

# Summary of HMICFRS activity – February 2022

07.03.2022 – Inspector 1653 Matthews

SPI/2022/080

## Visits/Meetings (inc Continuous Assessment)

No inspection activity for the force

## Closure of Recommendations/AFIs

This month has seen the closure of 7 recommendations and 7 AFIs, the majority of these as a result of evidence gathered during our PEEL 2021/22 inspection activity. This has also resulted in the closure of two remaining causes of concern from PEEL 2018/19 as all associated recommendations are now considered complete or superseded.

The specific CoCs, recommendations and AFIs closed are as follows:

**PEEL 2018/19:** Cause of Concern - The force does not have the capacity or capability to investigate crime effectively and this is affecting the service being provided to the public. There are failings in the way that crimes are being investigated. (This is however due to be replaced by a new Cause of Concern in this area with some of the associated recommendations closed as superseded rather than complete).

**PEEL 2018/19:** Cause of Concern - The force does not have suitable arrangements in place to make sure it can maintain the full range of public services when its alliance with Warwickshire Police ends. There are gaps in its workforce skills assessment, and weaknesses in both its investigative approach and its approach to safeguarding vulnerable people. (All recommendations against this CoC are set for closure thus it in turn should be closed – albeit the Skills Project recommendation below is closed as superseded by a new AFI in PEEL 2021/22).

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should improve how it responds to reports of crimes, how it then allocates them, ensuring it allocates investigations to appropriately trained and supported officers, and that it reviews this allocation appropriately throughout the investigation

**PEEL 2018/19:** HMIC recommends that the force should immediately conduct a review, involving its partners, of the approach to vulnerability to better safeguard vulnerable people.

**PEEL 2018/19:** HMIC recommends that within six months the force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure investigations are not delayed.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should take steps to better understand the data relating to its crime outcomes and put actions in place to ensure that it is effectively pursuing justice on behalf of victims

**PEEL 2018/19:** HMIC recommends that within six months the force should introduce consistent processes to effectively manage the risk posed by suspects who are under investigation but have not yet been arrested or circulated as wanted on PNC

**PEEL 2018/19:** HMIC recommends that the force should immediately expand the skills project work to include an assessment of all skills, not only operational, including potential future skills requirements. This assessment should inform workforce plans. (This is purely closed as it will be superseded by an AFI in the 2021 report).

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should introduce a performance framework to hold officers and staff to account for effective crime prevention activity.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should review the MARAC referral process and consider the need for greater partner involvement in the decision making process to ensure high risk victims of domestic abuse are not being placed at further risk as a result.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should work with partners to introduce effective MASH arrangements in all parts of the force.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should work with partners to implement the mental health crisis care concordat – This is being closed as being superseded by an AFI in the 2021/22 report.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should review its approach to unconscious bias and effective communications skills training to help it better achieve its community engagement aims.

**PEEL 2018/19:** The force should ensure that its promotion and selection processes are accessible and transparent and are perceived by the workforce as fair.

**An inspection of the effectiveness of the Regional Organised Crime Units:** By February 2022, the chief constable with the lead for SOC in each region, with the chief officers of the affected forces, should ensure that a chief officer is appointed with responsibility for each ROCU, as far as practicable working autonomously of force responsibilities.

### **HMIC News/Publications:**

**Custody Report** – On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 the force has received the pre-publication check version of the custody report for West Mercia following two weeks of inspection activity in January 2022.

The report has been reviewed by FLO Warren Matthews, CI Keith Gee and Chief Supt Paul Moxley with requested amendments then submitted to ACC Jones for approval prior to return to HMICFRS on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

The draft report contains a number of causes of concerns with associated recommendations along with a number of AFIs. The force is yet to receive the final version of the report which will formalise these.

## **Consultation - Policing inspection programme and framework commencing April 2022**

HMICFES published a [consultation document](#) that provides details of their proposed programme of policing inspections commencing April 2022.

As part of the consultation process they asked forces for views on whether they cover the right themes and areas of policing.

Types of inspection included in the consultation:

PEEL assessments

National thematic inspections

Commissions from the Home Secretary and local policing bodies

Inspection of national agencies and other non-Home Office forces

Joint inspections

State of Policing report

In particular, HMICFRS sought responses to the following consultation questions:

Do the proposed thematic inspections cover the areas that are of most concern to forces at the moment? Which do forces believe are of greatest importance or urgency?

Are there any significant new or emerging problems in policing that HMICFRS should consider when it inspects individual police forces?

How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take account of current circumstances and risks to public safety?

The consultation was shared with the Chief Officer team, Chief Supts and the OPCC and a collated force response has been submitted with approval of DCC Moss

### **Publications in February:**

- [Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Surrey](#)
- [Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Warwickshire](#)
- [Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to children's services in Solihull](#)
- [A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape - Phase two: Post-charge](#)

### **Upcoming Inspection Activity:**

HMICFRS has commenced a programme of work on race and policing. The inspectorate are being advised by an External Reference Group with appropriate police representation.

Fieldwork will shortly commence on an inspection of national leadership and governance, and forces contributing to this inspection have already been notified. (West Mercia are not one of these forces)

Work has also started on a second related inspection - disparity in police criminal justice decision making. The inspection will specifically look at the following decision points:

- arrest, compared to voluntary attendance;
- cautions;
- community resolution (Home Office outcome code 8);
- charge (police-only decision); and
- post-charge bail (including the decision to refuse bail).

A short survey has been sent to forces, this is designed to understand what criminal justice disparity information forces gather and how, if at all, it is used. The results will inform HMICFRS's choice of fieldwork forces and provide information and context for the resulting report.

HMICFRS intend to undertake a pilot inspection in May, with other fieldwork scheduled to take place between June and August. HMICFRS have not yet identified the forces they intend to inspect. The final report is due to be published before the end of the calendar year. FLO Warren Matthews has circulated questions from the survey to respective leads and will compile and submit the force response.

### **PEEL 2021/22 Update:**

**PEEL Publication** - The pre-publication check version of the report was reviewed internally by the force with requested amendments sent to HMICFRS ahead of the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

FLL Gary Ashton advises that the amendments have been duly considered and a finalised version of the report has now been through editorial checks and proof readers. As such the report is ready for imminent publication but no set date has yet been provided.

The force should receive the report under embargo 24hrs ahead of its public release.

**SOC** - Amendments to the PEEL assessment process means that SOC will now be subject of a regional report with individual force gradings forming part of that report.

Due to the West Mercia PEEL inspection taking place whilst the inspection framework was being amended the force has already had some inspection activity around SOC in 2021. As such HMICFRS have advised that we will now have a 2 day follow up in October of this year with the regional report then going to publication in March 2023. (Forces not yet inspected will have a five day inspection with an additional 2 day follow up if required).

### **Super Complaints:**

This month has seen the publication of responses from bodies subject to recommendations and actions in the report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint on policing and immigration.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responses-to-safe-to-share-report-on-liberty-and-southall-black-sisters-super-complaint-on-policing-and-immigration-status>

The joint West Mercia and OPCC response was submitted to HMICFRS with approval from T/ACC

Barratt and a redacted copy of the response has been published on the OPCC website. A link to this is included within the publication from HMICFRS above.