



Policing Issue Inspections Thematic

Issue 11



July 2023

- This Monthly Digest highlights and draws key insights from a range of relevant publications. These insights and subsequent commentary have been developed to provide a national context to key issues and support oversight.
- The themes covered in this Issue are:
 - **Inspections:** HMICFRS recently published an annual assessment of policing in England and Wales, with this section noting findings and recommendations relevant to Scotland.
 - **Human rights:** Covering recent developments by Scottish Government in their consultation for a 'Human Rights Bill for Scotland'.
 - **Violence Against Women and Girls:** This thematic area covers two publications – 1) an Independent Strategic Review into funding and commissioning of VAWG services by the Scottish Government; and 2) a survey of Scottish young people's attitudes to VAWG.
- Please contact SPAStrategyandPerformance@spa.police.uk with any specific questions or feedback on topics you would like to be included in future editions.

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Inspections Thematic

State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022

HMICFRS, 9th June 2023: [Link here](#)

Context

- Research shows that public confidence in English and Welsh police has decreased over the last few years. The [Institute for Government](#) theorise that a “deterioration” in public attitudes to policing is likely due to highly publicised cases of police misconduct.
- This review, along with the [Casey Review](#) (which looked specifically at the Metropolitan Police Service) have both provided in depth analysis of issues impacting policing performance.
- Following the appointment of the new HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary (England and Wales) in April 2022, this is his first annual report to the Secretary of State.
- HMICFRS recommendations are relevant to police forces in England and Wales, with progress against recommendations regularly published on the HMICFRS website. The equivalent body in Scotland is HMICS, with progress against recommendations for Police Scotland reported to the Authority’s Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC).

Summary/Findings

The report outlines three key thematic areas that HMICFRS assessed as having impacted on the current state of policing in England and Wales:

- 1) **The police aren’t always focusing on the issues that matter most to the public**
 - Public perception and victim experience of the police: Research shows that victims are becoming less satisfied with how they are treated by police. The HMICFRS police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections include a victim service assessment, which considers a victim’s experience from the initial point of contact with police. HMICFRS note that on “too many occasions”, police fail to give an adequate level of service to victims.
 - Factors affecting police performance: This includes demands placed on policing and the lack of resources at the disposal of police. HMICFRS discuss the fact that policing has historically been unsuccessful at making a “compelling” case for funding due to difficulties in specifying demand. This section also notes that the state of the wider criminal justice system (including the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS], courts, prisons and the Probation Service) also impacts the efficacy of policing.
 - The role of the police needs to be more tightly defined: The role of police has expanded over recent years. The impact of mental health calls is also specifically called out as an example of police time “being spent performing the work of other public services”.

Inspections Thematic (continued)

Summary/Findings

2) The police aren't always getting the basics right

- Responding to the public and investigating crime are still the worst-performing areas: 'Volume' crime (i.e. any crime which, through its sheer volume, has a significant impact on the community and the ability of the local police to tackle it) does not always get the police time and attention it deserves and performance varies across areas.
- Effective neighbourhood policing is vital for prevention: Neighbourhood policing has seen a significant decline, however HMICFRS argue that it is an essential component to build and maintain relationships with local communities and to act as a deterrent of crime. Furthermore, forces that prioritise neighbourhood policing can better plan long-term solutions. As such, the report urges policing to view prevention as a core to all policing activity.
- Stop and search is an essential tool that needs to be better understood: The report advocates for increased understanding of stop and search as a tool to prevent crime, drawing out a recommendation for commissioning research into evaluating stop and search. This is particularly in relation to higher rates of stop and search of those in the BAME community.

3) Governance, leadership and workforce reform

- Selecting and supporting the right leaders: The report recommends a requirement for Police and Crime Commissioners to consult with HMICFRS when appointing a senior officer.
- Standards and culture must improve: Following on from the [Inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service](#) report published in November 2022, a recent review of progress against the recommendations was commissioned by the Home Secretary. HMICFRS found varied progress against recommendations across forces.
- Dismissing corrupt and incompetent officers: The police do not always use the tools at their disposal to dismiss those unsuitable to serve as police officers, and the quality of misconduct investigations needs to improve.
- Recruiting the right people and keeping them in the service: This area focused on the decline in real-terms officer pay, the high number of officers who have left policing, and concerns around the wellbeing of officers.

