

# HMIC/Assurance paper

URN: SPI/2021/078

18.03.21

## National Monitoring Portal:

The portal provides a link between all forces and HMICFRS to record progress against recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs) arising from both force specific reports and national thematic reports.

West Mercia Police currently have:

5 Open causes for concern (National average 8.5, MSG<sup>1</sup> average 7)

74 Open recommendations (National average 77.1, MSG average 72.3)

23 Open AFIs (National average 22.1, MSG average 19.5)

There is positive progress here as until February 2021 West Mercia had exceeded the national average for open recommendations.

All recommendations and AFIs are captured internally on bespoke tracker templates for each published HMICFRS report. Strategic and tactical leads are identified and “Steps to Green” identify the planned course of action to achieve them. Updates are provided to Insp Warren Matthews as Force Liaison Officer to HMICFRS who will also RAG rate the recommendations and AFIs based on the updates received and feedback from HMICFRS.

Governance is primarily provided through Service Improvement Board chaired by DCC Moss. Focus here is given to recommendations and AFIs arising from PEEL inspections as these are specific to our force.

However, this forum is also used to monitor and drive progress against thematic recommendations and AFIs as required.

## PEEL 2020/21

The PEEL process has commenced during the pandemic with a number of pilot forces as the process is being redeveloped.

The new process places a greater emphasis on continuous assessment which should then allow for a reduced footprint, and impact, on forces during the final evidence gathering phase which is what we would associate with traditional onsite inspection activity.

---

<sup>1</sup> MSG – Most Similar Group are police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime. There are 8 forces in our MSG.

This continuous assessment process is underway and constitutes a number of interviews of strategic and tactical leads. The inspectorate also dial in to meetings and boards at force and LPA levels to gather insight on how the force is operating across all elements of the PEEL Assessment Framework. As the continuous assessment process progresses this will also include focus groups to gather evidence at a practitioner level in addition to that which has been obtained from a strategic and tactical level.

The force has recently completed submission of a document request to support this inspection (12<sup>th</sup> March 2021). Over the coming months the inspection will see specialist evidence gathering in areas such as armed policing and stop and search. A Victim Service Assessment (VSA) will also take place which is an element of the new PEEL Model.

The VSA will review 60 case files from the last 12 months for cases of rape, other sexual offences, serious injury assaults, non-serious injury assaults, burglary and stalking/harassment. The case file review will track the victim journey across six areas:

- Call Handling
- Deployment/Response
- Crime Recording
- Crime Screening
- Investigation
- Outcome

HMICFRS are then scheduled to hold a PEEL Assessment and Resourcing Meeting (PARM) on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This meeting assesses all of the evidence gathered to date through continuous assessment, FMS<sup>2</sup>, the National Monitoring Portal and VSA. It then informs the resources required for the final evidence gathering window, i.e. the number of inspectorate staff required and any areas of focus for in force inspection activity in the 4 week period commencing 6<sup>th</sup> September.

To date all activity has been conducted remotely. There is not yet any planned activity in person however Sir Thomas Winsor has written to forces to advise this may start to recommence in line with lockdown lifting schedules.

Our final PEEL report is due for publication in January 2022. However, under the new processes any causes of concern identified will be accelerated and notified to the force within approximately 4 weeks of being identified. HMICFRS are yet to advise on a formalised position for the publication of any accelerated findings.

## **Recent Inspection Activity:**

**“Fraud: Time to Choose”** – Thematic follow up inspection to the 2019 report

Interviews and focus groups were conducted remotely between 22<sup>nd</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March. (Strategic/Tactical leads, specialist and general investigators, protect and prevent leads, NFIB SPOCs, Head of Intelligence, Call Handlers). A debrief was provided to the force on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the final report will be due publication around June 2021.

---

<sup>2</sup> A Force Management Statement (FMS) is a self-assessment that chief constables (and London equivalents) prepare and give to HMICFRS each year.

**Centre for Women's Justice** - Super complaint in regards to domestic abuse reports where the perpetrator is a police officer or member of police staff.

West Mercia were selected as one of a small number of forces for limited fieldwork in relation to the Centre for Women's Justice super complaint in regards to domestic abuse reports where the alleged perpetrator is a police officer or member of police staff. The College of Policing is leading the investigation into this super complaint. (The police super-complaints system allows designated organisations to raise issues on behalf of the public about harmful patterns or trends in policing – thus these are national policing issues not complaints specifically about West Mercia).

The inspection activity was in the form of a case review of 7 cases from the last five years. These were randomly selected by John Armstrong from HMICFRS and a force laptop was provided to him for the remote inspection activity in the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. A debrief has again been provided and the College of Policing will lead on a report in reply to the super complaint with Autumn being the likely time period for publication.

## **Publications**

Recent publications of note are:

Getting the balance right? An inspection of how effectively the police deal with protests (11<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

Disproportionate use of police powers - A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force (26<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

Both of these thematic reports provide all forces with a number of recommendations and AFIs. As per force process these have been assigned to internal trackers and have been shared with Chief Supt Beth Bridges in Force Ops for allocation of strategic and tactical leads.

The reports did not provide specific mention of West Mercia, with the exception of a reference in the stop and search report to positive practice in regards to stop and search scenarios being included within our Officer Safety Training programme.

Insp Warren Matthews  
HMICFRS Liaison  
Strategy, Planning and Insight