

PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version: Sept 24

Force	Staffordshire																													
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams																													
Chief Constable	Chris Noble																													
Title of inspection	PEEL 2023–2025: An inspection of Staffordshire Police																													
Published Date	24 th September 2024																													
Inspectorate	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>																													
Summary of inspection	<p>I am pleased with some aspects of the performance of Staffordshire Police in keeping people safe, reducing crime and providing victims with an effective service. I am satisfied with most other aspects of the force’s performance, but there are areas in which it needs to improve. The force has addressed some of the poor performance that we identified in our last report, including in the areas of investigations and responding to the public. But it still has challenges in these areas, particularly in attending incidents in a timely manner and assigning appropriate outcomes to crimes. It also needs to reduce the number of non-emergency 101 calls that are abandoned by callers. The improvements we observed in our inspection were supported by a much more effective use of data. The force now has a much better understanding of demand, and of its capacity and capability to meet it. We found that both leaders and frontline staff have better access to data to help them understand the force’s performance and the service provided to victims. This helps the force more effectively monitor key areas such as the standard of investigations, how it responds to the public, and how it manages the risk posed by offenders.</p>																													
Grade	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Outstanding</th> <th>Good</th> <th>Adequate</th> <th>Requires improvement</th> <th>Inadequate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Preventing crime</td> <td>Police powers and public treatment</td> <td>Responding to the public</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Managing offenders</td> <td>Investigating crime</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Developing a positive workplace</td> <td>Protecting vulnerable people</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Leadership and force management</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate		Preventing crime	Police powers and public treatment	Responding to the public				Managing offenders	Investigating crime				Developing a positive workplace	Protecting vulnerable people				Leadership and force management						
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Recommendations																														

Areas for improvement

Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

- **The force should improve its understanding of the use of force.** In year ending 31 March 2023, Staffordshire Police recorded 4,238 incidents where force was used. We can estimate how many uses of force should be expected by looking at the number of arrests. **Each arrest would usually count as a use of force**, so we would expect the number of times use of force is recorded to be at least as high as the number of arrests, if not higher. But over the same time frame, Staffordshire Police recorded 12,123 arrests. This would suggest the force is failing to record the use of force consistently, by at least 7,885 incidents.

Responding to the public

- **The force needs to reduce the number of non-emergency 101 calls that are abandoned.** The force can now estimate whether the abandonment has been prompted by the automated interactive voice response system providing suggestions for alternate ways of contacting the force, such as through the website. But the force still lacks a full understanding of whether callers are using alternative methods to contact the force once they have abandoned their calls.
- **The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its published attendance times and make sure the caller is updated if there are delays**
- **The force needs to make sure that risk is reassessed for incidents that are awaiting attendance**
- **The force should improve how promptly it answers emergency calls**
- **The force has effective oversight of calls for service, but should make sure alternative ways for the public to make contact are consistently available**

Investigating crime

- **The force isn't always achieving the right outcomes for victims of crime**
- **The force needs to make sure it is using outcomes appropriately**
- **The force should make sure timely investigation plans are created, with supervisory oversight, so that all investigative opportunities are taken**

Protecting vulnerable people

- **The force should effectively co-ordinate victim feedback in to improve its services**
- **The force should make better use of ancillary orders to support and protect vulnerable people**
- **The force should improve its response to reports of domestic abuse**
- **The force has revised its governance of vulnerability, but it should continue to improve its capacity and capability in this area**

Managing offenders and suspects

- **The force should do more to make sure suspects managed by the Police Online Investigation Team are complying with their bail conditions**

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

- **The force should make sure that sufficient support is provided to student officers and their tutors**

Leadership and force management

- **The force's operating model should allow it to effectively respond to priorities and assess current and future demand**
- **The force should maximise the productivity of its resources and assets**

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's initial response

Staffordshire Police has seen improved gradings across the board compared to the previous inspection, one of very few forces to do so. This is now a sound basis on which to build an outstanding police service, an ambition shared between myself and the Chief Constable and reflected in our respective plans.

My Police and Crime Plan particularly prioritises improvements in the response provided to the public through telephone and online 101 services, incident attendance and quality of investigation as they are all key to improving confidence.

Preventing harm and protecting people is also a major element of my plan and I recognise the considerable improvements the force has made in this area. The specific areas for improvement highlighted in the report will assist in driving further improvement.

