



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 17 December 2014

HMIC Report – Crime Data Integrity

1. Background

1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) undertook their Crime Data Integrity inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary ("the Constabulary") in June 2014. HMIC's report '*Crime Data Integrity – Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary*' was published on the 18th November 2014. The report includes specific recommendations on how the Constabulary can improve the accuracy of, and therefore public confidence in, the way the police records crime.

2. National Context

2.1 A national thematic report¹ was published at the same time as the Constabulary's report. The conclusions of this report at a national level were that:

- Police were failing to record over 800,000 crimes reported to them each year. This represents an under-recording of 19%.
- The problem is greatest for victims of violence against the person and sexual offences, where the under-recording rates are 33% and 26% respectively.
- Even when crimes are correctly recorded, too many are removed or cancelled as recorded crimes for no good reason, and victims are not being informed that their crimes have been 'no crimed'.

¹ These inspections examine a key issue across a representative number of police forces, and comment solely on performance in relation to that key issue. This type of inspection identifies deficiencies relevant to the police service as a whole and spreads good practice regarding a specific aspect of policing

- Victims' wishes were not being considered in relation to out-of-court disposals, and these were being used for offenders where this was not appropriate.

3. Cambridgeshire Constabulary Findings

- 3.1 HMIC found that Chief Officers in the Constabulary promote compliance with Home Office Counting Rules (HOCRs), encouraging a victim-centred approach. HMIC Inspectors also reported that they found frontline staff, including call-takers, understand the importance of meeting the needs of the victim when considering crime recording and investigation, and they are polite, professional and helpful.
- 3.2 HMIC highlights in their report that their audit only examined a small sample of crime records from each police force. Taken together, these samples are sufficient to provide a reliable national estimate, but are too small to produce a Force estimate of compliance. Force compliance rates typically result in a margin of error of around +/- 10% and, therefore, a range of 20%. This range of uncertainty – as HMIC describes it – means that they state that *“few, if any, conclusions can be drawn from individual Force compliance rates or comparisons of rates between forces based on the data alone. (Samples large enough to make more reliable Force judgements, while desirable, were not affordable).”*
- 3.3 Despite HMIC's recognition that their audit of individual Force compliance rates was unreliable, HMIC noted that of the 75 Constabulary incident records they examined they found that 58 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 58 crimes that should have been recorded, only 41 were. HMIC described this as “of serious concern” as “it meant that some victims' crimes were not being recorded and they were not getting the service they deserved (e.g. because certain victim support services are only triggered when a crime is recorded).”
- 3.4 HMIC also examined 58 no-crime records (where reports of incidents to Police had resulted in no crime record being raised). They found 50 of these records to be compliant with HOCRs and National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), noting that they therefore felt the Force's approach to no-crime to be a matter of concern.
- 3.5 HMIC noted that the Police Service Centre (PSC) recorded approximately 21% of total recorded crime, taking reports of crime directly from members of the public which did not require the creation of an incident record. The HMIC inspection of the PSC (a review of 13 calls from the public) found that of the 13 crimes that should have been recorded, all 13 were recorded correctly, and that this was an effective approach to crime-recording for the Force.

4. HMIC Recommendations

- 4.1 HMIC made nine recommendations following the inspection, that the Constabulary should, from the date of the report being published:

Immediately

- 4.1.1 Ensure that all police officers and staff are fully aware of the confidential reporting line, emphasising that it is indeed confidential and can be used for all matters of concern, including those relating to crime data integrity.
- 4.1.2 Ensure that all relevant officers and staff are reminded of their responsibility to record crime as soon as the reporting officer is satisfied that it is more likely than not that a crime has been committed.
- 4.1.3 Ensure that all reports recorded separately on other Constabulary systems (e.g., those used by the public protection teams) are recorded as crimes. The Constabulary should put in place proportionate and effective audit arrangements, through the Force Control Room (FCR), to ensure that reports held on separate systems are properly recorded as crimes.
- 4.1.4 Should introduce a structured and proportionate quality assurance process by supervisors in the FCR. This should be undertaken on a consistent basis across all teams, including a check of compliance with the NCRS and, where appropriate feed into the development of professional practice and continuous improvement in the FCR.
- 4.1.5 Should retain out-of-court disposal records in compliance with the Management of Police Information guidelines.
- 4.1.6 Should take steps to ensure that the FCR audit programme includes an audit of all IT systems which may contain reports of crime so as to ensure compliance with the HOCR and NCRS.

Within three months

- 4.1.7 Should put in place a process that enables it to capture and share good practice and to correct failures in NCRS compliance as identified by the audit regime.
- 4.1.8 Should improve the supervision of Penalty Notice for Disorder to ensure that, where there is a victim, their view is appropriately considered and recorded.

Within six months

- 4.1.9 The Force should ensure that police staff, and in particular those working in the FCR receive adequate training in the application of the HOCR and NCRS.

5. Response to the HMIC Report

- 5.1 The Constabulary has accepted all nine recommendations. These were already being progressed through an action plan drawn up following the inspection hot debrief in Summer 2014.
- 5.2 This action plan is progressed through the Crime Data Integrity Working Group, and will be monitored through the Information Management Strategy Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	HMIC Report ' <i>Cambridgeshire Crime Data Integrity</i> ' HMIC National Thematic Report ' <i>Crime Data Integrity</i> ' http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/cambridgeshire/
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