

PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version:

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	Staffordshire Police: PEEL causes of concern revisit letter
Inspectorate	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>On 6 July 2022, we moved Staffordshire Police to the engage phase of our monitoring process. This provides additional accountability and support to forces that are tackling enduring problems.</p> <p>Responding to the public: In December 2023, we closed this cause of concern. We found that the force had significantly improved the frequency and quality of threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) assessments at the first point of contact. It had also improved the identification of vulnerable and repeat callers.</p> <p>Investigating crime: In February 2024, we inspected the force’s crime standards again, and carried out additional inspections between February 2024 and May 2024. We found that the force had improved the standard of its investigations and was providing higher quality supervision. It had also improved its compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. This means that victims now receive a better service from the force. As such, I am pleased with the improvement in Staffordshire Police’s investigation of crime. I am therefore able to close this cause of concern.</p>
Grade	
Recommendations	None
Areas for improvement	None

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s initial response

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Ben Adams has praised the work of Staffordshire Police, following the news that the force has been removed from the ‘Engage’ enhanced monitoring process after demonstrating improvements in its service.

The decision was made today (21 May) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), in consultation with other police stakeholders, including the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing.

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Ben Adams said: "Today's decision by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services to remove the force from the Engage process is testament to the wide-reaching improvements made by Staffordshire Police.

"This has only been possible due to the hard work and commitment of all the officers and staff here in Staffordshire, led by Chief Constable Chris Noble and his team, and I'm delighted to see that this hard work has been recognised by HMICFRS."

Chief Constable's response

Staffordshire Police has been removed from the enhanced monitoring process called 'Engage', following improvements in our service. The decision was made today (Tuesday 21 May) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), in consultation with other police stakeholders, including the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing.

Following in-depth monitoring and continuous assessment, HMICFRS has determined that Staffordshire Police has made several improvements, including:

Improving how it identifies vulnerable people at the first point of contact

Improving the standards of investigation and the service it provides to victims of crime.

Chief Constable Chris Noble said: "I welcome this decision, which comes on the back of incredibly hard work by our officers and staff for two years. Most importantly, it reflects an independent assessment that our communities are receiving a much better service, and our ambition is to significantly improve that service further.

"When we were first placed in 'Engage' in June 2022, we were taking nearly 25 seconds to answer 999 calls. Now, 999 calls are consistently answered in less than 10 seconds. Our control room staff are now routinely identifying the signs of vulnerability in our contacts with the public, enabling us to help and respond to those most at risk more effectively. This is a result of increased investments in our control room, clear performance processes, enhanced leadership, and adopting best practice ways of working.

"We've also seen a noticeable improvement in pursuing and bringing offenders to justice – moving from a 10 per cent outcome rate in 2022 to 18.5 per cent in the last three months, one of the best rates in the country. This is achieved by our move back to a local policing approach, which has seen our stop and search rates increase by 20 per cent and arrest rates up by 18 per cent. This back-to-basics approach has also seen us maintain our response times to Grade One (emergency) calls, despite facing 10,000 more emergency incidents than when we entered special measures.

"There is, though, much still to do.

“Everyone in the force is determined to return Staffordshire Police to being an ‘outstanding’ local police service, something it was known for in the past. Moving back into normal inspection monitoring is an important milestone in the journey, but for my staff and I, it is a beginning and not an end. Our focus in the coming months will be on further improving our public contact through a better 101 service, investing further in preventative and proactive policing across rural and urban communities, protecting the most vulnerable and exploiting technology to become more productive and effective.

“This focus will not be straightforward, as we move into a period of financial pressure with one of the least experienced workforces in the country, with one of the heaviest workloads, and the fifth lowest number of police officers compared to our population size. But we are as ‘up for the challenge’ as we were in tackling the numerous areas of concern levelled at us by our Inspectorate in 2022.

“None of this improvement work has been or will be done in isolation, and I want to acknowledge and thank those who have been key in our improvement efforts. The Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Commissioner and his team, for their investment and constructive challenge over the last two years, HMICFRS and other police stakeholders, for the supportive approach they have adopted, and our partners in local government and in the private and third sector who are all key in enabling us to deliver the best possible service to the most vulnerable in our communities.

“But I want to conclude by thanking and recognising my officers and staff, who serve our communities every day, often putting themselves in harm’s way and regularly putting the demands of ‘the job’ before friends and family. This is their achievement and reflects their desire to get back to being the outstanding local police service that Staffordshire needs and deserves”

Staffordshire’s Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, Ben Adams, said: “Today’s decision by HMICFRS to remove the force from the Engage process is testament to the wide-reaching improvements made by Staffordshire Police.

“This has only been possible due to the hard work and commitment of all the officers and staff here in Staffordshire, led by Chief Constable Chris Noble and his team, and I’m delighted to see that this hard work has been recognised by HMICFRS.

“This is a significant step forward by Staffordshire Police as they rapidly improve, and I will be closely monitoring the force’s performance on behalf of the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to ensure that this momentum is maintained.”

In removing Staffordshire Police from Engage monitoring, the inspectorate identified the following key factors in making its decision:

Following in-depth monitoring and continuous assessment, HMICFRS has determined that we have:

Significantly improved the frequency and quality of threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) assessments at the first point of contact. We have also improved the identification of vulnerable and repeat callers

These improvements were supported by a comprehensive auditing regime that has helped us to understand our performance and better target work to improve that performance
Improved the standard of our investigations and are providing higher quality supervision. We have also improved our compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. This means that victims now receive a better service.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's overall comments

This is a significant step forward by Staffordshire Police as they rapidly improve, and I will be closely monitoring the force's performance on behalf of the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to ensure that this momentum is maintained.