

To: January 2025 Joint Audit Committee
From: Sergeant Susie Tinsley
Subject: HMICFRS updates
Date: 28th January 2025

HMICFRS Activity Report

1.Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work HMICFRS conduct and to provide an understanding to the proposed changes to the HMICFRS inspection activity from 2025.

2.Overview

HMICFRS inspect all forces on behalf of the public through a number of inspections:

2.1 PEEL assessments

The police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Its main aim is to promote improvements in policing. HMICFRS provide graded judgments on aspects of forces' performance. They identify where forces need to improve and help the public understand how well their force is performing.

2.2 National thematic inspections

Thematic inspections are in-depth examinations of particular policing practices or processes, or of the policing approach to preventing and tackling specific offences. HMICFRS identify themes mainly through their continuous monitoring of forces and through consultations with key stakeholders.

Thematic inspections may be chosen for several reasons, including:

- current, acute problems in policing practice that are harming the public interest.
- inconsistencies in police performance across England and Wales, which force-level work can't adequately explain; or
- further improvement in practice that would benefit the most, or the most vulnerable, victims.

Expanding on the force-specific information from PEEL inspections and force management statements, HMICFRS aim to build a national picture of police efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy through a combination of:

- force data and document requests.
- interviews with national, regional, and local policing bodies, Government and other interested parties.
- case file audits; and
- testing the understanding and application of policies and procedures with officers and staff in forces.

While thematic inspections allow HMICFRS to identify areas of notable practice or specific concerns in specific forces, they will usually make recommendations that are relevant to the police service as a whole. These are published in the thematic report and all forces have to assess their performance and work against the recommendation to ensure the common themes HMICFRS have found in the thematic (normally about 6 forces are inspected, choosing a range of areas and sizes of forces to ensure commonality across the country) are addressed (if they feature) in every force in England and Wales.

2.3 Commissions from the Home Secretary and local policing bodies

The Home Secretary may, at any time, require HMICFRS to carry out an inspection of a police force, part of a police force, or particular activities of one or more police forces. Similarly, local policing bodies may, at any time, ask them to carry out inspections or reviews of the police forces they oversee. An example of this has been the rapid review of policing public order after the summer riots.

2.4 Inspection of national bodies and other non-Home Office forces

Additionally, HMICFRS also have a statutory responsibility to carry out inspections of the following national bodies and non-Home Office forces:

- the National Crime Agency.
- the Police Service of Northern Ireland.
- the British Transport Police.
- the Service Police – Royal Military Police, Royal Navy Police and Royal Air Force Police.

- the Ministry of Defence Police.
- the Civil Nuclear Constabulary; and
- HM Revenue & Customs.

At the request of the relevant dependency or overseas territory, they may also inspect forces in British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, such as Gibraltar, Jersey and Guernsey.

HMICFRS have similar voluntary inspection arrangements with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

2.5 Joint inspections

HMICFRS work with other organisations to carry out joint inspections. These allow them to inspect the way in which the police approach and tackle a particular type of crime or problem as part of a wider assessment of the service provided by all relevant bodies and organisations. For example, they work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to examine how local authorities, the police and health services work together to help protect children. These are the Joint Targeted Area Inspections. (JTAI).

HMICFRS also work with the other criminal justice inspectorates: HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons. This allows the assessment of police efficiency and effectiveness in both contributing to, and being affected by, the wider criminal justice system. The joint inspection work HMICFRS do with these inspectorates is detailed in the separate 'Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Business Plan 2023/25'.

2.6 State of Policing report

Each year, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary will produce an annual State of Policing report, which reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales. This is to inform parliament of the issues within policing.

2.7 Rolling programmes.

HMICFRS carry out a number of rolling programmes. These are to assess specific issues in areas of higher risk. These are deeper and narrower inspection into specific areas. These include:

- Custody

- Integrity (Vetting, Counter corruption and Professional Standards)
- Child Protection
- Serious and Organised Crime

3. Changes to the inspection work

3.1 HMICFRS have published their proposed framework for the next 5 years (to March 2029).

The changes are due from April 2025.

The framework pays cognisance to the change in government with emphasis on:

- safer streets
- commitments on increasing neighbourhood policing
- on halving knife crime
- addressing the root causes of abuse and violence against women and girls

3.2 National Thematic

HMICFRS plan to start the following thematic inspections in 2024/25 and complete them in 2025/26:

- firearms licensing
- police leadership

NOTE: no change here

Their proposed thematic inspections over the next four years are as follows.

This list is not in order of priority:

1. the police response to knife-related crime, building on their recent report into serious youth violence; the exact scope and focus of this inspection is to be developed, but it will potentially be inspected jointly with one or more of the other criminal justices' inspectorates.

2. the efficiency and effectiveness of current arrangements that provide local, regional and national policing services, including arrangements to meet the Strategic Policing Requirement. This includes Police Digital Service and National Police Air Service as well as commissioned services such as those for victims and witnesses, and professional standards-related functions.
3. science and technology – examining the use of new/emerging science and technology, such as biometrics and facial recognition, to tackle crime; NOTE: increased area of focus and directed section in the FMS.
4. economic crime – elements of economic crime not covered by PEEL and the serious and organised crime rolling programmes, including Action Fraud.
5. undercover policing – building on the 2014 report ('An inspection of undercover policing in England and Wales').
6. police and fire service cybersecurity – examining the police and fire service's response to increasing areas of cybersecurity risk.
7. counter-terrorism – the exact subject is to be developed.
8. Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles across all JESIP partners; and
9. data and analytics – including topics such as data quality, management of data, data rights analysis (the capability and role of the analyst, for example) and using science to improve the application of data. NOTE: Increasing area of focus in all HMICFRS reports and narrative, the need for forces to properly understand their data and to use it to make decisions.

Continuation of current inspections and seems to be no change to the below:

- NCPI (Child protection)
- JTAI (Ofsted led child inspections)
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Integrity

3.3 PEEL 2025-27

This sees HMICFRS introduce two new core questions (on safeguarding and the response to fraud).

The main changes are:

- move the inspection of custody into PEEL, which will increase the frequency of inspections, so every force is inspected every four (rather than six) years.
- make changes to how they inspect and report on crime data integrity and the management of suspects and offenders; and
- change elements of the HMI summary

The PEEL question headings are now:

1. leadership.
2. supporting and developing the workforce.
3. public treatment.
4. prevention and deterrence.
5. responding to the public
6. investigating crime.
7. safeguarding children and adults at risk.
8. custody; and
9. (subject to specific funding) fraud.

Safeguarding

As part of the new safeguarding question, HMICFRS will assess whether a force has identified children and adults who may be at risk of harm and safeguarded them

appropriately. The focus is on adults and children who are experiencing domestic abuse, stalking or harassment, and who have reported rape and sexual assault. They will also consider children who have been reported missing.

This replaces the vulnerability core question. Instead, HMICFRS will report their assessment of a force's ability to protect vulnerable people from harm in a revised HMI summary. They have made this change to recognise the importance and breadth of vulnerability: it is relevant to many areas of policing. –

Fraud

In the new fraud question, they will focus on how a force approaches fraud. As part of this question, they will assess:

- the investigation of crimes that are the responsibility of local police forces.
- how forces safeguard and give advice to victims; and
- how the force prevents the public becoming victims of fraud.

Crime data integrity

HMICFRS haven't previously inspected every force on crime data integrity (CDI) during each round of PEEL. In their new approach to inspection for 2025–27, HMICFRS will inspect all 43 forces during each round. However, forces will no longer receive a graded judgment for CDI.

Instead, they will carry out a dip sample of files in each force and include any relevant findings in specific characteristics of good for other PEEL core questions. This means that the results of the CDI inspection will directly influence the judgment given for those core questions.

