

RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF DEVON, CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY TO HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES'

PEEL: POLICE EFFECTIVENESS 2017 - DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE

As part of HMICFRS' annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), it assessed how effective Devon and Cornwall Police is at keeping people safe and reducing crime. This inspection focused on five areas of policing:

- preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe
- investigating crime and reducing re-offending
- protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims
- tackling serious and organised crime
- specialist capabilities

This report was published in March 2018, see here: [report](#) and concluded that the overall effectiveness of Devon and Cornwall Police was: **requires improvement**.

HMICFRS findings

OVERALL JUDGMENT:

REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?

Good

How effective is the force at investigating crime and reducing re-offending?

Requires improvement

How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm, and supporting victims?

Requires improvement

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime?

Good

How effective are the force's specialist capabilities?

Ungraded

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENTS

The Chief Constable is pleased to note the 'good' gradings for dealing with serious and organised crime, and local policing, preventing crime and reducing antisocial behaviour.

The report included a 'requires improvement' grading for crime investigation, which reflected both local and national issues with investigative capability and capacity which are being progressed.

The Force was also graded 'requires improvement' for vulnerability. Whilst the report reflects the work in the control room, in the assessment, from public protection, from sexual offences and domestic abuse teams and first responders as being good, it does not consider vulnerability as widely as we do. The inspection has focused very narrowly on domestic abuse to determine a judgment on vulnerability, which does not reflect our broad Mission and commitment. It also failed to consider the reality of our Force Mission that we put assets, the precious assets, in the areas of the highest risk and medium risk and try and safeguard people.

Devon and Cornwall Police will be taking a range of actions in respect of the specific areas for improvement identified in the report:

In respect of the specific areas for improvement the following activity is planned.

National Recommendation. By September 2018, all forces with a shortage in qualified detectives and/or other investigators should develop an action plan.

A 100 day action plan has been developed to drive forward action in this area. The focus of this work includes

- Identifying opportunities for short term resources to be provided that will improve PIP 2 (Professionalising Investigation Programme) capacity
- Considering the future workforce mix for investigations and identify opportunities to maximise effectiveness of Police Staff Investigators
- Identifying immediate changes to ICIDP (Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme) process to encourage applicants
- Identify changes to the duty scheme for investigation that will improve the wellbeing of staff and evaluating their impact on recruitment and retention
- Improve current resource levels through the utilisation of a transferee process
- Considering medium to long term options for building PIP 2 resilience

National Recommendation. By September 2018, all forces should review how they are implementing changes to pre-charge police bail, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council lead.

An Investigation Standards action plan is being put in place, overseen by a new Investigation Standards Board which will drive forward local progress in line with national developments. Work under the action plan to address this recommendation includes implementing a UNIFI solution to improve management of cases that are

Released Under Investigation, provide effective performance data to enable local areas to manage performance more effectively and improving supervision of workloads.

D&C Area for Improvement: Preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour

- ***The force should take a more structured, consistent approach to problem solving to enable it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively.***

The Force has a structured, consistent approach to problem solving which is being bolstered through the recruitment of a Head of Profession and nine Specialist Problem Solvers across the Force. Governance is provided by way of the Genesis Board, led by the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing and Connectivity.

This problem solving approach has been complemented by the publication of a single Strategic Alliance Problem Solving and Prevention Strategy. In order to embed all of these structures and processes in a consistent fashion a series of day long problem solving training inputs are currently being delivered to all neighbourhood teams with problem solving activity being captured centrally.

