.</p>
<p>R12 Police Scotland should ensure that the cadre of trained SOLOs across the organisation is sufficient to meet demand and to ensure the wellbeing of these officers.</p>	<p>SOLO numbers have increased and steps have been taken to better protect the welfare of SOLOs through the SIO forums and improved SOLO co-ordination.</p> <p>PPDP are analysing the various task undertake and demand on SOLOs to better understand how best to incorporate wellbeing and resource levels into any public protection model.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2024.</p>
<p>R13 Police Scotland should incorporate the findings and recommendations from our Strategic Workforce Planning Assurance Review in its approach to the Public Protection Development Programme. It should review its structures holistically and for its response to domestic abuse: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an in-depth and accurate picture of current and forecasted demand levels. • Set out clearly defined service level standards to meet victims' needs. 	<p>Evidence was submitted to HMICS in July 2024 outlining the aims and intentions of the PPDP and service design principles being applied.</p> <p>HMICS acknowledged the programme was still in the discovery stage and the recommendation would remain open until evidence of tested solutions had been developed and delivered.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2024.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the resource level needed to meet demand. • Implement the best model nationally and locally to effect the change needed to support the concept of investigative ownership and continuity of contact/engagement with victims. <p>Ensure the resources within that model are empowered and have the requisite skills and training to equip them in the complex area of domestic abuse.</p>	
<p>R14 Police Scotland and the SPA should put in place measures to monitor progress against the areas for development outlined in this thematic review.</p>	<p>13 Areas for Development were identified by HMICS during their inspection. Work is yet to commence on these and all 13 currently remain open.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2023.</p>

Crime Audit 2020	
Recommendation	Position
<p>R2 - Police Scotland should revise its current Crime Recording Strategy to focus on effective implementation and better consider the required level of cultural change required to improve SCRS compliance</p>	<p>The 2018 Strategy document referred to in the 2021 report is no longer available. Our strategic aims and guidance in relation to implementation are now encompassed in the current published policy and comprehensive 2024 'Scottish Crime Recording Standards and Counting Rules Third-Party Guidance'.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Sept 2022.</p>

<p>R3 Police Scotland should review its overall approach to incident compliance, considering what constitutes best practice in quality assurance processes in C3, specialist units and frontline policing, establishing clear relative roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>In 2023 a 3-stage plan was developed and SLWG stood up to progress the development of 'National Crime Management Processes'.</p> <p>The group produced a plan with 11 improvement recommendations, presented to the ACC Major Crime in April 2024.</p> <p>These recommendations once delivered will address this and the other HMICS recommendations.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Sept 2022.</p>
<p>R4 - Police Scotland should review crime management unit structures taking the opportunity to maximise the benefits of the new single national crime recording system.</p>	<p>As above. Recommendation 4, 5, and 6 of the National Crime Management Processes relate specifically.</p> <p>HMICS provided feedback in January 2025: Notwithstanding the 2025 Crime Audit, this work can be considered independently of the revised audit. The referenced "Stage 3" report appears to be the driver for this work, from which evidence could be derived and submitted with appropriate timescales.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Sept 2022.</p>
<p>R5 - Police Scotland should develop a comprehensive approach to organisational learning and training, with consistent approaches to the introduction of new or changes to legislation, to more effectively support delivery of its crime recording strategy.</p>	<p>As above. Recommendation 9 and 10 of the National Crime Management Processes relate specifically.</p> <p>HMICS provided feedback in January 2025: With additional information to support an org learning approach, this recommendation could potentially be discharged. It is clear that (putting to one side the method of training, i.e. Moodle type training) there is work ongoing in relation to organisational understanding of SCRS, which needs to be articulated here,</p>

	<p>in addition to any evidence that would support org learning in this area (e.g. new Hate Crime legislation).</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Dec 2022.</p>
<p>R6 - It is recommended that the Police Scotland COS Programme review its approach to business change as part of the implementation of the new single national crime recording system, taking the opportunity to standardise and streamline business, audit and quality assurance processes.</p>	<p>The aforementioned plan seeks to streamline and standardise business processes, which will address identified inconsistencies in approach to crime management.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was Sept 2022.</p>

Hate Crime 2021	
Recommendation	Position
<p>R6 – Police Scotland should accelerate its work with partners to improve the Third-Party Reporting arrangements, providing people with the option to report hate crime without speaking directly to the police.</p>	<p>This is the last remaining recommendation from the 2021 Thematic Inspection of Hate Crime.</p> <p>Police Scotland and Scottish Government will jointly lead work to review existing TPR arrangements. Discussions with all key partners are progressing well towards delivery of a consistent victim centred approach. Although still at early stages, service design is being progressed to aid future direction.</p> <p>The initial target for completion was June 2022.</p>

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no social implications in this report.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 There are no community implications in this report.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the progress detailed within the report.