The report concludes by noting that policing has a considerable population of dedicated staff and volunteers who are committed to serving the public, but that there is a limited window to repair public confidence.

There are three recommendations made:

1. reviewing legislation to make HMICFRS's remit of inspection clearer and clarifying its power to inspect policing functions delivered by police and crime commissioners;

Inspections Thematic (continued)

2. re-establishing the role of the inspectors of constabulary in selecting and appointing police chief officers; and
3. new research into the deterrent value of stop and search and the causes of disproportionality in its use.

Whilst the remit of the report is limited to English and Welsh police, many areas raised in the report are also applicable to policing in Scotland. However there are also some areas where Scotland already has in place measures which reflect suggestions for improvement such as the Authority involving HMICS as an independent advisor in all senior officer recruitment processes.

Previous Oversight by the Authority

- Stop and search data are regularly published by Police Scotland, with the most recent update brought to Policing Performance Committee (PPC) in [June 2023](#). The disproportionality of searches of BAME individuals in Scotland has also been raised, with the National Stop and Search Unit committing to further investigation of these higher rates.
- Police Scotland have made a [public statement](#) committing to ensuring high standards of vetting officers.
- There has been previous reporting to Complaints and Conduct Committee on [Continuous Integrity Screening](#), with the update noting that an annual re-vetting programme will result in over 1,200 vetting reviews of officers and staff being conducted every year.
- Police Scotland have also reported on the [progression of recommendations related to professional boundaries](#) in November 2022 to the Complaints and Conducts Committee. This was a result of the review commissioned by DCC Taylor into all complaints and conduct matters between 1st January 2017 and 21st October 2021.
- People Committee [receives quarterly wellbeing updates](#) from Police Scotland, as well as quarterly updates on [resourcing](#). In addition, discussions regarding 2023/24 pay settlements are currently underway via the Police Negotiating Board.
- Mental health demand has been regularly reported on by Police Scotland and the Authority convened an event on [Mental Health, Vulnerability and Policing](#) in December 2022 and [Policing & Trauma](#) in April 2023.
- The Authority approved the Hate Crime Act Initial Business Case (IBC) at May Resources Committee, which covers those parts of the Act that Police Scotland is required to implement. This project will allow Police Scotland to discharge recommendations made by HMICS in relation to training officers and staff in the provisions outlined in the Act.

Inspections Thematic (continued)

Future Oversight by the Authority

- [Policing Together](#), the Police Scotland EDI Strategy, was agreed in September 2022 and will be reported regularly through People Committee. Metrics relevant to this strategy have been incorporated to the [Performance Framework](#) presented to PPC in June 2023.
- Police Scotland brought an update on its [Local Policing Service Delivery Review](#) to June 2023 PPC, outlining pilot work underway to gather user insights which will inform a collaborative redesign of local policing provision. Further updates on the work of the review will be presented to the Authority and Policing Performance Committee.
- The Authority's [Community Confidence Action Research](#) reports on community confidence in policing in areas across Scotland, with key findings (such as a lack of visible policing within the area) drawing parallels to areas raised in the HMICFRS report. The project continues to publish outputs which are published publicly on the Authority's website.
- The [Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) is currently at Stage 1 in the Scottish Parliament. Whilst this would have limited direct implications for the Authority, this Bill seeks to improve the experience of victims within the criminal justice system.
- The [Police \(Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) is currently at Stage 1 in the Scottish Parliament. This Bill requires the police to have a code of ethics, to make changes with regards to the handling of police misconduct, to increase the functions of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) and to introduce advisory board for the commissioner.
- An item is being brought to July Change Board which will bring a collated a view of all legislation currently in progress which will have an impact on Police Scotland, including the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021. This should may be considered by the Authority at future meetings.
- HMICS are conducting a Thematic Inspection of Organisational Culture. The [Terms of Reference](#) confirms the key objective to "*assure quality of vetting & renewals & whether these effectively identify potential misconduct*" and will consider issues identified in the HMICFRS [inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#). Specific findings with regards to vetting are likely to be published ahead of broader inspection report and are due in July 2023.

External Sources

- NPCC - [Response to HMICFRS State of Policing 2022 report](#) – 9th June 2023
- APCC – [APCC response to HMICFRS State of Policing report 2022](#) – 9th June 2023