



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection

PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 - An inspection of Cleveland Police

Date Inspection Published

February 2016

Type of Inspection:

- Cleveland Specific
 Follow Up
 Partner Inspection

- National
 Thematic

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?

Yes

No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 18th February, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published the conclusions of the effectiveness strand of the 2015 Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) annual assessment. HMIC's effectiveness inspections make an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; and protecting victims and those who are vulnerable. To reach a judgment on each force's effectiveness, HMIC explored four core questions:

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe? (assessed Autumn 2015)
2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders? (assessed Autumn 2015)
3. How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims? (assessed in Autumn 2015 as part of PEEL: Police Effectiveness Inspection 2015 (Vulnerability) - report produced December 2015)
4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities? (assessed Autumn 2015)

The overall judgement was that the Force 'required improvement', with this judgement reached in two of the four core questions (1 and 3) and a 'good' judgement reached in the remaining two core questions (2 and 4).

There were a number of areas for improvement which are listed below:

Core Question 1 – ‘Requires Improvement’

- The force should ensure that the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity.
- The force should adopt a structured and consistent problem-solving process across the force to enable it to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively.
- The force should use evidence of ‘what works’ drawn from other forces, academics and partners to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. There should be routine evaluation of tactics and sharing of effective practice at a local level.

Core Question 2 – ‘Good’

- The force should ensure that all crimes are allocated promptly to investigators with the appropriate skills, accreditation and support to investigate them to a good standard.
- The force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed.

Core Question 3 – ‘Requires Improvement’

- The force should improve its response to missing children by ensuring that the force and partners can readily use information in a timely manner to safeguard children; that it carries out risk assessments and investigations to an appropriate standard; and that it introduces processes to ensure that it supervises properly risk assessment and investigations.
- The force should continue to develop its response to child sexual exploitation specifically in relation to ensuring officers and staff record consistently their risk assessments.
- The force should further improve the way it works with partner organisations in relation to sharing information and safeguarding victims by continuing to work to establish a multi-agency safeguarding hub.

There was also one ‘cause for concern’ in relation to this core question:

The force’s identification and response to vulnerable victims is a cause of concern to HMIC. There are inconsistencies in the quality of service to vulnerable victims at the first point of contact with the police, which means that their particular needs may not be initially recognised and fully met. Call handlers must ensure they spend sufficient time speaking to the person reporting an incident to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of the vulnerability of the victim, offer immediate safeguarding advice, and provide reassurance. Although the force is aware of this concern and is currently in negotiations with the service provider to improve the quality of the initial identification of vulnerability, presently some victims may not be adequately safeguarded. HMIC also found that the force does not respond to all incidents within the required timescale. This means that some vulnerable victims may not receive a sufficiently rapid response to keep them safe. In addition, the force does not yet fully understand the level of repeat incidents.

- Recommendation to address this area of concern the force should immediately take steps to improve its identification of and response to vulnerable victims by ensuring that: staff effectively assess and identify vulnerable victims at initial point of contact; and staff respond in a timely manner to incidents identified as requiring police attendance

Core Question 4 – ‘Good’

- The force should complete its serious and organised crime local profile including relevant data from partner agencies, and ensure that it has a local partnership structure in place with responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime.

FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

HMIC judged the Force’s Effectiveness as ‘requires improvement’ in the 2015 inspection. They specifically inspected the Force’s approach to preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; managing offenders; and protecting those who are vulnerable. These, they believe, are the most important responsibilities for a police Force, and are the principal measures by which the public will judge the performance of their Force and policing as a whole.

HMIC found that overall the Force needs to improve how it keeps people safe and reduces crime. They found the Force is performing well in some areas, however in particular we need to improve how we prevents crime and anti-social behaviour. The Force needs to ensure that the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is a routine part of neighbourhood policing activity, and that officers are afforded the time required to do more problem solving to prevent longer term issues. There also needs to be a routine evaluation of tactics and sharing of effective practice at a local level to build knowledge of ‘what works’.

HMIC found that the Force has made significant investment in its investigation of crime since the recommendations in their crime inspection in 2014, and are able to demonstrate improvement. And that we are also able to access a good level of forensic support through a multi-Force collaboration.

They identified the Force has appropriately trained officers to investigate crime, although they found that caseloads in some areas are excessive. They acknowledge the Force is aware of this and is working with other Forces to put in place future resilience for the investigation of major crime; in particular with North Yorkshire through EVOLVE.

They acknowledge we are making progress with the engagement of partners from other organisations to establish the ‘prevent’ element of the serious and organised crime strategy and we work to ensure that our partners across multiple agencies understand the strategy fully, with the aim of deterring people from involvement in organised crime.

The HMIC found that the Force needs to improve how it prevents crime and anti-social behaviour. However, it is good at tackling serious and organised crime, managing offenders and investigating crime.

In order to address the areas for improvement highlighted, the Force will focus improvement activity in the following key areas:

- Effectively assess and identify vulnerability at point of contact.
- Provide a timely response to vulnerable victims.
- Improve the response to missing children.
- Develop the response to Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Develop and implement plans for a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- Ensure neighbourhood policing includes routine crime and Anti-Social Behaviour prevention activity.
- Adopt a structured and consistent problem solving process.
- Understand and utilise 'what works' and evaluate tactics.
- Ensure the prompt allocation of crime to appropriately skilled and accredited investigators.
- Improve the ability to retrieve digital evidence.
- Complete a Serious and Organised Crime local profile.
- Ensure a local partnership structure for tackling Serious and Organised Crime

Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Simon Nickless stated

“At the time of the inspection we had already begun to address areas that we identified as needing improvement, and this is reflected within our local report. I'm pleased that inspectors have recognised the good work we are doing to understand and address the risk posed by serious and organised crime, that the quality of our investigations is good and that we are good at managing offenders. We know that we must do more to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour and are working closely with our partners to develop this area further. The inspection team gave us feedback about improvements we need to make to protect vulnerable people from harm. We have listened and acted upon this feedback and changes have and are being made. We are transforming the way in which we deliver policing to reduce demand and increase staffing within the team responsible for protecting our vulnerable people. I would ask that people read our local report to get a balanced view of the inspection.”

PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

Comment by the PCC:

As with the PEEL 2015 Legitimacy report, although HMIC rates the Force overall as 'requiring improvement' in its effectiveness, it is encouraging to see that the Force has been graded as 'good' in some categories, particularly in relation to investigating crime and managing offenders, tackling serious and organised crime and fulfilling national policing responsibilities.

A lot of good collaborative work has been undertaken in these areas including the creation of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme provided by Local Authorities and the continued success of NERSOU (North East Regional Special Operations Unit), a collaboration between the three forces of Northumbria, Cleveland and Durham, which creates additional specialist capacity through effective partnership working to deliver an increased response to tackling serious and organised crime that transcends Force borders in the region.

I have been assured and I am pleased that the Force is addressing the areas for improvement and the cause for concern highlighted in the vulnerability inspection which took place in December 2015. Improving victim services is a key priority of my Police & Crime Plan and areas such as points of contact, response times, problem solving, evidence gathering and partnership working are all drivers to delivering on that promise.

As with all HMIC inspections, my office will continue to involve and monitor the embedding of these recommendations to satisfy not only the demands of the inspectorate but the local people of Cleveland, the key recipients of our local policing service.