Publication Title	Detail	Issue	Management Response and Action Plan	Owner	Assignee	Variable Target	Risk Rating	Audit Theme
Custody Argyll & WD (Joint)	R1 - Police Scotland should ensure that the maintenance and repair of crucial custody infrastructure is addressed swiftly to maintain operational capacity as well as safety and security standards.	<p>The cells complex at Clydebank comprised of 30 cells, with one cell having been re-purposed as a temporary store, leaving 29 cells functioning. Most cells were within the original part of the building, however, 11 cells were located in the adjoining modular extension, which is a more recent addition to the complex.</p> <p>Notably, two cells in the extension were temporarily closed as a consequence of a water leak emanating from the flat roof above. According to staff, this was a recurring issue that frequently reduced capacity by up to four cells at a time. The issue has been subject of longstanding maintenance requests to address the problem, however, the cause of the leak remained unresolved at the time of inspection.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing with Estates to ensure any repairs to custody estate are expedited and treated as urgent when cell capacity is reduced. Often, short-term fixes will require to be utilised in the first instance in order to maintain cell capacity, as long-term fixes require extensive planning, costing and potentially a temporary closure of a custody centre or wing whilst repairs are made.</p> <p>Longer term, with the establishment of the Custody 2030 programme, a long-term estates strategy will be devised that will explore renewing much of our aging estate.</p>	ACC Criminal Justice	CI Trish Robertson	30/09/2025	Medium	Compliance
	R2 - Police Scotland should examine the current staffing model and arrangements at Clydebank and Oban custody centres to ensure they are efficient, effective and meet the needs of the service, staff and detainees.	<p>While Oban has dedicated custody staff, the centre has limited resilience without seeking local policing backfill. There have been times when a detainee is transferred a considerable distance from Oban to Clydebank and back the following day for court, as a result of insufficient staffing at Oban.</p> <p>In one such instance, a detainee was arrested in Oban on a Friday to be held for court in Oban on Monday. However, they were transferred to Clydebank the next day due to staffing issues at Oban, and then returned for court the following Monday. This equates to a round trip of around 170 miles, on an A class road, in the back of a police van. While we recognise that such instances are not commonplace, efforts should be made to avoid this wherever possible. We also recognise that the absence of operational weekend courts, further contributes to these types of long transfer journeys taking place.</p> <p>It is rare that Clydebank operates as a PC-led custody centre. While the sergeants there accepts that criminal justice decisions could be made remotely, there was concern about the level of risk and responsibility they held. Sergeants we spoke with, highlighted that they were conflicted about being responsible for the welfare of detainees that they had not seen or fully assessed due to remote supervision. When a team leader is absent, sergeants can be very busy at Clydebank as they assume the wider responsibilities outlined above (care and welfare). However, they are also required to remotely supervise several PC-led and ancillary centres simultaneously, which can present considerable challenges.</p> <p>While we recognise that delivering an effective custody service in such a diverse landscape will come with challenges, it is anticipated that custody staff receive adequate supervision, and that the model meets the needs of detainees as well</p>	<p>Staffing levels and OBLS across the custody estate will be assessed under the Ops Model review and a report on the outcomes will be submitted in due course.</p> <p>Closures of Oban due to staffing levels are rare, however when options for overtime and local policing backfill have been explored and unsuccessful there are occasions where closures may be necessary to ensure the care and welfare of persons in custody. All efforts are made to avoid this prior to any closures taking place.</p>	ACC Criminal Justice	CI Trish Robertson	30/09/2025	Medium	Compliance