HMICFRS have advised that if they have concerns about a force's performance in relation to crime recording, it may result in them carrying out a full CDI audit. HMICFRS also intend to report on national themes in this area through a PEEL spotlight report.

HMICFRS publish spotlight reports that contain a summary of findings or themes that emerge from their inspections if they consider it appropriate.

Management of offenders and suspects

In the 2025–27 PEEL round of inspections, HMICFRS will report separately on the management of offenders and suspects in a national spotlight report. This is because there are consistent areas for improvement across forces which suggest a national effort is required to make the necessary improvements.

Although no longer a core question, the PEEL assessment framework continues to focus on offenders, including the proactive and appropriate use and oversight of preventative orders and disclosure schemes.

HMICFRS will assess how well forces work with partner organisations in multi-agency processes to keep vulnerable people safe and reduce the risk of the most prolific and persistent offenders reoffending. As part of the continuous approach to assessment, they will continue to monitor the progress of individual forces against areas for improvement they identified in the 2023–25 inspection cycle. HMICFRS also intend to review additional data to support their understanding of any increased risk within the policing of registered sex offenders and investigations into online child abuse.

Proposed PEEL Assessment Framework (PAF) 2025-27

Question one – leadership

Topic areas

- The force's senior leaders use all available information to develop strategic plans that will provide a quality service to the public.
- The force's senior leaders make sure there is a clear performance framework aligned to the force's strategic plans.
- The force's senior leaders make sure there is the right culture and capable leadership at all levels to oversee how the force's strategic plans are implemented, and its performance objectives are achieved.

- The force's senior leaders make sure the force's strategic plans are implemented, and its performance objectives are achieved, by introducing efficiencies in the workforce. These efficiencies may include the use of technology, continuous improvement and collaboration.
- The force's senior leaders make the best use of available funding to implement the force's strategic plans and achieve its performance objectives.

Question two – supporting and developing the workforce.

Topic areas

- The force has a diverse workforce and recruits the right people to meet the needs of its communities.
- The force develops its workforce to make sure it has the skills and capabilities to meet the needs of its communities.
- The force supports its workforce, making successful efforts to retain officers and staff, while meeting the needs of the individual, force and community.

Question three – public treatment

Topic areas

- The force's training and feedback systems improve how it uses stop and search and use of force powers.
- The force's use of [stop and search powers](#) is fair and appropriate and supports its force priorities.
- The force uses its use of force powers fairly and appropriately.

Question four – prevention and deterrence

Topic areas

- The force works with partner organisations to identify and prioritise its approach to prevent vulnerability, [antisocial behaviour](#) and crime.
- The force uses primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activity to prevent, deter and tackle crime and keep its communities safe.
- The force's [neighbourhood policing team](#) listens to and responds well to its communities to help make them feel safe.

Question five – responding to the public.

Topic areas

- The force meets the needs of the public who make contact via a range of communication methods.
- The force understands risk and vulnerability at first point of contact and makes sure it gives appropriate advice and guidance to the public.
- The force provides an appropriate response to incidents and manages and prioritises ongoing risk to keep the public safe.

Question six – investigating crime.

Topic areas

- The force secures justice for [victims](#).
- The force carries out high quality investigations to achieve appropriate outcomes for [victims](#).
- The force provides a quality service to [victims](#) of crime.

Question seven – safeguarding children and adults at risk

Topic areas

- The force understands and addresses the vulnerability and [safeguarding](#) concerns it identifies.

- The force reduces and prevents harm by [safeguarding](#) and supporting vulnerable people.

Question eight – fraud

Topic areas

- The force gives advice to its communities and has initiatives in place to prevent the public becoming [victims](#) of fraud.
- The force carries out high-quality fraud investigations to achieve appropriate outcomes for [victims](#).
- The force provides a quality service to [victims](#) of fraud.