I am pleased to see that the report recognises the impact of high levels of recruitment in recent years. The energy and commitment of the new influx of officers is very much welcomed but it is balanced with a relative lack of experience. This is not unique to Staffordshire and will improve over time. I am closely engaged with the force's work to increase the skill levels of front-line staff, particularly around investigation quality, and have supported the recent investment in additional capacity in local policing to meet increased demand.

Chief Constable's response

The report, published under the Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) programme, shows improvements taking place across the board, with the force achieving improved ratings in the majority of categories since the last PEEL inspection in 2022. Against the backdrop of many forces seeing their gradings reduce in this current inspection window, it sees Staffordshire Police emerge as one of the most improved forces in the country.

This positive inspection follows the force being removed from HMICFRS' 'Engage' enhanced monitoring process in May following improvements to specific areas of our service.

In particular, the Inspectorate has rated Staffordshire Police as 'Good' in preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour and reducing vulnerability. It has further rated the force as competent or 'Adequate' in the following areas: police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully, managing offenders and suspects, building, supporting and protecting the workforce and leadership and force management. But it also says the force needs to do more in the areas of responding to the public, investigating crime, protecting vulnerable people, with these three areas rated as requiring improvement.

Overall, this is a positive report for Staffordshire Police which is reflective of the hard work and commitment of officers and staff to improve the service we provide to Staffordshire communities. Since our last full inspection over two years ago, we have been focused on improving all our areas of policing by adopting a back-to-basics approach to ensure we focus on delivering the best possible service to our communities – answering emergency calls faster, arresting more criminals, solving more crimes and further improving our local policing model. We have seen particular improvements in the amount of time it takes us to answer 999 calls, how we identify vulnerable callers and how we ensure they get the right support, right away. Investments in our control room and the introduction of new processes and teams mean we now answer the majority of 999 calls in less than 10 seconds, a 15-second improvement from two years ago.

The Inspectorate has commended our ability to effectively address members of the public who make unnecessary repeat 999 calls, which has allowed us to free-up time for the people that need us most. We're also working more closely with partner agencies through our Right Care, Right Person initiative to ensure health-related calls we receive are responded to by the most appropriate agency.

HMICFRS has recognised that we need to do more in reducing wait times for our non-emergency 101 service and we already have plans in place to enhance this service through investing in more staff and adopting cutting-edge technology, to ensure it's a response we are proud of. Our return to a local policing model, which has now been in place for two years, sees us work more closely with local communities to tackle the local issues that really matter to them. HMICFRS has recognised our improved problem-solving approaches and our work with partner agencies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour at its source. Our engagement with local communities has also significantly improved with increased opportunities for two-way engagement with local officers.

We've also invested heavily in a new public protection unit to provide more officers to tackle the most serious crimes, such as serious violence and sexual assault, which have a lasting impact on vulnerable people. HMICFRS has noted our improved compliance with the Victims' Code in ensuring victims of crime are informed and empowered through every stage of the investigation process. It has also commended how we work closely with partner agencies to ensure the most vulnerable people in our communities are protected from harm.

We are well underway in addressing the Inspectorate's challenge to us as to how we respond more consistently and effectively to reports of domestic abuse. We are currently working on a new approach that will significantly reduce the time it takes to respond to grade 2 domestic abuse-related incidents. We have also already implemented a seven-step plan which seeks to improve our response from the initial attendance to the end of the investigation. A number of other improvements are already in train and I am confident we'll be able to robustly address our weaker performing areas in the same way we did following the 2022 inspection while ensuring the positive changes we've already made are maintained.

This is a positive report for Staffordshire Police but it also outlines areas of focus where we have already well-developed plans and intended investments. We have not waited for the report to land to start our work and my commitment, and that of my staff, is that we will not rest on our laurels but push on to deliver a service to the Staffordshire public that we can all be proud of."

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's overall comments

This report illustrates a positive direction of travel and reflects the hard work by the force, not only to address previous weaknesses but to build a solid foundation for further improvement. There is no complacency; both the Chief Constable and I recognise that there is much work to be done to achieve our joint ambition to provide an outstanding local police service to the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. I value HMICFRS's expertise, observations and ongoing support in helping to focus our collective efforts. I will aim to provide the appropriate resources, continue my oversight of performance and use my powers to convene partners to drive further improvement.