R3 - Police Scotland should introduce an effective quality assurance and audit process to ensure that expected custody standards are being met.	Current practice at the custody centres, is that only four custody records are dip sampled each month for audit and quality assurance purposes. Given that there were 563 records for March 2024, four records represent a very small proportion of these. It is appreciated that where an adverse incident occurs, managers may direct an audit to be carried out in addition to these. However, we consider that the absence of a more comprehensive audit regime could allow poor practice and inconsistency to become established. Good record keeping encourages good compliance with police, which provides greater confidence that the criminal justice ends are met, while meeting the care and welfare needs of the detainee.	Under the new CRI model, audits are now being conducted by CRIs whenever there are two on duty. In addition to this, a new Custody Audit and Compliance Sergeant is now in post. A dashboard has been created to monitor the number of audits and their outcomes and data will be provided from this in due course. Police Scotland will continue to examine what a suitable staffing model would look like to support an improved audit and compliance function.	ACC Criminal Justice	CI Trish Robertson	01/06/2025	Medium	Resources
	This issue has been highlighted in recent inspection reports, and a recommendation was made in our report on the inspection of custody centres in Greater Glasgow in June 2019. Recommendation 5 from that report states that: "Police Scotland should improve the adequacy and quality of information being recorded in custody by providing guidance and training to staff and by using quality assurance and audit processes."						
	This had previously been addressed by Police Scotland through the introduction of dedicated quality assurance roles and processes, however, this has diminished over time. We consider that Police Scotland should revisit how they carry out quality assurance and audit practices to ensure that required standards are met.						
R4 - Police Scotland, supported by Glasgow City HSCP, should ensure that used sharps bins awaiting uplift are stored in line with current guidance.	Sharps bins, which are used to dispose of used sharps, were correctly labelled and had temporary closures in place. Clinical waste was disposed of in line with guidance. The local hospital holds the contract for the collection of clinical waste and sharps bins. Inspectors saw that clinical waste was stored securely in a locked area, however, used sharps bins were stored in an unlocked cupboard.	A review of sharps bins and their collection is currently being conducted by the CJSD Continuous Improvement Unit, as it was established that there was disparity in the type of bins being used and collection processes across the country. This review will allow for consistency of process and safer storage in accordance with guidelines.	ACC Criminal Justice	CI Trish Robertson	01/06/2025	Medium	Better Practice
R9 - Argyll and Bute HSCP and Police Scotland should ensure that the healthcare environment is maintained to support effective cleaning.	The healthcare room at the centre required some upgrading, with staining around the skylight area and some damage to the walls, which would impact on effective cleaning.	This will be escalated via Estates to ensure that this is rectified in upcoming refurbishment work at Oban Police Station.	ACC Criminal Justice	CI Trish Robertson	01/06/2025	Medium	Governance

<p>AFD1 - The custody centres should review internal and external security features and take appropriate steps to mitigate risks.</p>	<p>We examined the route into both custody centres and found both rear yards doubled as parking areas for operational police vehicles and in the case of Oban, Sheriff Court vehicles, Both yards were accessed directly from the public road and there were no notices or signs restricting unauthorised entry, albeit both approaches were well covered by CCTV, viewable from the custody office. Both yards were bounded by walls, however, in the case of Clydebank, the wall was low and easily scalable.</p>	<p>Full reviews and risk assessments will be conducted at both centres alongside Estates and Health & Safety colleagues to identify any mitigations required.</p>	<p>ACC Criminal Justice</p>	<p>CI Trish Robertson</p>	<p>01/06/2025 Advisory</p>	<p>Resources</p>
	<p>Both yards featured steel gates/barriers. At Oban, the steel barrier was in a state of disrepair and had missing steel bars/panels. The gates would not prevent pedestrian access should it be required and while they could be used to prevent vehicular access, we were told they were rarely closed. Notably, inspectors were informed that officers had, at times, been confronted by aggressive members of the public encroaching on to the insecure rear yard at Clydebank.</p>					
	<p>On inspection, there were several security issues relating to the initial access routes to both custody centres, which could present a potential escape risk.</p>					
	<p>Access to Clydebank custody centre was via two initial unsecured doors leading to a small vestibule and main access door secured by a keypad and intercom linked to the custody office. This space led to a further lobby area from which access could be gained through further doors to the detainee access room, custody office, walk-through holding cell leading to the charge bar and fourth unsecured door. This opened into the main station stairwell and nearby "push bar" fire escape leading to the unsecured rear yard.</p>					
	<p>In addition, the direct return route from the initial vestibule area to the rear</p>					
<p>AFD2 - The Oban custody centre should ensure that the automated external defibrillator is situated in an easily identifiable position, with clear signage in place for direction to its location.</p>	<p>The Clydebank office stored fire safety equipment and first aid materials including automated external defibrillator (AED) devices. In Oban, however, the AED was stored on a shelf in the main staff office and there were no associated signs or posters in the charge bar, or elsewhere in the centre, to highlight its location. This could result in an unnecessary delay should a member of staff be new to the centre or in the event that someone is covering a shift from one of the other centres.</p>	<p>The AED has been moved to a more accessible location and guidance on the maintenance and checking of AED devices has been developed and published by the NPoCN.</p>	<p>ACC Criminal Justice</p>	<p>CI Trish Robertson</p>	<p>31/03/2025 Advisory</p>	<p>Better Practice</p>

