



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 02 December 2016

Crime Data Integrity – An update prior to the 2017 Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Inspection

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on progress with work to improve the application of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Board is invited to note the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) were established in their current form in 1998 and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was implemented in 2002. Together they provide a clear and simple framework and set of rules for the sound and consistent recording of crime by the police.

3.2 Police force crime data are reported to the Home Office and published by the Office for National Statistics along with other independent data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales to provide as clear as possible a picture of levels of crime. For several years prior to HMIC’s *Crime-recording: Making the victim count* inspection in 2014, these national data sets showed significant reductions in crime during a time when the rules and standards governing crime-recording practice had been tightened. Whilst this was very welcome, there remained appreciable public concern that true crime levels were not truly represented in the statistics, particularly those recorded by police forces.

3.3 The 2014 HMIC inspection examined and assessed the integrity of crime data in all police forces in England and Wales. The inspection focused on three broad themes: leadership and governance; systems and processes; and people and skills. Consideration was given to how each force applied the recording standards, how

police culture and behaviours affected recording, how victims of crime were being served by police crime-recording practices, and how the police used out-of-court disposals such as cautions, cannabis warnings, community resolutions and penalty notices for disorder when dealing with offenders.

- 3.4 The 2014 inspection made 9 specific recommendations for the Constabulary to address, which were accepted in full. See Annex A.
- 3.5 HMIC specifically noted that Chief Officers in the Constabulary promoted compliance with HOCR and encouraged a victim-centred approach. HMIC also reported that frontline staff, including call-takers, understood the importance of meeting the needs of the victim when considering crime recording and investigation.

4. Update on Progress since 2014

- 4.1 Following the 2014 inspection, the force introduced a Crime Data Integrity Working Group (the “working group”) with a Superintendent-level chair and appropriate representation from across the force from departments that are involved in achieving NCRS compliance.
- 4.2 A detailed action plan addressing the specific recommendations of the 2014 inspection was put in place and has been completed. Some aspects of the 2014 inspection recommendations require regular revisits and this is recognised within the latest working group action plan, which serves to continue to improve compliance.
- 4.3 The working group is responsible for monitoring crime recording and outcome compliance. It is supplied with regular audit reports¹ from the Force Crime Registrar and uses this information to identify action necessary to improve performance. The working group regularly reviews crime recording processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose and provides regular communications regarding changes to the HOCR or any other crime recording issues. Training needs are also identified and addressed. The working group reports to the Force Performance Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable.
- 4.4 It is noteworthy that a cultural shift towards agile working and digital delivery has presented new challenges to NCRS compliance, which the Crime Data Integrity Working Group is currently addressing through additional scrutiny on the correct closure of incidents.
- 4.5 More recent activities by the working group have recognised learning from the 2016 HMIC crime data integrity inspections of Greater Manchester Police, Sussex Police and Staffordshire Police and the force has been quick to respond to relevant findings in those forces, including:
 - Additional scrutiny within the Force Control Room to ensure correct interpretation of the NCRS for high risk incidents.
 - Enhanced online training for all front-line staff.
 - Re-emphasis of the importance of correct crime recording by Chief Officers and the link to victim service and public confidence.

¹ 250 incidents are reviewed by the Force Crime Registrar and her team on a monthly basis, focused on the highest risk areas.

- Process refinements, including enhanced quality checking by area crime managers.

5. 2017 Crime Data Integrity Inspection

5.1 The force was notified that it would receive an unannounced HMIC Crime Data Integrity Inspection in November 2016, as part of a rolling inspection programme. Following a comprehensive audit by HMIC in November and December 2016, inspection fieldwork will take place in January 2017, with a report expected in May 2017. The 2017 methodology does not include scrutiny of out-of-court disposals.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Board is invited to note the contents of the report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	Crime Data Integrity: Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, HMIC, November 2014 Crime Recording: Making the victim count, HMIC, November 2014
Contact Officer(s)	Detective Superintendent Martin Brunning, Head of Investigation Standards and Development, Cambridgeshire Constabulary Rachel Badcock, Force Crime Registrar, Corporate Development Department, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Annex A: Force recommendations from Crime Data Integrity: Inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, HMIC, November 2014

Immediately

- 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. **Complete**
- 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. **Complete (and repeated in the current action plan)**
- 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. **Complete (and repeated in the current action plan)**
- 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. **Complete**
- Should retain out-of-court disposal records in compliance with the Management of Police Information guidelines. **Complete (and repeated in the current action plan)**
- 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 HOCA and NCRS. **Complete**

Within three months

- 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. **Complete**
- Should improve the supervision of Penalty Notice for Disorder to ensure that, where there is a victim, their view is appropriately considered and recorded. **Complete**

Within six months

- The Force should ensure that police staff, and in particular those working in the FCR to receive adequate training in the application of the HOCA and NCRS. **Complete (and repeated in the current action plan)**