

HMICFRS: Update Report

18.06.21

About HMICFRS:

The principal role of HMICFRS is to promote improvements in policing and fire & rescue services to make everyone safer. This is achieved through inspecting, monitoring and reporting on the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and FRSs with the aim of encouraging improvement.

In devising its policing inspection programme for the Home Secretary's approval, HMICFRS considers the risks to the public, service quality, public concerns, the operating environment, the effect which inspection may have on a force, and the benefits to the public of improvements which may follow inspection.

It is for chief constables (whose operational independence is a cornerstone of British policing), police and crime commissioners (with powers to set local priorities and budgets) and, in extreme cases, the Home Secretary (who has ultimate democratic responsibility for policing) to take action as a result of HMICFRS's recommendations contained within reports produced following inspection activity.

These reports may be force specific as a result of individual inspection activity such as the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) programme and National Child Protection Inspections; or they can be national thematic inspections whereby inspection activity in a selection of forces will be used to address a theme in policing with all forces subject of any subsequent recommendations.

Where HMICFRS identify significant issues this can result in the publication of a cause for concern with associated recommendations to address this. All causes for concern, recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs) identified within reports are published on a National Monitoring Portal. Each force has access to this electronic database through which updates on progress can be submitted to HMICFRS for assessment with a view to demonstrating sufficient evidence to achieve completion and closure of these records.

The current West Mercia position in relation to open Causes of Concern, Recommendations and AFIs is as follows:

Causes of Concern	5
Recommendations	74
AFIs	19

This can be compared to the national position and our most similar group (MSG) position. (MSGs are groups of 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 – West Mercia is one of 8 forces in its MSG).

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National:		MSG	
Causes of Concern	8	Causes of Concern	7
Recommendations	78	Recommendations	76
AFIs	23	AFIs	21

As can be seen from the current figures West Mercia have achieved closure of more of each of the respective areas than both the national and MSG average.

In addition to inspection activity HMICFRS also collect data from all forces to build an understanding of statistical analysis and forces who may be outliers either at either end of the scale indicating potential failings or good practice. Access to the data collected and various analytical products is provided to forces via PEEL Digital Analysis Packs within Microsoft PowerBI.

These data collections generally take place twice a year in Spring and Autumn.

HMICFRS have recently published a 2021-25 strategy which can be located here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/hmicfrs-strategy-2021-25.pdf>

Details of the 2021/22 PEEL assessment process can also be located here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/2021-22-peel-assessment/>

West Mercia Response:

The West Mercia structure for responding to HMICFRS publications and inspection activity is to have a dedicated Inspector post as Force Liaison Officer (FLO) to HMICFRS.

The FLO works closely with the HMICFRS Force Liaison Lead (FLL) in order to facilitate continuous assessment and engagement with the force. This takes the form of invitations to various strategic and tactical meetings, document sharing, interviews with strategic/tactical leads and focus groups with officers/staff.

The FLO manages the force access to the National Monitoring Portal in order to update progress against Causes of Concern, Recommendations and AFIs.

Following publication of any HMICFRS report an internal tracker document is created to record new causes of concern, recommendations and AFIs. Strategic and Tactical leads are identified for each of these and a RAG status is attributed based on the current force position. Strategic leads are then required to identify "Steps to Green" to plot a pathway to completion of each recommendation/AFI.

Initial updates are shared with the OPCC in order to assist with the requirement for the PCC to reply to reports within 56 days of publication.

Chief Officer oversight for HMICFRS activity is provided by DCC Moss at the Service Improvement Board where strategic and tactical leads are held to account in regards to progress and required improvements.

Current Activity:

West Mercia are currently subject of activity as part of the PEEL 2021/22 assessment process. (Further details of the assessment process are available in the link provided above.)

To date West Mercia have responded to a document request in relation to the 12 question areas that form part of the PEEL assessment. There has also been a schedule of continuous assessment activity with the FLL and colleagues conducting remote interviews of strategic/tactical leads and focus groups, again across the full range of the PEEL assessment framework.

There has also been in recent weeks a number of specialist evidence gathering activities conducted remotely by means of video conferences.

This has seen inspection activity in:

- Serious and Organised Crime
- Armed Policing
- Victim Service Assessment
- Managing Offenders and Suspects

Further activity will continue through the summer months prior to HMICFRS holding a PEEL Assessment and Resourcing Meeting (PARM) in August. At this meeting the inspectorate will review all of the material gathered to date in order to identify any gaps in understanding of the force or areas that require additional focus. This will inform the planned onsite activity in the final evidence gathering window when HMICFRS will visit the force w/c 6th September 2021.

The final report following this inspection activity is currently due to be published in January 2022.

Forthcoming Activity:

HMICFRS submitted a consultation document to forces, with responses submitted in May 2021, regarding the proposed inspection programme for 2021/22.

Details of the proposed inspection programme, and thus the activity likely to follow, can be found here:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/policing-inspection-programme-and-framework-2021-22-for-consultation/>

For West Mercia it is also likely that a Custody inspection will take place in the near future as this rolling programme is intended to ensure that each force receives a Custody inspection at least once every six years. The last West Mercia inspection took place in 2015 thus this is now due. (The timescale for this taking place is likely to have been impacted by the Covid pandemic restricting inspection activity).

Super Complaints:

Super-complaints provide a voice for designated bodies to raise concerns on behalf of the public about patterns or trends in policing that are, or appear to be, significantly harming the

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interests of the public. Super complaints are submitted for consideration by HMICFRS, the College of Policing and the IOPC.

Full details of the super complaints process can be located here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-super-complaints>

To date there have been five super complaints deemed eligible for investigation:

- Super-complaint made by the Centre for Women's Justice - Police use of protective measures in cases of violence against women and girls
- Super-complaint made by Hestia - Police response to victims of modern slavery
- Super-complaint made by the Centre for Women's Justice - Force response to police perpetrated domestic abuse
- Super-complaint made by Liberty and Southall Black Sisters - Police data sharing for immigration purposes
- Super-complaint from the Tees Valley Inclusion Project - police response to BAME victims of sexual abuse

Reports published in relation to these super complaints also contain recommendations for various bodies including police forces. The West Mercia approach mirrors the process used for HMICFRS reports in that internal trackers capture these recommendations and the associated owners and updates. These are again managed by the designated Inspector in this post.

Super complaints generally utilise a select number of police forces for inspection activities but forces are not subsequently named in reports where there is negative commentary or areas for improvement.

West Mercia were selected to support the police perpetrated domestic abuse super complaint with a remote case file review conducted. The force has also been selected recently for the Tees Valley super complaint, this will take the form of an analysis of the sexual offence cases within our recent victim service assessment to analyse any disparity based on demographics.