<p>AFD3 - The Oban custody centre should make safe ceiling lighting fixtures in cells, which in their current state are potentially removable or present a ligature risk.</p>	<p>All of Oban's seven operational cells were inspected, which were distributed three on the ground floor and four on the first floor. The first-floor cells are routinely used by GEO-Amey (detainee transport agency), to hold detainees for court as the adjacent Sheriff Court building has no cells of its own.</p> <p>All cells at Oban were lit by way of glass brick windows and ceiling lights, however, although the light switches are dual function, only one light setting is achieved.</p> <p>A potential hazard was also discovered concerning the integrity and placement of the light fittings within the cells on the upper floor. Cells on the upper floor had retrofitted internal lights that have been fitted over or next to uneven ceiling features, which in the case of two cells, has resulted in small gaps between the light fixture cowling and the ceiling representing either a ligature risk or a risk of detainee access to a removable and potentially hazardous fixture.</p>	<p>This will be escalated via Estates to ensure that this is rectified in upcoming refurbishment work at Oban Police Station. It will also be reported to GeoAmey as they often utilise these cells, ensuring that they can put appropriate mitigations in place until rectified.</p>	<p>ACC Criminal Justice</p>	<p>CI Trish Robertson</p>	<p>01/06/2025 Advisory</p>	<p>Better Practice</p>
<p>This was reported to the custody officer during our inspection and noted in the custody centre maintenance file for immediate attention.</p> <p>AFD4 - The Oban custody centre should ensure that custody constables have undertaken appropriate training relevant to the role and have the required level of system access.</p>	<p>Inspectors observed five detainees being booked in to custody; three at Clydebank and two at Oban. In all instances, staff were thorough and professional. They built a good rapport with detainees and were respectful. We noted that custody staff received advance notification of detainee particulars from arresting officers, either by telephone or radio, to enable the commencement of background checks. Custody staff at Clydebank checked CHS, PNC, the national custody system and iVPD, prior to the arrival of the arresting officers.</p> <p>At Oban, the custody constable on duty had not completed the necessary training to undertake checks on CHS and PNC systems. The officer had to telephone Clydebank to obtain background information, which can cause unnecessary delays. We were advised this was also the case for other custody constables based at the centre.</p>	<p>Training will be arranged as a matter of priority. In the meantime, workarounds are in place whereby contact can be made with other centres to arrange for checks to be conducted.</p>	<p>ACC Criminal Justice</p>	<p>CI Trish Robertson</p>	<p>01/06/2025 Advisory</p>	<p>Better Practice</p>

HMICS Missing Person Improvement Plan

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PS Owner ACC Policing Together

SPA Owner N/A

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Governance	Meeting	Date
Owner	Policing Together SLT	19-Dec-24
Internal Board	PPMB	14-Jan-25
SPA Committee Returned to HMICS	People Committee	19-Mar-25