D&C Area for Improvement: Investigating crime

- ***The force should ensure that it completes all investigations to a consistently good standard and in a timely manner.***
- ***The force should ensure that there is regular and active supervision of investigations to improve quality and progress.***
- ***The force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed.***
- ***The force should ensure that it swiftly locates and arrests those who are circulated as wanted on the Police National Computer, those who fail to appear on police bail, named and outstanding suspects and suspects identified through forensic evidence.***
- ***The force should improve the quality of investigations involving vulnerable people, ensuring that the workloads of specialist investigators are manageable and that such investigations are subject to regular and active supervision.***

The Force has established an Investigation Standards Board to drive improvements in investigations following the findings from the PEEL effectiveness report in these areas. This has established an immediate 100 day action plan to address the issues raised by HMICFRS. It is anticipated that these actions will identify future areas for improvement which will be taken forward under the governance of the Board. The service to vulnerable victims will be considered as part of the work of this Board.

In the medium to long term, the work of a dedicated project team to review and deliver a new crime management process for the Force will contribute to this area.

The issue of fugitive management is being progressed as part of change management as part of the Strategic Alliance. Ahead of implementation, a series of actions have been identified to be carried out immediately through the 100 day plan including the

development of a PNC (Police National Computer) circulation implementation plan and a risk assessment process for all suspects.

D&C Area for Improvement: Vulnerability

- ***The force should improve its understanding of the reasons for the declining domestic abuse arrest and charge/summons rates and how it uses voluntary attendance in domestic abuse cases, to ensure victims are protected.***
- ***The force should improve its initial investigation of cases involving vulnerable victims, by providing responding officers with access to body-worn video-recording equipment, to record evidence of injuries and crime scenes.***

The force is carrying out a review of its current approach to responding to Domestic Abuse to understand the impact on the safeguarding of victims. Additional action is also being taken which includes focus groups to look at appointments and barriers to arrest; utilising recent CPS/Police guidance on troubleshooting and the regional CPS review of VAWG (Violence against women and girls) cases; reviewing scope for ICT solutions around risk management in such cases.

The delivery of Body Worn Video is a high priority for Devon and Cornwall Police and the body worn video roll-out programme has received significant support and investment from the Chief Constable and the Commissioner. An ambitious time line has been set for rollout to frontline teams and several hundred frontline staff will be trained and equipped by late summer. Contracts have been awarded for the equipment and training will commence at the start of June with Patrol, Neighbourhood and investigation Teams.

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S RESPONSE

Preventing crime, tackling anti-social behavior and keeping people safe

The HMICFRS report is wide ranging and covers a significant breadth of work conducted by Devon & Cornwall Police. The Commissioner considers that the report is generally positive with the two important areas of crime prevention and tackling serious and organised crime as being graded as good. The need for additional action, in particular in the area of investigation is of great importance to the Commissioner and she will be closely monitoring the progress made in this area over the coming months.

The Commissioner welcomes HMICFRS's recognition that the Force has made a substantial step in putting prevention at the centre of its approach which represents a notable improvement over the last twelve months. This renewed focus on prevention is the clear direction set out in the Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioner shares HMICFRS's view that once the Neighbourhood policing model is established and embedded, this should see opportunities for developing further the problem-solving approach which the new Neighbourhood model will need to draw upon.

Neighbourhood Policing remains an issue raised regularly with the Commissioner by members of the public, local authorities and other partners and stakeholders as an area

of high importance. It is essential to continue developing the relationships between the police and local communities which serve as the bedrock to community safety. This review is important for Devon and Cornwall Police – an area where Neighbourhood policing has a long history and is fundamental to the style of policing the public expect and greatly value across our urban, rural and coastal communities.

Connectivity is a key priority in the Police and Crime Plan backed by the joint commitment by the Chief Constable and the Commissioner to enhance engagement with communities and deliver consistency and transparency by setting service standards for what the public can expect. We are driving forward a number of new initiatives to enhance that connectivity, including an innovative Councillor Advocate Scheme whereby nominated elected members are provided with additional briefings and information for sharing amongst their respective councils.

The Commissioner considers that the outcomes of the neighbourhood policing review and the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan will provide a strong platform for continued good performance in this area.

Investigating crime and reducing re-offending

The Commissioner is pleased that the HMICFRS report recognises the good response that victims of crime receive to their initial call for assistance. The Commissioner also particularly welcomes the opinion that victims, including victims of fraud, now the most prevalent crime, are well served with the victims' needs actively considered.

