



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection - An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024. Tranche 1: capacity and capability, co-ordination and mobilisation, and well-being

Date Inspection Published - 18 December 2024

Type of Inspection: Cleveland Specific National
 Follow Up Thematic
 Partner Inspection

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

On Monday 29 July 2024, three young girls, Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice Da Silva Aguiar, were killed in a knife attack in Southport. Following these tragic events, widespread unrest and violent disorder broke out in many towns and cities across the UK.

On 6 September 2024, the Home Secretary commissioned His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to carry out a rapid review into the policing response to the disorder, to identify lessons for the future. The commission divided the work into two tranches (parts). The terms of reference for Tranche 1 required the HMICFRS to examine:

- the police service's public order public safety (POPS) capacity and capabilities;
- the police service's ability to mobilise officers across police force areas to respond to the disorder; and
- how the well-being and resilience of officers might be affected by repeated exposure to incidents of disorder.

This first report sets out the findings on these areas:

The police service's capacity and capability to respond to widespread simultaneous outbreaks of disorder

- The elements of the Strategic Policing Requirement related to public order public safety need to be reviewed
- The number of officers in public order public safety roles has declined, but the reasons for this aren't clear
- National training standards and command structures are well established
- There are opportunities to improve public order public safety officer training
 - Training for violent disorder could be improved
 - Physical fitness requirements for public order public safety officers may be set too low
 - Better public order public safety tactical training could improve officers' confidence
 - Some public order public safety training facilities need to be improved
- Forces were unprepared for the scale of the disorder
 - Limited resources restricted tactical options during the initial stages of the disorder
 - Police commanders displayed resilience and resolve
- Specialist resources played an important role in restoring order and bringing offenders to justice
 - Police use of dogs and horses helped to restore order, but they weren't available to all forces

- Aircraft and drones helped the police gather evidence and make decisions
- The police didn't use more dynamic crowd dispersal options
- Personal protective equipment, uniform and communication equipment:
 - Some decisions on uniform and equipment exposed officers to greater risks
 - Most personal protective equipment worked well, but there may be better options
 - Communication equipment didn't always work effectively

Recommendation 1

With immediate effect, the National Police Chiefs' Council and chief constables, working with the College of Policing and the Home Office, should create a plan and begin work to improve the police service's capacity and capability to respond to widespread violent disorder. They should plan to:

- in consultation with the Home Office, review the public order public safety (POPS)-related elements of the Strategic Policing Requirement and add relevant specialist capabilities, beginning with investigators and intelligence resources;
- complete a full assessment of the suitability and availability of personal protective equipment for all POPS trained officers, including mounted branches and dog units;
- make sure that every police force or region can rapidly deploy drones during POPS incidents;
- develop and provide guidance on the use of drones within the College of Policing's POPS authorised professional practice;
- review the range of available tactical options, equipment and technology to make sure officers can quickly and safely disperse people who take part in disorder; and
- review POPS training at all levels, including an assessment of the adequacy of the current fitness test for level 2 officers.

The National Police Coordination Centre and the mobilisation of public order public safety resources during the disorder

- National mobilisation of public order public safety resources worked well
- The National Police Chiefs' Council is responsible for activating the national mobilisation plan, but chief constables don't have to follow it
- With hindsight, the National Police Chiefs' Council's decision to implement the national mobilisation plan was made too late
- Regional information and co-ordination centres gave support, but some could operate more effectively
- Investigative resources should have been mobilised more effectively to help those forces under most pressure
- The National Police Coordination Centre needs to have the authority to make and influence decisions at both regional and national levels
- The police service needs to be able to track public order public safety resources accurately
- National Police Coordination Centre strategic intelligence and briefing struggled to deal with the scale of requests for information
- The police service has been slow to learn lessons from recent disorder
- Emergency services worked together during violent disorder
- The police service should test its mobilisation plans more robustly

Recommendation 2

With immediate effect, the National Police Chiefs' Council and chief constables, working with the College of Policing, should create a plan and begin work to improve how the police service mobilises public order public safety (POPS) resources. They should plan to:

- give the National Police Chiefs' Council POPS lead (national co-ordinating gold commander) explicit authority to set the national strategy for POPS mobilisation, and full command and control of the deployment of tier 3 resources;
- improve the capacity and capability of all regional information and co-ordination centres, including providing better guidance and a common operating framework;
- improve the technology available to the National Police Coordination Centre, so that it

can deploy and manage mutual aid more effectively and efficiently - the police service should be able to access information on the identity, number, location and nature of resources; skills available; length of deployments; and operational status of vehicles;

- prioritise a national structured debriefing process about the police response to disorder that supports rapid learning and improvement; and
- increase the police service's POPS mobilisation testing regime and take decisive action on its results.