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Recommendation	Management Response/Business Drivers	Action to be Taken	Strategic Alignment	Key Deliverables	Target Dates
<p>Recommendation 1 Police Scotland should promote the national missing person framework's aims, objectives and commitments to officers and staff across divisions, and emphasise that this underpins its strategic direction.</p>	<p>The National Missing Person Framework for Scotland sets out the collective aims, objectives and commitments that all agencies should work to in response to missing persons. In the absence of a missing person internal strategy Police Scotland rely upon the Framework to provide our purpose and vision to deliver our response. Whilst the Framework is known within core areas we must highlight the key strategic aims and objectives to drive Police Scotlands tactical and operational response to missing persons, including partnerships, preventions, interventions and our investigative approach. We will ensure that our refreshed documents and comms strategy reflect our commitment to the framework objectives. Promoting the Framework internally within Police Scotland will provide a greater understanding of our roles and responsibilities to deliver a positive response to missing person investigations. This allows Police Scotland to interact with partner agencies to develop preventions and interventions for people at risk whilst promoting community wellbeing.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comms strategy for delivering framework content across the organisation. • Engagement with Framework Working Group to establish timescales for delivery of refreshed Framework • Consider development of strategic policy on a page. • Ensuring our policy documents align to and reference framework principles. • Consider development of implementation plan to promote the Framework aims and objectives within operational training. 	<p>Strategic Outcome SO1 - Threats to public safety and wellbeing are resolved by a proactive and responsive police service.</p>	<p>Publication of refreshed National Missing Person Framework for Scotland. Publication of refreshed Police Scotland missing persons policy and guidance document sets with Framework reference embedded within. Operational Training materials refreshed with Framework Aims and objectives embedded within.</p>	<p>30/12/2025</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 Police Scotland should ensure that there is consistent national leadership in place to direct missing persons policy, establish outcome targets and support effective operational delivery.</p>	<p>Police Scotland has some governance in place in respect of missing and have recently re-established the Strategic Oversight Board. Some governance is established at divisional level however gaps exist between national and local governance. The result of this is inconsistencies in approach to the policing response, policy and procedures. By implementing this improvement action, we seek to formalise, introduce best practise and consistency to how Police Scotland responds to missing persons, and how we interact with partners to deliver on the missing person Framework commitments; this will enable us to clarify and define Police Scotland and partners' roles and responsibilities. Establishing proper national leadership forums that link directly to divisional forums will promote best practice and enable adherence to the national Framework within each division, whilst also identifying ineffective performance. Local performance can also be measured against national consistency to ensure a corporate response tailored to deliver across Scotland.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and management of risks associated with internal and external national governance. • Develop National Tactical Working Group to establish clear links with Strategic Oversight Board for missing. • Consider development of implementation plan to deliver best practise through divisional tactical forums that examine local missing person demand and risks. 	<p>Strategic Outcome SO1 - Threats to public safety and wellbeing are resolved by a responsive service.</p>	<p>Establishment of National Tactical Working Group for missing persons. Delivery of divisional tactical forums for missing persons.</p>	<p>30/06/2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 Police Scotland should re-establish the missing person strategic governance forum to provide scrutiny, oversight and governance for matters relating to the police and partner response to missing persons.</p>	<p>The missing person strategic overview board is an internal board and was previously established until falling into abeyance in 2022. However, the board has been re-established and was chaired again in April 2024 by CS for Policing Together. The board has met twice since then then and a refreshed Terms of Reference has been agreed. The board delivers key strategic direction in respect of Police Scotland's approach to missing. We acknowledge a multi-agency forum at strategic level is key to ensuring that partnership contribution is established. The establishment of this Strategic Forum will provide increased focus and oversight of Missing Persons at Force Executive level and is key to enabling engagement with partner agencies at strategic level to ensure multi agency roles and responsibilities in respect of the Framework are understood and defined within parameters of local demographics.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish Strategic Oversight Board • Consider the establishment of Partnership Delivery Group for missing. 	<p>Strategic Outcome SO2, the needs of local communities are addressed through effective service delivery</p>	<p>Re-establishment of Missing Person Governance forum. Establishment of any new agreed partnership delivery group for missing persons.</p>	<p>30/09/2025</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4 Police Scotland should bring together all operational practice guidance relevant to missing persons in one place on the police intranet – including protocols and procedures, shared learning, and the national missing persons toolkit – to enable easy access for managers and staff. Area for Development 5 aligns with this recommendation and actions will address the improvement required - Police Scotland should examine the processes and practice relevant to the management of long-term missing person enquiries, and introduce necessary improvements.</p>	<p>Police Scotland operational guidance for missing persons is located in one place within the Policing Together Divisional pages however it is recognised that these pages are not as visible or accessible as they could be and Intranet access needs to be improved. A review is currently being undertaken of guidance content however opportunities should be explored in respect of accessibility options. Going forward key areas of specialist guidance will be contained within a toolkit for missing persons located in a central area and visible for officers and staff. Having such guidance available and more visible would benefit investigations and decision making around missing. By implementing this improvement action we aim to create an accessible, centralised resource facility that supports supervisors and staff. Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current policy, procedure and guidance to ensure relevance and currency • Review the intranet space available for missing in respect of visibility. • Develop a clear, intuitive and usable toolkit for missing. • Consider development of implementation plan to promote missing persons operational guidance across the organisation. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO4 Our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to serve the public.</p>	<p>Completion of full review of the current suite of missing persons policy and guidance documents sets. Delivery of missing person supplementary guidance document. Establishment of single visible location for missing persons document sets to be located.</p>	<p>30/09/2025</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 Police Scotland should review the training provided to officers and staff regarding missing persons and ensure that it is adequate and meets the requirements of the role. Area for Development 3 aligns with this recommendation and actions will address the improvement required - Police Scotland should examine the level of access to the national missing persons application required by service advisors to improve operational efficiency and service delivery in response to missing persons.</p>	<p>It is essential across Police Scotland that there is consistency and currency of training material which meets the needs for the differing ranks, roles and responsibilities across the organisation underpinned by the National Framework. Any review work will align and reflect these standards. By comprehensively reviewing Police Scotland’s suite of training options, we will ensure that training packages are fit for purpose and accurately reflect the needs of the landscape and communities which we police. In turn this will empower our officers and staff to accurately assess and manage risk in respect of missing, and each officer and staff member will be able to conduct their duties robustly pertaining to each of the following key strands- investigation, interventions, preventions and partnership approaches. Delivering a standardised approach and review to the training available will minimise risk to Police Scotland as each officer and staff members role specific understanding of their responsibilities will be solidified. Implementing this approach will create comprehensive training materials and routes for all police officer and staff involved in the delivery of missing. Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information on existing missing person training, guidance materials and intended audiences, including Framework objectives. • Consider Training Needs Analysis to review existing training and identify potential gaps. • Consultation with officers and staff to identify training gaps. • Engage with Local Policing Service Delivery Team (LP-SDR) in relation to plans for frontline Sergeant and Inspector skills training. • Engage with LTD and C3 to develop plan for training. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO4 Our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to serve the public.</p>	<p>Assessment and any subsequent outcome relating to any identified need for a Training Needs Analysis to be undertaken. Completion of review of existing training material linked to missing persons. Delivery of refreshed suite of training material for missing person across the organisation.</p>	<p>31/12/2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 Police Scotland should develop a role profile and operational guidance for divisional coordinators, and ensure that the role is supported and enabled to fulfil tasks and responsibilities effectively. Area for Development 1 aligns with this recommendation and actions will address the improvement required - Police Scotland should examine the processes and practice relevant to the management of long-term missing person enquiries, and introduce necessary improvements.</p>	<p>The role of operational co-ordinator is vital to enable the consistent delivery of protocols, prevention strategies partnership engagement and quality assurance. Without an operational co-ordinator established within each division, protected to provide focus upon missing persons, framework objectives will not be consistently delivered. This can have a detrimental effect on organisational risk and reputation. Consultation will be undertaken within local divisions and the Strategic Oversight Board to discuss and establish a position going forward for the role requirements outlining its benefits and potential risk if not supported. By properly defining the role of the divisional co-ordinator, both at operational and tactical level, focus and priority will be given to the role which is a fundamental key area of delivering support to divisions by ensuring quality assurance, benchmarking best practise and the co-ordination of resources/ partners. Co-ordinators are the conduit to ensuring effective investigations and policing response which in turn reduces the risk to vulnerable individuals and minimises potential reputational risk. The development of suitable guidance for co-ordinators will ensure they are effective in their role. Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an organisation consult with local policing and staff to define and outline roles and responsibilities of the divisional operational and tactical missing person co-ordinator. • Develop suitable guidance to support the operational and tactical co-ordinator roles. Consult with LP-SDR and Op Evolve in respect of the Target Operating Model and to define the divisional co-ordinator roles at both operational and tactical level. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO4 Our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to serve the public.</p>	<p>Establishment of an organisational position that prioritises the role of the operational co-ordinator. Establishment of role profile for divisional co-ordinators. Delivery of operational guidance for operational co-ordinators.</p>	<p>30/12/2025</p>

