

PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version:

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	PEEL INSPECTION REPORT – STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE
Inspectorate	 <p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>The report highlights concerns about the performance of Staffordshire Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime. In particular, I have serious concerns about how the force is responding to the public, investigating crime and managing its offenders and suspects. In view of these findings, I have been in regular contact with the chief constable as I do not underestimate how much improvement is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force needs to improve how it identifies vulnerable victims at the first point of contact • The force needs to make sure that it carries out effective investigations, giving victims the support they need • The force needs to improve how it manages offenders and outstanding suspects <p>The force has recently introduced a new operating model. This model is designed to create a better understanding of the demand for its service and improve how it manages its resources.</p>
Grade	Requires Improvement
Recommendations	
Areas for improvement	<p>Providing a Service to Victims of Crime: Crime data integrity – Requires Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The force needs to improve the time it takes to record crimes - The force is poor at recording crime when anti-social behaviour is reported - The force needs to improve the recording of equality data <p>Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect – Requires Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The force should develop and implement an effective strategy to work with its local communities so it can identify and respond to their needs - The force needs to improve certain aspects of its use of force and stop and search <p>Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour - Adequate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The force should make sure there is a clear strategy for neighbourhood policing that is understood by all its staff. This should be supported by a governance framework which monitors effectiveness and promotes improvement

- The force should improve its use of problem solving, with a structured and effective model that includes evaluation and sharing of effective practice
 - The force should review its neighbourhood policing abstraction policy and ensure that abstractions are effectively monitored
- Responding to the public – Inadequate**
- Cause for Concern** Staffordshire Police needs to improve how it determines and assesses vulnerability at the first point of contact
- The force should take steps to understand the demand on its officers to respond to calls for service and manage its resources effectively to cope with that demand
 - The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its published attendance times and ensure that when this doesn't occur, victims are fully updated
- Investigating crime - Inadequate**
- Cause for Concern** The force needs to make sure that it carries out effective investigations and that it gives victims the support they need
- The force needs to be more efficient at retrieving digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices to make sure investigations aren't delayed
 - The force needs to make sure that all appropriate investigative opportunities are carried out before closing an investigation
 - The force should make sure it holds an auditable record of victims' decisions and their reasons for withdrawing their support and that victims' wishes for an out-of-court disposal or a caution are fully documented
- Protecting vulnerable people – Requires Improvement**
- The force requires a clear governance and performance reporting structure for vulnerability which is understood throughout the force
 - The force should collect victim feedback on a regular basis, including through partner agencies and use this information to improve services, both at an organisational and individual level
 - The force should review its capacity and capability to better understand future demand and the resources it needs
- Managing Offenders and suspects – Inadequate**
- The force needs to improve its monitoring and oversight of outstanding suspects and wanted people
 - The force should urgently review its staffing levels within the Safenet team in order to manage the demand and ensure the wellbeing of its staff
 - The force should implement an intelligence review process for cases awaiting enforcement action
 - The force should implement high-quality supervisor reviews within its sexual offender management unit team, to monitor outstanding and overdue work
- Building and supporting and protecting the workforce Requires Improvement**
- The force should ensure that its officers and staff have manageable workloads and a good work-life balance
 - The force should ensure that it provides suitable support and capacity for its supervisors so that they are fully equipped and confident to manage the performance and development of its staff
 - The force should continue to improve the visibility of its senior leadership
- Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money – Requires Improvement**
- The force should make sure it improves its understanding of current demand
 - The force should make sure that it has effective plans to meet future demand
 - The force should make sure it has a good understanding of capability and capacity and that it makes best use of the resources it has at its disposal

Police Crime and Commissioner's initial response

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, Ben Adams said: "As Commissioner, I understand that this report will make concerning reading, but Staffordshire is one of the safest places to live, work and visit, with the lowest crime in the West Midlands and the lowest out of its most similar forces."

This PEEL report highlights the importance of call handling, response and quality of investigations which Staffordshire has identified as particular areas of concern. The Commissioner is committed to improving the experience for all victims of crime including these particular crime types and the force has several action plans in place to address these issues.

“Since being elected in May 2021, I have seen officers and staff working incredibly hard to improve the service. I have recruited a new Chief Constable from outside the force to help accelerate change and ensure improvements to the force’s call handling and investigation functions. The increase in officers that we will see in Staffordshire in the next two years will help us to do just that.

Chief Constable’s response

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has today (Thursday 22 September) published its latest inspection of Staffordshire Police under the Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) programme.