The resilience and well-being of officers repeatedly exposed to incidents of disorder

- Officers acted bravely and many were injured during the violent disorder
- Officers suffered from dehydration, hunger and exhaustion
- Offenders targeted some officers disproportionately
- Public order public safety officers may need additional support
- The police service could make better use of the support offered by the National Police Wellbeing Service
- Forces should look for the effects of psychological injuries on public order public safety officers

Recommendation 3

With immediate effect, the National Police Chiefs' Council and chief constables, working with the College of Policing and the Home Office should create a plan and begin work to improve the well-being support the police service gives to its officers and staff. They should plan to:

- create formal protocols with ambulance services and hospital trusts for the treatment of police officers who are injured on duty;
- assess how public order public safety planning and mobilisation, at force, regional and national levels, considers and prioritises the well-being of officers and staff, such as making sure they have access to food and drink, rest and rotation, personal protective equipment and toilet facilities;
- consider whether public order public safety roles should be defined as 'high risk', particularly in police forces that face frequent, extensive and severe disorder;
- review whether officers deployed in hostile incidents need additional support on a case-by-case basis; and
- examine the level of contribution that each police force, and the Home Office, makes to police treatment and well-being centres, so that all officers and staff who need treatment can access it.

FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

All new reports into the Force follow a specific process which involves informing the Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, of the report's publication and identifying an Executive Lead to monitor/drive progress of the actions going forward.

A plenary session with the Exec lead and relevant stakeholders is held to discuss the actions and agree how they will be progressed. The outcome from this session is reported back to the GAIN Board for acceptance and approval; progress is then monitored through governance meetings until such a time as the action is considered complete.

The process for closing actions is depicted by HMICFRS, as they award each action a level; the Force complies with the appropriate course of action, linked to this level, to formally close the actions.

The report includes 3 recommendations, none of which require a response from forces. The Force will, however, assist the National Police Chiefs' Council to progress their actions as and when required.

The Executive Lead for the report will be ACC Felton. The report will be discussed in the

January 2025 GAIN meeting.

The Force continues to actively work to satisfy all recommendations and AFIs which are discussed regularly in the relevant Force governance meetings.

PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

Comment by the PCC:

The PCC fully endorses the HMICFRS's recommendations for improvement and the lessons for the future.

The PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2024-29 focuses on setting local policing and community safety objectives. However, the plan also recognises the national requirements Cleveland Police must meet.

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out the seven national threats facing the country, as identified by the Home Secretary. One of the seven threats is public disorder.

The PCC acknowledges that Cleveland Police must demonstrate that it has the plans and capability to respond to all seven national threats, when required.

At the PCC's Scrutiny Meeting, held on 9 July 2024, evidence was received on the Force's capabilities to deliver the SPR. In receiving this information, the PCC was looking to:

- hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of functions associated with the SPR;
- seek assurance that the Force has an effective and proportionate response to each of the national threats; and
- formulate the Police and Crime Plan and the Annual Report and pay due regard to the SPR threat types in both documents.

The meeting focussed on the Force's ability and preparedness to fulfil the requirements of the SPR and information was received on:

- i. the process to assess, plan, prepare and respond to each threat type;
- ii. the governance and reporting mechanisms to ensure the Force is fulfilling its responsibilities for tackling the seven threats; and
- iii. the threat types that have been identified as the most significant risks locally and the response required to fully combat these risks.

The PCC was assured by the evidence received at the Scrutiny Meeting and the Force's subsequent response to the outbreaks of disorder in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough.

On an annual basis, the PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for Cleveland Police's ability to respond effectively to the SPR.

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