Question nine – custody

Topic areas and characteristics of good are yet to be developed but will be largely based on the current rolling programme of custody inspection:

- Leadership, accountability and working with partners.
- Pre-custody: officers and staff consider alternatives to custody at first point of contact.
- In the custody suite: people are treated respectfully and with dignity.
- In the custody cell: detainees are held in clean and safe conditions with access to healthcare and [safeguarding](#).

Release and transfer from custody is both safe and prompt.

4. Publications

4.1 All HMICFRS publications are available through this link: [Publications - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

4.2 Reports of note:

4.2.1 On 9th December 2024 HMICFRS closed the cause of concern for Cambridgeshire. In their [2023–25 police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspection](#) HMICFRS raised a cause of concern regarding managing registered sex offenders in the community. Following HMICFRS reinspection work, they have closed this cause of concern

4.2.2 The new style **integrity** inspection reports were published last week for Derbyshire, North Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. These reports are the first of the triple inspection report that cover forces vetting, counter corruption and professional standards work.

4.2.3 Within this period The **Metropolitan Police** have been moved out of enhanced monitoring due to a sustained increase in performance. The Met was put under enhanced monitoring by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in June 2022 after concerns about its performance, including issues of confidence and trust in the force.

After being under enhanced monitoring for more than two-and-a-half years, the force has now been removed to routine monitoring in January 2025.

Whilst **Lincolnshire Police** have been moved into enhanced monitoring (engage) (6th Dec) due to their PEEL 2023/25 inspection report.

4.2.4 Rapid review of the policing of public disorder – Tranche 2 terms of reference publication.

Background

On 29 July 2024, three young girls, Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice Da Silva Aguiar, were killed in a knife attack in Southport. In the aftermath, far-right groups used social media to spread incorrect and false information, and to mobilise demonstrators. Violent disorder broke out in the town.

In the days that followed, violent disorder affected other towns and cities throughout the UK. The police made more than 800 arrests in the first few weeks after the disorder.

On 6 September 2024, the Home Secretary wrote to HMICFRS under [section 54\(2B\) of the Police Act 1996](#) to carry out a rapid review into the events following the attacks in Southport.

On 18 December 2024, HMICFRS published their report, '[An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 1](#)'. This examined capacity and capability, co-ordination and [mobilisation](#), and well-being.

Rapid review into the policing of public disorder – Tranche 2

In the Tranche 2 review, HMICFRS are to examine the police service's arrangements for rapidly learning lessons from these outbreaks of violent disorder. They will also assess how well prepared it is to respond to future similar outbreaks.

The police service's use of an intelligence-led approach

Assessment of:

- how the police service gathered and managed relevant [intelligence](#) about emerging threats of violent disorder from different sources, including those that are online and within communities; the likely value of these sources when the police service is responding to a rapidly developing situation; and the national structures and processes the police service used to collate, analyse and share [intelligence](#); and
- the extent to which the police service recognised rising community tensions before the disorder and reacted to changes in [intelligence](#) during the disorder.

The police service's arrangements for tackling online misinformation and disinformation

Assessment of:

- how the police service monitors, assesses and responds to social media and online content, and how it deals with the consequences of social media content that contains misinformation and/or disinformation;
- the methods the police service can use to correct misinformation and disinformation rapidly;

- how the police service can take action against people who use social media to influence and incite others to take part in violent disorder;
- how the police service co-ordinates its public communications so they are consistent and effective; and
- how the police service identifies misinformation and disinformation that promotes and incites violence and refers it to technology companies so they can take appropriate action, and whether current systems and processes help the police to deal with harmful online content.

Crime investigations

Assessment of:

- how dealing with the violent disorder affected forces' capacity and capability to maintain effective policing services, investigate crime, and support [victims](#) and witnesses;
- how forces responded to the additional investigative demand arising from the disorder;
- the effectiveness of national police arrangements in support of these investigations; and
- how the police service and [criminal justice system](#) partners worked together to bring offenders to justice.