



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

Police Effectiveness - 2017

Title of Inspection

PEEL: PCC HMICFRS Response

Date Inspection Published

March 2018

Type of Inspection:

- Cleveland Specific
 Follow Up
 Partner Inspection

- National
 Thematic

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?

Yes

No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report outlined how Cleveland Police was good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Since the 2016 inspection the force had made progress in all areas inspected. It was further strengthening its approach to neighbourhood policing and responded well to people who were vulnerable through their age, disability or because they have been subjected to repeated offences or were at high risk of abuse, for example. It was noted that the force needed to take further action to ensure vulnerable people consistently received an effective service.

Cleveland Police had an effective approach to reducing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. Prioritising and investing in preventing crime through its approach to neighbourhood policing and working with other organisations. It was also noted that the force worked well with partner organisations to support vulnerable people with mental health problems.

The Force had a good approach to its understanding of its communities and what mattered to local people. It was good at tackling crime and anti-social behaviour with partner organisations.

In terms of improvements, it was noted that the force must improve its ability to protect vulnerable people. Whilst it answered calls promptly, treated victims with empathy and ensured immediate safeguarding needs, the quality of risk assessment was

unsatisfactory. For example the force did not refer all high-risk domestic abuse cases to a multi-agency risk assessment conference and did not always refer standard and medium-risk cases quickly enough. The force also needed to more effectively manage the risks posed by registered sex offenders.

Areas for Improvement were detailed as follows

- The force should improve the quality of information that officers record on the DASH risk assessments at initial response.
- The force should ensure its process to obtain feedback from victims of domestic abuse include those victims who do not support police action.
- 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 risk as a result.
- The force should take steps to understand the reasons why a high proportion of crimes related to domestic abuse fall in to the category 'evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action' and rectify this to ensure that it is pursuing justice on behalf of victims of domestic abuse.
- The force should ensure that it manages effectively the risks posed by registered sex offenders
- The Force should improve how it works with partner organisations in relation to exchanging information and safeguarding victims by continuing to work to establish a multi-agency safeguarding hub.

FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Assistant Chief Constable Jason Harwin said: "I am pleased that the improvements that have been made in the Force since the last HMICFRS effectiveness inspection in 2016 have been recognised, however, we are not complacent and we do recognise that there are improvements to be made around the way that we protect vulnerable people. Those improvements are already beginning to happen.

"Members of the public can take from this report that we are identifying threat, risk and harm to keep them safe and that we are tackling antisocial behaviour and crime, which are ultimately the main aims that we have as police officers."

PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

Comment by the PCC:

It is very pleasing to see that HMI has singled out the force for praise nationally for our efforts to protect neighbourhood policing.

The national overview states on page 26:

‘Good forces tend to allow staff to concentrate on their prevention work and do not often assign them to other duties. They understand their communities well, and take a co-ordinated, long-term approach to problem solving. Leaders hold neighbourhood officers and staff to account for results, and monitor performance regularly. High performing forces regularly assess risks and tensions in communities. They exploit opportunities to prevent crime by deploying officers and staff equipped with the right skills and powers to help the public and prevent crime’.

For example, Cleveland Police has made crime prevention one of its three priorities. Police officers and PCSOs working in neighbourhood policing teams receive the training, guidance and support they need to get involved with communities, solve problems together with partner organisations, and prevent crime. Neighbourhood officers are not deployed away from their communities often, and PCSOs are never diverted from their main tasks. The force’s investment in neighbourhood policing includes recruiting crime prevention co-ordinators and schools’ liaison PCSOs to help with prevention and early intervention.

As well as our work in local communities, the Inspectorate also singles us out for praise the effective use of the PCC and force websites, social media platforms and “pop-up” stalls to engage with the public and prevent crime.

The previous Chief Constable and I shared a determination to protect neighbourhood policing and that will continue under our new Chief, Mike Veale.

The inspection also concluded that since the last HMICFRS inspection in 2016, the Force:

- Has made progress in all areas inspected.
- Has strengthened its approach to neighbourhood policing and prioritises and invests in preventing crime through neighbourhood policing.
- Has responded well to people vulnerable through their age, disability, or repeat victims of offences such as abuse.
- Has a good understanding of its communities and what matters to local people influences its identification of threat, risk and harm.
- Is good at tackling crime and antisocial behaviour with partner organisations.
- Uses evidence of good practice and reviews the effect of its activity on a case-by-case basis.
- Answers calls promptly, treats victims with empathy and ensures their immediate safeguarding needs are addressed.
- Works well with partner organisations to support vulnerable people with mental health problems.

There are areas for improvement, particularly in our approach to protecting vulnerable people and supporting victims. HMI recognises that financial cuts have made an impact in this area. I know work is already well underway and the force is committed to making the changes required, as Commissioner I shall hold the force to account on this.

It is pleasing that the Inspector notes the progress we have already made in these areas and that an issue flagged up in last year’s report, concerning missing children, has been successfully addressed. That is clear evidence of the determination this organisation has to address issues and move on.

One theme that was strongly highlighted in the inspection report was the positive working relationships and partnership working with local organisations across a number of areas, which, as move towards the policing vision 2025, will be ever more important to the delivery of effective local policing in our area. I look forward to the continued working with those partners in developing and improving services for people in Cleveland.

Scrutiny of the Force's response to, and progress with, areas for improvement are a standard feature within my scrutiny programme. As such, in the first instance I will seek assurance from the force that any areas of immediate concern are rectified and that secondly, the force has a robust action plan to address the areas for improvement and also seek clarification on how the Force intends to respond to any other areas for development as outlined within the report.

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