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<p>Recommendation 7 Police Scotland should develop a version of the national missing persons application that has full functionality on mobile devices, and respond swiftly to any technical problems and potential improvements identified by users.</p>	<p>It has been recognised for a significant period that to fully capitalise from the efficiencies that improved NMPA functionalities could offer, focus and prioritisation is needed to develop the app. Such improvements are necessary to reduce reputational risk and drive efficient investigation from the earliest opportunity. Equipping our frontline officers with an intuitive and user-friendly application will help avoid double keying, saving their time for other investigative tasks and allowing supervisory officer to assess and accept the risks at an early stage of the enquiry to ensure the appropriate deployment of investigative strategy. The establishment of internal partnerships with a shared ambition and vision will deliver the necessary continuous improvement to the application both for desktop and mobile. A mobile focussed NMPA will improve the investigative response allowing vulnerable people to be traced in a timeous and effective manner. Establishing an effective pathway to delivering continuous improvement to both desktop and mobile version, driven by first responders and investigator’s alike, will ensure our software packages are fit for purpose as technology moves forward. The establishment of internal partnerships , with a shared prioritisation, ambition and vision, will deliver the necessary continuous improvement to the application both for desktop and mobile.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise funding opportunities for NMPA improvements. • Develop a mobile application that is intuitive, reliable and minimises double keying. • Establish working group between DSEG (Digital Support and Evolution Group), NMPU and frontline users to ensure continued operability and improvement of the Application. • Consider developing comms and guidance strategy alongside improvement delivery. • Include NMPA improvements as a standing item on Strategic Oversight Board Agenda. 	<p>Strategic Outcome SO5 Policing is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.</p>	<p>Establishment of working group involving key stakeholders. Recruitment of contractor developer and subsequent review of application functionality on mobile device. Delivery of improvements to application that enhance reliability and usability of NMPA on mobile devices. Evidence of established sustainable pathway for product enhancement.</p>	<p>30/06/2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 Police Scotland should continue to engage with partners and service providers at a national and local level to encourage greater adherence to the collective commitments of the national missing persons framework. This should include engagement on the implementation of early intervention and prevention approaches, and the use of national and local protocols.</p> <p>Area for Development 4 aligns with this recommendation and actions will address the improvement required - Police Scotland should ensure that service advisors are aware of national protocols and their relevance and, where possible, have an understanding of the type of local protocols that are in place and what benefits these can bring.</p>	<p>The need to ensure a multi-agency strategic response to drive the aims, objectives and commitments of the framework is recognised as key to delivering a national partnership approach to missing person. The framework principles are admired from elsewhere in the UK and it is vital that we maximise the opportunities it brings. There is greater need for interagency co-operation to ensure a focussed and consistent local delivery taken from best practise whilst ensuring National Implementation Project partners are fully engaged. A shared understanding and commitment to the Framework aims and objectives, aligned with the knowledge and use of national and local partnership protocols are clearly beneficial in the efficacy of multi-agency responses to missing person matters. By delivering a whole systems approach to address the causes of missing incidents, we are able to address causations and triggers in a person-centred manner, whilst ensuring an effective response to missing episodes. This results in both the safeguarding and wellbeing of vulnerable persons in our communities.</p> <p>Implementing this approach will help develop a multi-agency strategic response to missing framework.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and review existing partnership policy to enable best practise nationally • Engage with National Implementation Project Co-ordinators to develop flexible and effective pathways to national delivery of protocols. • Engagement with Care Inspectorate around implementation of Framework commitments. • Engage with key internal partners to consider how best to develop awareness of protocols • Consider development of implementation plan for protocol delivery for approval at Strategic Oversight Board. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO3 The public, communities and partners are engaged, involved and have confidence in policing.</p>	<p>Consolidation of review and engagement outcomes with key stakeholders and development of delivery plan to achieve all elements of recommendation. Development and delivery of processes that establish a sustainable pathway of engagement and shared learning that delivers best use of available protocols, interventions and prevention strategies.</p>	<p>30/06/2026</p>

