

HMICFRS: JASC Update Report September 2022

03.09.22 – Inspector 1169 Pilkington

About HMICFRS:

The principle role of HMICFRS is to promote improvements in policing and fire & rescue services to ensure the public are protected from harm. 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 (who operational independence and autonomy within their respective forces), 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, but then with all forces subject of any subsequent recommendations. The latest thematic inspection and associated recommendations is around the police response to acquisitive crime, for example.

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 (correct 03/09/22):

Causes of Concern	9
Recommendations	70
AFIs	34

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 as below).

	D&C	Glouc	Norfolk	North York	Suffolk	Warks	West Mer	Wilts	Average
CoCs	4	14	7	0	6	9	9	8	7.125
Recs	57	74	66	55	72	93	64	102	72.875
AFIs	18	46	14	23	14	45	34	34	28.5

National averages:		MSG averages:	
Causes of Concern	6.2	Causes of Concern	7.12
Recommendations	71.27	Recommendations	72.87
AFIs	26.32	AFIs	28.5

As can be seen from the current figures West Mercia have a higher number of open causes of concern than both the National and MSG average, the same applies to AFIs with only recommendations being below the respective comparable figures. (The MSG averages are to some degree disproportionately affected by North Yorkshire who have 0 open causes for concern and only 49 open recommendations). West Mercia had been in a stronger position previously with figures below the averages across the board. However, April 2022 saw the publication of our force specific PEEL and Custody Reports. The PEEL report contained 1 Cause of Concern, 2 recommendations and 16 AFIs. The Custody report contained 5 Causes of Concern, 5 recommendations and 11 AFIs; hence the change in position. (West Mercia are one of only 19 forces to have had PEEL 2021/22 inspections completed and reports published; there have also only been 16 Custody inspection reports published in the last three years of which we are one).

In addition, evidence to enable consideration of closure has been uploaded to the portal for a number of AFIs and recommendations but has not yet been verified by our FLL given her focus on the North Wales PEEL inspection. We would expect to see these figures start to drop again in the Autumn months as evidence is verified leading to closures and a reduction in corresponding numbers. The custody action plan has been submitted as an interim document and will be re visited in October which should also lead to closure of interlinked AFI's and CoCs.

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 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. West Mercia's latest submission was in May 2022.

West Mercia Response:

The West Mercia structure for responding to HMICFRS reports and recommendations remains as outlined in the previous updates to JASC with internal tracker documents produced for each report in isolation and "steps to green" populated by the strategic leads.

These are reviewed by the FLO as and when updates are provided to assess the efficacy of the measures introduced or changes made in light of the recommendations.

When deemed appropriate, the updates are then added to the national portal for HMIC scrutiny.

Current Activity:

West Mercia has in the week commencing 22nd August 2022 verified all DA related aspects of the spring data returns such that the figures can be provided to the ONS.

PEEL 2021/22 – The force response to this report is well underway with progress being monitored via the Service Improvement Board. The report's only cause of concern regarding investigations is receiving specific focus through Op Reset led by Supt Crowther. The report has also been the subject of Holding to Account sessions with the PCC.

Custody – There was an immediate force response to the negative findings of this report and the number of causes of concern it identified. Supt Nigel Webster had adopted the Criminal Justice portfolio that has been separated from that of Crime Management so that each has an additional level of focus. The interim custody improvement plan was submitted to HMICFRS in July with an expectation that there will be a re visit to monitor progress and offer advice in October 2022.

Forthcoming Activity:

West Mercia are not currently subject of any formal notifications of inspection activity (although a thematic inspection of victim's expectations and service across the CJS has just been announced). Sarah Lewis- the force FLL will visit for an informal number of sessions and advisory meetings at the end of September and will sit in the Service improvement board to showcase efforts being made to address recommendations in the interests of transparency.

News/Publications:

Since the last update to JASC there have been a number of further reports published by HMICFRS. Whilst many of these are specific to forces other than West Mercia there have been national reports and West Mercia specific reports as follows:

- [The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime - Finding time for crime](#)
- [Terms of reference: Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system](#)
- [Policing inspection programme and framework commencing April 2022](#)

- [Twenty years on, is MAPPA achieving its objectives?](#)
- [Police perpetrated domestic abuse: Report on the Centre for Women's Justice super-complaint](#)
- [Safeguarding: How effective is the National Crime Agency at protecting vulnerable people?](#)
- [Terms of reference: inspection of the police response to child sexual exploitation in England and Wales](#)

Super Complaints:

As per the above hyperlinks, the publication of findings for the Police perpetrated domestic abuse supercomplaint has now been formally published with associated recommendations for police, CPS, MoJ and OPCCs. West Mercia have replied to say they accept these recommendations.

These form part of the existing VAWG action plan within West Mercia and are subject to ongoing work to achieve closure. The VAWG action plan is due for review at the end of September as a whole, and the associated recommendations have their own action tracker to comply with the HMICFRS guidance in relation to supercomplaints (the responses are submitted via NPCC and not the HMICFRS portal, despite the fact the recommendations appear on the portal, which is slightly confusing and has been raised nationally to try and ensure this process is a little more streamlined).