The HMICFRS identify a number of areas for improvement in the area of investigation and the Commissioner welcomes the establishment of a new Investigation Standards Board and Action Plan to drive forward the required improvements at pace.

Devon and Cornwall Police has an insufficient number of detectives to respond to the demands placed upon the service. The Chief Constable has briefed the Commissioner on this matter and it is an issue that is receiving attention from the Force at the highest level. This is not a matter isolated to Devon and Cornwall as other Forces in England and Wales face similar challenges. Indeed HMICFRS has suggested the matter is a “national crisis” and as such it will not be a problem that can be resolved quickly.

The Commissioner welcomes the focus the Chief Constable has given this matter by setting out the immediate steps that will be taken to look to address the shortfall in line with the national plan to develop investigative resilience.

The Commissioner is concerned at the view expressed by HMICFRS that the Force had not sufficiently improved its use of the Police National Computer to identify, track and apprehend offenders or wanted suspects of risk to the public. The Commissioner notes that Devon and Cornwall Police is not alone in this area and several other Forces have also been asked to improve their performance in the use of PNC. The Commissioner has sought assurance from the Chief Constable on how this gap will be closed and an associated timeframe. The Commissioner expects the Chief Constable to give this urgent priority given the importance placed on protecting the public coupled with the fact

that this matter was originally raised with Devon and Cornwall Police by HMIC in 2016. The Commissioner will be monitoring this activity closely, alongside progress on the other recommendations made in investigation and will receive regular reports on progress through the PCC/Force governance processes that are in place.

Protecting vulnerable people and supporting victims

The Commissioner is pleased that HMICFRS recognises the Force has developed a good understanding of the nature of vulnerability across Devon and Cornwall, provides a good initial response to calls for assistance and has a good grasp of how people with mental health issues should be supported.

However the Commissioner has asked the Chief Constable to explain why Devon and Cornwall Police does not compare favourably for domestic violence arrests and what action is being taken to address this. Domestic violence and abuse are important areas in the Police and Crime Plan and in the police Mission to detect and prevent harm. The Commissioner will monitor progress on this issue closely over the coming months.

The Commissioner recognises the issues raised by HMICFRS that the workloads of some officers and staff are very high and that this can lead to a sub-optimal outcome for victims and have an impact on the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Devon and Cornwall Police is not alone in seeing increasing demands across all of its areas. The Commissioner is pleased that the Force has taken a number of positive steps to assist the workforce through support groups and it signposts assistance when necessary. However, it is clear there remain pressures and the summer demand on police services in Devon and Cornwall is such that it places additional strain on officers and staff. The wellbeing of staff is an issue that both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable take very seriously and investment has been made in this area through a number of initiatives such as Activate 2020 and the mental health peer support network.

The additional funding for officers that the Commissioner has made available in the 2018/19 budget will go some way to assist. Whilst welcomed, it is only a small step. As mentioned earlier in the need for more detectives, the Commissioner is well aware there is no easy or quick fix for this situation.

Specialist capabilities

Whilst this area of the report has not been graded, the PCC is pleased that the HMICFRS is satisfied that the Force has the adequate arrangements in place to meet its national policing responsibilities.

Concluding remarks

The Commissioner would like to provide her thanks to the Chief Constable and his officers and staff for their hard work and commitment to protecting the public and keeping people safe in the face of unexpected demand and increasing public scrutiny.

There are a number of areas for improvement highlighted in the report and recommendations in the national overview report applicable to Devon and Cornwall

Police. The Chief Constable has set out the action he intends to take in these areas and the Commissioner will be monitoring progress in these areas over the coming months.

Despite the overall judgment of the report, the PCC remains confident that the Force has the strong leadership, clear direction and improvement plans in place to continue to improve the performance of the Force and the service to victims and the public and ultimately to prevent crime and keep the public safe.

16 May 2018