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<p>Recommendation 10 Police Scotland should work with partners to ensure that clear and co-ordinated arrangements are in place to conduct return discussions across divisions. These should align effectively with safe and well checks, and all relevant information gathered from such discussions should be shared between partners.</p>	<p>The Missing Person Framework places significant value in undertaking meaningful return discussions in order that agencies can ensure learning, understanding and provision of an appropriate response to a persons personal circumstances. It is acknowledged that across the country there are a inconsistencies in the approach to return discussions. There is opportunity to work with the National Implementation Project to focus on key areas such as repeat missing episodes. Return home discussions are of most benefit when conducted by the right person, often chosen by the individual. The outcomes of discussions should drive preventions and interventions for better life outcomes. This must be a cohesive multi agency approach to enable the effective flexible delivery of bespoke arrangements at a local level, based on demographics delivering best practise using a person-centred approach. Identifying best practise examples, based on Framework objectives, will identify the processes that work and can be adapted locally. Being able to share relevant information with partners is key to enabling a multi-agency preventative approach to supporting those who may go missing in an effort to reduce repeat missing episodes and the distress encountered by both the missing person and those in their circle. Implementing this improvement action will develop a cohesive multi-agency approach to return discussions.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and engagement with National Co-ordinators for Framework Implementation Project to identify barriers and develop an aligned national approach. • Scope and review existing partnership policy to enable best practise nationally. • Promoting framework guidance in respect of corporate parenting responsibilities. • Engagement with Care Inspectorate to share current working practises, relationships and areas for improvement. Engagement with Information Assurance around best practise for Information Sharing Agreement requirements. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO3 The public, communities and partners are engaged, involved and have confidence in policing.</p>	<p>Scoping of survey and engagement work outcomes and development of policy and guidance that addresses and overcomes identified barriers. The establishment of multi agency pathways to deliver consistent shared approaches to return discussions nationally.</p>	<p>30/06/2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 Police Scotland should routinely evaluate the quality of its missing persons operations to pinpoint areas for improvement, using that knowledge to drive improvement, reduce demand and improve outcomes for missing people and their families. Area for Development 2 aligns with this recommendation and actions will address the improvement required - Police Scotland should ensure that quality assurance tasks are undertaken competently and consistently at each stage of the process.</p>	<p>Police Scotland should ensure quality assurance of investigations at all stages of a police incident/ investigation. Learning points and best practise should be shared via the Strategic Governance Group via the National Missing Person Unit. Such learning should be embedded within guidance and training to drive best practise. Police Scotland will continue to engage with internal stakeholders, public partners and academia to understand causation factors to allow the development and implementation of partnership prevention strategies. Implementing this approach will establish processes for the analysis and learning of investigation to inform partnership prevention strategies. By developing routine evaluation of missing persons operations we will be able to quality assure our investigations to develop an effective response that will help deliver preventions and interventions with partner agencies and key stakeholders, thereby reducing the demand on frontline resources and positively impact community wellbeing.</p> <p>Lead - ACC Policing Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish appropriate quality assurance tasks to be carried out locally and nationally throughout each stage of an investigation, considering use of technology to deliver. • Utilising existing data output to develop better understanding of trends, and emerging threats of risk and harm to enable more targeted approaches to investigations and partnership engagement. • Engage with SPA re reporting expectations for missing persons. • Consider how to enable best use of Academic research to deliver a better understanding of missing and improve policing response and outcomes. 	<p>Strategic Outcome, SO5 Policing is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.</p>	<p>Embedding quality assurance tasks within routine scrutiny processes. The development and delivery of framework and processes that enables the organisation to respond to performance outputs and deliver improvement where necessary.</p>	<p>30/06/2026</p>

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BRIEFING PAPER FOR INFORMATION OF SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION	
For Publication	Yes
Date	19 March 2025
Author / Approved by	ACC Policing Together
Attachments: No	

HMICS Inspection – Police Response to Missing Persons in Scotland

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the SPA Policing Performance Committee with an overview of the Police Scotland planned improvement activity in response to the findings of the recent His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) inspection on the Policing response to Missing Persons in Scotland.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

BACKGROUND

In October 2023, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) commenced a thematic review of the policing response to missing persons in Scotland, publishing the review in October 2024.

The learning from the review has been used by Police Scotland to develop a plan (Item 4.1 Appendix B) which will support Police Scotland in delivering improvements in our response to missing persons.

The report identified 11 recommendations and 6 Areas for Development.

Assistant Chief Constable for Policing Together will oversee the delivery of the improvement plan in response to the HMICS review.

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The recommendations and areas for development from the HMICS review are detailed in **Item 4.1 Appendix B – Missing Persons Improvement Plan**.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

This report provides Police Scotland's approach to developing responses to the recommendations and Areas for Development identified within the HMICS review.

The Improvement Plan has been developed by an internal Police Scotland working group comprised of officers and staff from Policing Together and Risk, Assurance and Inspection, including staff in senior leadership roles.

The key considerations that have been taken into account when developing improvement actions are outlined below:

- Alignment with organisational strategy
- Desired outcomes
- Milestones to measure performance
- Strategic/operational/divisional risks
- Responsibilities-Strategic/action owners

The Improvement Plan (Item 4.1 Appendix B) presents our management response, intended actions, milestones, and key deliverables along with target dates.

An internal working group has been created and will be liaising with all key internal stakeholders as well as external stakeholders such as SPA, Scottish Government and HMICS.

ALIGNMENT WITH ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

The development actions from the review have been considered within the wider policing context of our Strategic Outcomes. The improvement actions have been aligned to the Police Scotland Strategic Outcomes and are detailed within the Improvement Plan.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Where improvement actions are not included in Quarterly Performance Reports, progress will be reported within the wider Improvement Plan updates to the Policing Performance Committee.

GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

ACC Policing Together is the Executive Lead for this Improvement Plan, with Chief Superintendent Policing Together designated SRO.

Approval in respect of the Improvement Plan has been received through Policing Performance Management Board on 14 January 2025.

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In consideration of operational priorities, capacity and dependencies of the contributing Divisions/Departments the actions and timescales are considered achievable.

Regular updates will be provided on Improvement Plan progress to the Missing Person Strategic Oversight Board and the SPA Policing Performance Committee:

- (i) Key achievements.
- (ii) Recommendations closed in the period – outcomes and impact on service delivery.
- (iii) Recommendations in progress – emerging challenges/risks to delivery and rationale for changes to target dates.

Updates will be provided in accordance with standard reporting arrangements requested by the Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Recommendation 7 highlights the need for investment in the National Missing Person Application, particularly the mobile version, but also to ensure establishment of an improvement pathway for both the mobile and desktop version. Any IT upgrade or improvement will have a cost element, however through the revenue investment group pathway, £50,000 of financial support has already been secured to deliver the necessary work to provide confidence in respect of connectivity issues for the mobile device version. Digital Support and Evolution Group lead in this area and work is well underway in delivering this improvement.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications in this report. It is acknowledged that any change to the whole system approach could positively benefit frontline policing and as stated in the review, afford Police Scotland's effectiveness and efficiency in performing its traditional role of protecting life.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications in this report.

REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There would be reputational implications should the recommendations not be discharged, however there are no anticipated challenges with meeting the requirements of the recommendations or areas for development from this inspection.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no social implications in this report.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT

The improvements delivered by these recommendations will undoubtedly improve the service to the public and therefore the communities Police Scotland serves.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Equality, diversity, and human rights are embedded within existing missing persons guidance and practice and will be considered at all stages of improvement plan delivery.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications in this report.