

PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version:

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| Force | Staffordshire |
| Police and Crime Commissioner | Ben Adams |
| Chief Constable | Chris Noble |
| Title of inspection | PEEL Spotlight - The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime - Finding time for crime |
| Inspectorate |  |
| Summary of inspection | <p>This report focuses on the police response to serious acquisitive crime, which HMICFRS have defined as domestic burglary, personal robbery, theft from a person, and theft of and from a motor vehicle.</p> <p>In this report they examine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • call handling; • the initial policing response; • how forces allocate investigations; and • investigation standards. <p>They aim to identify what is working well, what needs to change, and the main barriers to making improvements.</p> <p>To help forces to improve and learn from each other, they highlighted some examples of the good and innovative practices we have found during our inspections.</p> |
| Grade | N/A |
| Recommendations | <p>Recommendation 1 By March 2023, forces should make sure their crime scene management practices adhere to the authorised professional practice on managing investigations for SAC or provide a rationale for deviating from it. They should also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - giving victims timely and appropriate advice during their initial call; and - applying a risk assessment process such as THRIVE, clearly recording it, and flagging those re-victimised for further support. <p>Recommendation 2 By March 2023, all forces should ensure SAC investigations are subject to effective supervision and direction. This should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making sure supervisors have the capability and capacity to meaningfully supervise investigations; - making sure investigations meet the necessary standard and achieve suitable outcomes that consider the voice or opinion of victims; - applying investigative outcome codes appropriately; and - complying with the Victims' Code and recording evidence of compliance. |
| Areas for improvement | |

Police Crime and Commissioner's initial response

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Ben Adams welcomes the most recent spotlight report on burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime and the opportunity for sharing good practice amongst police forces. The 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.

“This report highlights particular areas of good practice amongst our peers in the policing community and I will be encouraging Staffordshire police use this knowledge whilst developing current policies and procedures, particularly around prevention, early intervention and Out of Court Disposals.”

Chief Constable's response

In considering the HMICFRS national report into ‘Finding the time for crime - The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime’ (SAC), I recognise the significant impact that these crimes have on victims, physically, psychologically and financially. Our response to SAC is inextricably linked to our ongoing work around investigations management and supporting victims in line with the victim code of practice. The overall objective is to prevent crime, support people who are a victim of crime and bring those responsible for committing it to justice; whilst utilising the partnership arrangements to prevent further re-offending.

Many of these crime types have been reduced over recent years through effective targeting and utilising preventative and partnership working. Staffordshire has largely seen reductions in these crime types in comparison to pre-COVID levels.

In the last 12 months compared to the period pre-COVID overall acquisitive crime is 20% lower in Staffordshire.

- Burglary business is – 37% lower
- Burglary residential is – 25% lower
- Business Robbery is – 5% lower
- Personal robbery is – 13% lower
- Theft is – 21% lower
- Theft from motor vehicles – 31% lower

Whilst a reduction in these crimes makes Staffordshire a safer place I recognise the impact that each one of these crimes does have on victims who are subject of them.

There are areas of acquisitive crime where we have seen increase, such as aggravated burglary, whilst the numbers are low an additional 6 offences in 12 months on pre COVID levels, these are high harm offences. In some offences we have seen links between the offences and other criminalities such as

drug supply connections to targeted premises. As high harm offences this type of criminality is owned by our Detective Resources.

We have also seen a 22% increase in theft of motor vehicles, for which we increasing our Priorities Team capabilities to target this offending and working with neighbouring forces and the Regional and Organised Crime Unit where offending networks originate from.

Our overall Criminal Justice outcome rate for SAC is generally higher than the national averages, over the last 6 months these are:

- Theft – 8.6%
- Burglary residential – 7.6%
- Burglary business – 12.2%
- Personal Robbery – 8.1%
- Business Robbery – 30.19%

Whilst these outcomes are higher than national averages, I recognise there is still much to do in improving this area.

Governance

SAC is already one of the forces Control Strategy priorities which is overseen by an Assistant Chief Constable Lead and monitored through the forces Performance Governance meetings. SAC is subject of a strategic and tactical plan, aligned to a prepare, prevent, protect and pursue approach.

Under these plans I will ensure that our approach to acquisitive crime is strengthened, the plans include areas such as:

- Intelligence management at strategic and tactical level
- Victim, Offender and Location profiling
- Crime pattern analysis
- Crime volumes and justice outcomes
- Preventative measures
- Assessment of response based on harm and vulnerability
- Partnership arrangements to support victims and prevent further re-offending
- Our forensic approach
- Management of criminal justice proceedings
- Offender management methods

Contact

All SAC crime as with other reported incidents are subject of a THRIVE assessment at the point of initial contact, assessing threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement. The force attends large proportions of acquisitive crime such as all residential burglaries. Whilst some crimes such as vehicle related SAC are assessed under THRIVE to understand the benefit of attendance, if they are not attended the contact centre provide crime prevention advice and supportive information connected to the victims' code of practice and how to access support services. SAC crime requiring a response is also subject of forensic review following initial contact to understand the benefit of attendance with the protocols being outlined in our Forensic Investigation Service Provision – a service level agreement relating to this area.

Investigation standards and victim management

The force has undertaken significant work related to its holistic approach to investigation management which will include acquisitive crime. These are overseen by a force GOLD group and are supported by an action plan and key thematic pieces of work which have been reported on previously.

In addition, the forces change programme has a specific work package relating to the locally based CID. A strand of this is working to understand the current allocation policies to align investigations to a detective. This is currently based on the seriousness and complexity of a crime and work to quality assure, qualify and quantify this is ongoing.

Under the Control Strategy Plans relating to acquisitive crime we will continue to review and build our approach to tackling this type of criminality.

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."