The report rates Staffordshire Police as ‘inadequate’ in its ability to respond to the public, investigate crime and manage offenders and suspects. It further rates the force as requiring improvement in a number of other areas, while rating it as adequate in its ability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Within the report, HMICFRS makes a number of recommendations of what the force needs to do to improve its performance.

In his response to the report, Chief Constable Chris Noble, said: “I fully accept the findings of the HMICFRS’ PEEL report and I am committed to addressing its recommendations. We are already well under way with these improvements, a fact recognised by the Inspectorate.

“This report will be concerning for Staffordshire residents but we have specific and clear plans to deliver the standard of service our communities expect and deserve. This will not be an easy journey and it will take time to embed and fully realise improvements – but it is one I and my staff are fully committed to.

“Policing, because of COVID and pressures on other agencies, has become more complex and demanding since the last PEEL inspection and our officers and staff are operating under increasingly challenging circumstances. Despite this, they remain dedicated to providing a service which secures a safe and confident Staffordshire. They are, however, under pressure and alongside improving the service to the public I am also focused on supporting my staff and giving them the tools and time to do their job.

“Despite these challenges, the most recent national crime data shows that Staffordshire Police remains one of the safest places in the country, with one of the lowest levels of crime recorded out of all 43 forces. But, we want to make it the safest.

“In order to achieve this, we launched our new local policing model in June of this year. This has increased the number of officers based in local communities, meaning we can respond more quickly to emergencies.

“Our response teams are now based at the same local police stations as neighbourhood officers, working more closely together and with other local agencies to problem solve the issues that really matter to our communities.

“In other changes, we are bringing together the teams that investigate our most serious crimes, such as serious violence and sexual assault, which will allow us to provide a more consistent service for victims of these crimes and other vulnerable people.

“As part of our return to a local policing approach, we have launched a bespoke operation which will see us put policing back on the front foot in Staffordshire – executing warrants, arresting suspects, delivering appropriate stop and search and patrolling visibly in our local towns and cities. Our local commanders will keep you updated on what this looks like in your area.

“We have not waited for the HMICFRS report to land. In anticipation of its recommendations and findings, we have invested in our Force Contact Centre, recruiting significant numbers of additional

staff to help reduce wait times on 999 and 101 calls. We are starting to see call waiting times reduce, at a time when all contact centres across the country are under huge pressure.

“To focus everyone in Staffordshire Police on making the required improvements, we have recently launched a new Policing Plan which clearly sets out our plan of work for the next 12 months. This is closely aligned to the delivery of the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan and was developed with our own staff.

“Whilst the PEEL report outlines a number of areas of improvement, it also contains some examples of positive practice across the force. Examples include:

- We work with partners to prevent crime, identify the root cause of problems and support the rehabilitation of offenders
- The force provides continuing safeguarding support for vulnerable people and officers are confident in assessing vulnerability during the initial response and know the process for supporting vulnerable people
- Officers understand the standards of behaviour expected and they feel confident to report any incidents and have a number of ways to report unacceptable behaviour.

“The ‘Engage’ phase of HMICFRS monitoring provides us with a positive opportunity to be supported by HMICFRS and other national policing bodies and enables us to regularly share our progress on the areas for improvement.

“Staffordshire Police has a proud and recent history of being one of the best performing forces in the country – my staff are clear that they intend to be back in that place. They want to be proud of the service they deliver to their communities.

“I am regularly held to account on our improvement plan by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Ben Adams, but I will also keep you all regularly updated on the progress we are making.”

Police Crime and Commissioner’s overall comments

“I’m encouraged to see the new local policing model, introduced at the end of June, is already making a difference. With more officers based in our communities, the force is able to respond to calls for service more quickly, and spend more time working with partners to address the issues that matter to people.

“There is also a focus on improvements within the force contact centre, recruiting additional staff to reduce waiting times on 999 and 101 calls – a key priority for me as Commissioner, and the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

“As a result of this work, significant progress has already been made to address the areas requiring improvement, which is recognised in the inspectors’ report. They also praise the force for its work in preventing crime, safeguarding vulnerable people and understanding the standards of behaviour expected of officers.”

“I will be closely monitoring the force’s performance over the coming months to ensure this momentum is maintained to keep our communities safe. Whilst progress has been made, I recognise the need to move quickly to address the issues driving these failings. These action plans form a major focus of our regular internal performance meetings and I will update the public with progress in further detail at Public Performance Meetings.”