


PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version Dec 2024

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
Published Date	27/3/2025
Inspectorate	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>The effective investigation of crime is fundamental to the legitimacy of policing and to public confidence. It also influences how safe people feel and it prevents future offending.</p> <p>There has been a long-term decline in successful prosecutions, meaning that too few criminal investigations are leading to justice for victims.</p> <p>During the inspection, HMICFRS saw numerous examples of initiatives forces have introduced to improve the standard of crime investigations and achieve better outcomes for victims.</p> <p>The 11 recommendations are designed to help forces improve the standard of their crime investigations and achieve better outcomes for victims by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building a better understanding of their crime-related demand and the resources they need so they can meet it; • designing more effective processes for recording, assessing, allocating and investigating crime, putting victims at the heart of the process; • providing better training for investigators, their supervisors, and any other officers or members of staff who have a role in an investigation; and • improving the supervision of crime investigations. <p>The focus of this report is on volume crime.</p>
Grade	
Recommendations	<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has an effective and efficient end-to-end process to deal with online reports of crime. The process should remove all unnecessary delays in recording, assessing and allocating crime reports, and make sure the force consistently complies with its requirements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.</p> <p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the end-to-end process for receiving, assessing and allocating reports of crime in their force minimises delays in the investigation process and the length of time before investigators contact victims.</p>

Recommendation 5

By 31 December 2025, chief constables should design and operate a policy that results in their force allocating to investigators crimes that are commensurate with each investigator's level of training, accreditation and experience.

Recommendation 6

By 30 September 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has a clear policy relating to investigation plans. They should make sure their force communicates this policy to officers and staff.

As a minimum, this policy should cover:

- when to start an investigation plan;
- who is responsible for writing the investigation plan;
- what to consider including in an investigation plan;
- how supervisors should review and approve investigation plans; and
- how the force will monitor investigation plans to check their quality, and to make sure investigators and supervisors have followed them.

Recommendation 7

By 30 June 2025, chief constables should include in investigation policies a direction stating that when an image exists, investigators should search it against the Police National Database and any other relevant databases before closing investigation.

Recommendation 9

By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the first supervisory review of a crime investigation takes place early enough for the supervisor to be able to:

- review any actions taken, including those to assess and manage risk;
- make sure the investigator has put in place the appropriate support for victims, and is complying with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;
- set or approve an investigation plan;
- review the investigator's caseload; and
- set a date for a further review.

Recommendation 10

By 31 March 2026, chief constables should:

- make sure any member of staff who supports the investigation process completes the College of Policing 'Introduction to investigation' learning programme;
- satisfy themselves that the content of their force's ongoing investigative training for responders is designed to develop their investigative skills and performance, and to improve outcomes for victims, and that their force gives responders protected time to complete this training;
- make sure their force focuses sufficiently on case file preparation when providing professionalising investigations programme level 1 training,
- make sure their force gives officers and staff continuing professional development opportunities about preparing case files;
- make sure their force keeps accurate records of professionalising investigations programme level 2 accredited officers and staff, maintain their accreditation,
- review the investigative training their force gives to supervisors,

Recommendation 11

By 30 September 2025, chief constables should establish and implement a process to monitor the proportion of recorded crime that their force allocates for investigation. This should include a process to make sure a decision not to allocate a crime for investigation is appropriate.

Areas for improvement

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's initial response

I welcome this report and the eleven recommendations which I know will be reviewed, actioned and embedded across the organisation by Staffordshire's Quality of Investigations Board (QIB). Much progress has already been made around improving the quality of investigations and the force is well placed to adopt and embed additional good practice.

My Police and Crime Plan particularly prioritises improvements in contact 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.

I'm pleased that HMICFRS recognise that forces do not have sufficient resources to investigate all volume crime to a standard that they and the public wish to see and I will continue to fulfil my statutory duty in holding the Chief Constable to account for what matters to the public of Staffordshire. I welcome the focus on increased demand and demand analysis; workload & well-being and recruitment & retention. I'm confident the specific recommendations highlighted in the report will assist in driving further improvement.

Chief Constable's response

Staffordshire Police has welcomed the HMICFRS' recommendations from the report on how to ensure the quality of crime investigations. This will enable us to focus even more on improving the current work being delivered to our communities.

The force was recently graded Requires Improvement for Investigating crime by HMICFRS during last year's PEEL inspection (report published in September 2024).

As quoted in the force's PEEL report:

"The force understands the quality of its investigations and has invested in training and support for supervisors. Staffordshire Police has invested in a comprehensive auditing regime that helps senior leaders to understand how effectively investigations are being carried out. HMICFRS were impressed at the range and depth of the auditing, which included the risk assessment at the first point of contact, the attendance at an incident or crime, the effectiveness of investigations, the frequency and quality of supervision, and the level of adherence to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime."

"This is supported by dip sampling by investigative supervisors, and we saw evidence of this being used to identify further lines of enquiry and raise investigative standards. We also saw evidence of supervisors reviewing the work of other teams to remove the risk of positivity bias."

“Investigative supervisors have also been provided with extra training and support. The force has provided a range of investigative masterclasses and consulted with its sergeants to understand the demands on them via ‘Sergeant Sprints’.”

“The force updates victims about the progress of investigations effectively, and makes sure their needs are considered

The Victims’ Code sets out the minimum standard that organisations must provide to victims of crime. This includes carrying out victims needs assessments, setting out how frequently victims should be updated on the progress of investigations through the victim contract, and reflecting their views in victim personal statements.”

The force also continues to introduce technological innovation to provide timely information to victims, to improve the efficiency of investigations and to capture evidence crucial to obtaining successful outcomes. The HMICFRS recommendations have been transferred to the force action plan system and the actions will be progressed by the force thematic leads for Investigation.

Progress of the work towards delivering the recommendations will be monitored at the Quality of Investigation Board (QIB), chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable. Final sign off of the completed work will be tabled to the Inspection and Audit Governance Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s overall comments

I look forward to monitoring progress against the recommendations of both this report and the linked actions from the recent PEEL inspection through existing governance arrangements and I will continue to update the public at regular public performance meetings throughout the coming year.