



## OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY

### POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018

#### HMICFRS – CRIME DATA INTEGRITY INSPECTION REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

##### **Background**

The HMICFRS 'Crime Data Integrity' (CDI) inspection methodology focussed on three offence groups:

- violence against the person,
- sexual offences, and
- all other offences excluding fraud.

HMICFRS issued an 'Overall Judgement' for Thames Valley Police of 'Inadequate'.

To put that judgement into context, HMICFRS have completed and published 20 force inspection reports as part of the CDI programme. Thames Valley is one of nine forces to be graded as inadequate, with over half of forces falling below 'good'.

The inspection identified that Thames Valley had made some improvements since the 2014 inspection and it was further recognised that the correct accreditation was in place for the Force Crime Registrar and Deputy.

The audit demonstrably showed process issues leading to the incorrect classification of a statistically significant proportion of crimes and incidents, exacerbated by some knowledge gaps regarding the detail of the National Crime Recording Standards and the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime outside the Contact Management centre.

Encouragingly, the inspection identified that appropriate safeguarding actions were undertaken in relevant cases, regardless of whether a crime had been correctly recorded and classified. With specific regard to modern slavery, all crimes were correctly recorded, with a tendency to over-record in this area.

The Force was also recognised as performing well in relation to the cancellation of crimes as a result of additional verifiable information. The inspection report recognised the application of this recording standard as being very good, alongside a demonstration of good attention to victim care in cases where a crime had been transferred or cancelled.

Finally, it was recognised that the force has provided clear and unambiguous expectations to officers and staff with regards crime recording. Whilst issues were identified concerning knowledge and understanding of the crime-recording rules, the inspection team found a commitment to ethical crime recording that is victim-focussed.

## **Causes for concern**

The report identified the following concerns in Thames Valley:

- There is a failure of officers and staff to make correct crime-recording decisions at the first opportunity.
- The Force is failing to ensure it adequately records all reports of rape, other sexual and violence offences, including domestic abuse crimes and crimes reported directly to its public protection departments.

## **HMICFRS Recommendations and Areas for Improvement**

Immediate action:

- Take steps to identify and address gaps in its systems and processes for identifying and recording all reports of crime which are domestic abuse related.
- Take steps to ensure that reports of crime received in respect of vulnerable adults and children from other agencies or disclosed during investigation are recorded as crimes at the point of reporting.
- Put in place improvements to the recording practices for reports of rape and ensure the correct use of rape classification N100.

Action within 3 months:

- Develop and implement procedures for the effective supervision of crime-recording decisions throughout the whole force.
- Put in place arrangements to ensure that where more than one crime is disclosed within an incident record, or is identified as part of other recorded crime investigations, these are recorded at the earliest opportunity.

Action within 6 months:

Design and provide training for officers who make crime recording decisions. This should include training in regard to:

- The extent of the information required to provide for a crime recording decision to be made.
- The expectation that reported crime is recorded at the first point that sufficient information exists to record a crime, which in the majority of cases will be at the point of report.
- The importance of believing the first account of victims whom officers believe are suffering from mental health issues.
- The proper use of classification N100 for reports of rape and recording crimes of rape involving multiple offenders.
- The additional verifiable information require in order to make crime cancellation decisions.
- How to correctly record crimes that are reported by third parties and, in particular, those reported by professional third parties.
- Offences involving the public order act, malicious communications, harassment and common assault.
- How to correctly record crime on the Niche crime recording system.

Areas for Improvement:

The Force should

- Immediately improve how it collects diversity information from victims of crime and how it uses this to inform its compliance with its equality duty.
- Develop and implement an effective feedback process for all officers and staff involved in making crime recording decisions.

## **PCC Response**

I have concerns about the assessment criteria used by HMICFRS, for example the report states that a significant proportion of crimes are not being recorded, whereas my contention is that they are, but as 'incidents' rather than 'crimes'. More importantly, there is no suggestion in the report that the Force failed to respond appropriately to the calls or to deal with the matters in hand

Nevertheless, I applaud the fact that the Force has fully accepted the inspection gradings, causes for concern and recommendations within the report, and will be addressing the concerns raised in the report and the recommendations put forward to improve.

I note that an action plan had been commissioned shortly prior to the unannounced HMICFRS inspection to address issues identified through routine internal audit processes. A number of those issues resonated with the findings of the HMICFRS, leading to an updated action plan now reflecting the causes for concern, recommendations and areas for improvement included in the inspection report, whilst retaining the specific actions in place to address them.

Progress against the action plan is being governed within the Force through a Gold Group structure, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, and a newly introduced Tactical Group, chaired by the Force Crime Registrar.

In addition, I will be monitoring progress of the Force in delivering the action plan as part of my 'holding to account' arrangements. I have initiated discussions with the Chief Constable to that effect and I anticipate that the process will involve, for example, regular progress reports being submitted by the Force to my public 'Level 1' meetings. Once arrangements are agreed and implemented, I will notify the Police and Crime Panel accordingly.

It is noteworthy that there is no suggestion that the Force is ignoring or neglecting calls for service, or failing to attend and deal with incidents and crime. The inspection report also found evidence of a strong and ethical culture, with officers and staff acting with integrity.

The Force is confident that pre-existing structures and frameworks are sufficient to address the operational process issues identified. Furthermore, the introduction of the Contact Management ICT Platform provides an opportunity to increase recording at the point of call as well as providing the means of additional governance and oversight.

The Force will be subject to a further visit and re-inspection by HMICFRS within the next 12 months to assess progress against the recommendations, which I am confident will be an opportunity to show progress made.

**Anthony Stansfeld**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley

April 2018