

Diverging under pressure – An overview of 2018/19 PEEL inspections

This report gives an overview of the themes from the 2018/19 PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspections. With the publication of the final 14 force reports from our third tranche of inspections, this report reflects on findings from all 43 force inspections to draw together national themes in policing.

PEEL is the annual assessment of police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS assess forces in three ways to find out:

- how effective they are at preventing and investigating crime, protecting vulnerable people and tackling serious organised crime;
- how efficiently they manage demand and plan for the future; and
- how legitimately they treat the public, how ethically they behave, and how they treat their workforce.

The findings, in the form of a letter was published on 7th February 2020. There are no recommendations.

The full report can be viewed here

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/peel-spotlight-report-diverging-under-pressure-2018-19-overview.pdf>

Police and Crime Commissioner's response

I welcome Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) PEEL Spotlight Report - Diverging under pressure, an overview of 2018/19 PEEL inspections published in February 2020.

As a Police and Crime Commissioner it is of course vital that I understand HMICFRS views on Devon and Cornwall Police through our own integrated PEEL assessment, however this report provides me with a fascinating and useful insight into the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Whilst this report makes no specific recommendations for Devon and Cornwall Police, I have consulted with the Chief Constable and we agree that the overall findings are of interest.

Although this report covers a diverse range of issues, there are 6 key themes on which I would like to make specific comment:

Protecting vulnerable people



It is heartening to learn that throughout England and Wales, Forces have greatly improved their ability to protect vulnerable people and support victims. As you know Devon and Cornwall Police have been graded as 'good' at protecting vulnerable people in the Force's most recent Integrated PEEL inspection. Supporting vulnerable individuals and communities also sits at the very heart of my Police and Crime Plan and is reflected in my commissioning of over £5.4 million of services for victims of crime and other vulnerable individuals each and every year.

Giving victims the support they need

When someone is the victim of a crime the type and quality of service that they then receive should not be a postcode lottery, nor should they have to navigate complex systems and processes in an attempt to seek justice. This is why I am deeply committed to delivering the Victims Code of Practice throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. I am delighted to hear that HMICFRS are now introducing a victim service assessment into its PEEL inspections and will help with this process in any way I can to further improve our offer to victims.

Neighbourhood policing and the fight against Serious and Organised Crime

The Covid-19 pandemic whilst devastating, has provided a unique opportunity in time where police officers in Devon and Cornwall Police have had the capacity to reconnect with their communities. One of my independent scrutiny panels has recently reflected if there is now an opportunity for policing to consider whether all previous practices needed to be returned to after the pandemic, or if some things could be done differently. I think this reflection sits well with observation within this report in relation to intelligence gathering and analysis at a neighbourhood policing level, and how that could be strengthened further by a number of Forces in the fight against serious and organised crime.

Being efficient and understanding capacity

Although all Police and Crime Commissioners have a finite term of office I am confident that the work of my office is supporting Devon and Cornwall Police to plan far ahead. HMICFRS has already recognised that Devon and Cornwall Police has a balanced budget and that its financial plans are realistic and I am satisfied that the Force is using its Force Management Statement to plan effectively for the future.

Creating a diverse workforce

Police Forces should be representative of the communities they serve and during the officer uplift programme I will be working with the Chief Constable to ensure that Devon and Cornwall Police is doing everything it can to recruit black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals and those with other protected characteristics.

Engaging communities in effective scrutiny

This report highlights the need for getting local communities involved in policing, and the need to be able to show communities that the police are using certain powers such as stop and search powers consistently, reasonably and fairly. When scrutiny is done well it can enhance and improve policing profoundly. Independent community scrutiny of the use of police powers is the best way to make sure people are being treated fairly and my own Use of Police Powers Community Scrutiny Panel has worked tirelessly to carry out a number of in-depth scrutiny reviews including stop and search and use of spit guards. This work has provided me with an assurance as commissioner and has provided a useful and productive public insight to the Chief Constable.

Concluding remarks

I thank HMICFRS for sharing the combined insight from the integrated PEEL inspections for 2018/19 in a thought provoking and independent report.

Alison Hernandez
Police and Crime Commissioner
Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly