

To: August Joint Audit Committee
From: Sergeant Lyndsey Bradshaw
Date: August 2026
Subject: HMICFRS updates and overview of publications

HMICFRS Activity Report

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of HMICFRS's work and the inspection reports it published between July and August 2026.

2. Executive Summary

This report provides the Joint Audit Committee with an overview of HMICFRS activity and the principal inspection publications issued between July and August 2026. HMICFRS assesses police forces through the 2025–2027 PEEL framework, national thematic and commissioned inspections, joint inspections with other inspectorates, and rolling programmes directed at higher-risk areas. Its inspection activity is intended to provide public assurance, identify notable practice and expose areas where forces or partnerships need to improve.

The inspection model is becoming increasingly intelligence-led and continuous. PEEL assessments consider the efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of all 43 police forces in England and Wales against the current assessment framework, with graded judgments linked more clearly to causes of concern and areas for improvement. This is complemented by thematic work examining systemic issues across policing, joint inspections assessing the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements, and focused rolling programmes covering integrity, child protection, and serious and organised crime.

Three publications are highlighted for this reporting period: the PEEL inspections of Cumbria Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary, both published on 20 August 2026, and the joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in Staffordshire. The Staffordshire inspection considered how police, local authority, health and probation services collectively identify, assess and protect children who need help and protection.

3. Overview

HMICFRS inspects police forces on behalf of the public through a range of inspection programmes:

3.1 PEEL assessments

Police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Their principal aim is to promote improvement in policing. HMICFRS provides graded judgments on aspects of force performance, identifies where improvement is needed and helps the public understand how well their local force is performing.

HMICFRS has moved to a more intelligence-led, continuous assessment approach, replacing the annual PEEL inspections used in previous years. Forces are assessed against the characteristics of good performance set out in the PEEL assessment framework 2025–2027, with judgments linked more clearly to causes of concern and areas for improvement. The first assessment under the 2025–2027 framework was published in April 2026.

3.2 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.

Thematic inspections can identify notable practice or specific concerns within individual forces, but their recommendations will usually be relevant to policing nationally. All forces must assess their own performance against those recommendations and address any applicable themes. A thematic inspection normally involves a sample of approximately six forces, selected to represent different areas and force sizes and to identify issues of wider relevance across England and Wales.

3.3 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.

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

HMICFRS also has a statutory responsibility to inspect 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.

3.5 Joint inspections

HMICFRS works with other inspectorates to carry out joint inspections. These examine how the police tackle a particular type of crime or problem as part of a wider assessment of the services provided by relevant agencies. For example, HMICFRS works with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to assess how local authorities, police and health services work together to protect children through joint targeted area inspections (JTAs).

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.

3.6 State of Policing report

Each year, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary produces the State of Policing report on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales. The report informs Parliament about significant issues affecting policing.

3.7 Rolling programmes

HMICFRS carries out a number of rolling programmes to assess specific issues in higher-risk areas. These provide a deeper, more focused inspection of:

- Integrity (vetting, counter-corruption and professional standards)
- Child protection
- Serious and organised crime

4. Publications

4.1 Access to publications

All HMICFRS publications are available here: [HMICFRS publications](#)

4.2 Reports of note

- PEEL 2025–2027: An inspection of Cumbria Constabulary
- PEEL 2025–2027: An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary

- Joint child protection inspection of child sexual abuse in the family environment in Staffordshire

4.3 Detailed report summaries

4.3.1 PEEL 2025-2027: An inspection of Cumbria Constabulary

On 20 August 2026, HMICFRS made the following graded judgments:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Leadership and force management	Police powers and public treatment		
	Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Preventing and deterring crime		
	Responding to the public	Investigating crime		
	Safeguarding children and adults	Managing fraud		

4.3.2 PEEL 2025-2027: An inspection of Suffolk Constabulary

On 20 August 2026, HMICFRS made the following graded judgments:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing and deterring crime	Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Leadership and force management	Safeguarding children and adults
		Responding to the public	Police powers and public treatment	Providing a safe custody environment
		Investigating crime	Managing fraud	

4.3.3 Joint child protection inspection of child sexual abuse in the family environment in Staffordshire

Between 15 and 19 June 2026, Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the Care Quality Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation carried out a joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in Staffordshire.

These inspections examine the arrangements and services for children in need of help and protection in local authority areas in England.

This letter summarises the findings of the joint inspection.

The link to the letter can be found [HERE](#)