

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel 21 November 2014

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Title: General Issues: National Publications Relevant to the Work of the Police and Crime Panel

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HMIC inspection of Crime Data Integrity: Thames Valley Police

In its 2013/14 inspection programme, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) committed to carry out an inspection into the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales record crime data. The central question of this inspection programme is: "To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?"

The inspection of Thames Valley Police resulted in the following recommendations, reproduced directly from the report, and should be read in conjunction with it:¹

Immediately

1. Chief officers should ensure all police officers and police staff are provided with clear messages on the importance of achieving crime data accuracy in accordance with the HOCR and NCRS and on how this links to the force message on the importance of the Code of Ethics.
2. The force should undertake an audit of reports recorded under the non-crime occurrence adult and child at risk categories of Niche, to ensure all reports of crime contained therein are recorded in accordance with the HOCR and NCRS. Any identified failings in the use of these systems should be identified and addressed in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of these crimes not being recorded in the future.
3. The force should establish an effective supervisory review of incidents opened with a crime code but closed as a non-crime. The force should also ensure that police officers and police staff in the control room are provided with clear messages as to their role in ensuring compliance with the NCRS.
4. The force should take steps to reduce the backlog of appointments and appointment records awaiting update.

Within three months

5. The force should review and amend as necessary the appointments system, ensuring it both meets the needs of victims and ensures HOCR and NCRS compliance.

¹ See: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-thames-valley-police-2014.pdf>

6. The force should publish a clear procedure for officers detailing what action they should take when an out-of-court disposal is subsequently rescinded.

7. The force should improve the supervision of the use of PND and cannabis warnings. In the case of PND, where there is a victim, their view should be appropriately considered and recorded. In the case of cannabis warnings, the offender should be made aware of the implications of accepting the warning and this should be recorded.

HMIC inspection of South Yorkshire Police

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published the report of its inspection (as part of a national programme) of the child protection work of South Yorkshire Police at the end of September 2014. This followed an inspection of the force's response to Child Sexual Exploitation, which had been commissioned by the (then) Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire, the findings of which were published in November 2013.

Positive findings of the inspection included:

- The force had a clear set of priorities to protect children and had made progress in service improvements;
- there had been a large increases in the capacity of child protection teams and extra training for staff in specialist roles;
- most staff were well trained and committed to protecting children; briefings had been delivered to a wide range of personnel to raise awareness; and
- the force had good relationships with partner agencies and local safeguarding children's boards. Different agencies were working together in co-located teams and this was working well.

Concerns arising from the inspection:

- for the most part, the force responded well when the case clearly identified a child in need of protection, but the response was weak in difficult or complex cases;
- there were shortcomings in performance in Doncaster in the protection of children in care homes with shortcomings in understanding of the risk posed by offenders who target vulnerable children;
- there were inconsistencies in the police response to child sexual exploitation across the force area. There was some good practice, but the police response needed improvement in Barnsley and Doncaster. Inspectors found some individual cases of concern; and
- children were being unnecessarily detained in custody overnight.

Serious Crime Bill

The Serious Crime Bill, which is currently before Parliament, contains a number of wide-ranging provisions to pursue, disrupt and bring to justice, serious and organised criminals and gangs.

The .gov website provides the following information on the Serious Crime Bill, which was introduced in the House of Lords on 5th June 2014; it will:

- improve the ability to recover criminal assets by amending the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
- amend the Computer Misuse Act 1990 to ensure sentences for attacks on computer systems fully reflect the damage they cause
- create a new offence targeting people who knowingly participate in an organised crime group
- extend the scope of serious crime prevention orders and gang injunctions
- create new powers to seize, detain and destroy chemical substances suspected of being used as cutting agents for illegal drugs

- clarify the offence of child cruelty, in section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, in particular, to make it explicit that the offence covers cruelty which causes psychological suffering or injury as well as physical harm
- create a new offence making it illegal to possess paedophile manuals
- bring in new provisions to tackle FGM by:
 - extending the extra-territorial reach of the offences in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 so that they apply to habitual as well as permanent UK residents
 - introducing a new offence of failing to protect a girl from risk of FGM
 - granting lifelong anonymity to victims
 - bringing in a civil order ('FGM protection orders') to protect potential victims
- create a new offence of unauthorised possession of a knife or other offensive weapon in prison
- allow people suspected of committing an offence overseas under sections 5 (preparation of terrorism acts) or 6 (training for terrorism) of the Terrorism Act 2006 to be prosecuted in the UK.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/serious-crime-bill>

NFU Mutual Rural Crime Survey 2014

Thames Valley has seen a drop in rural crime compared to national figures. Rural crime fell last year by 19 per cent across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, according to NFU Mutual's Rural Crime Survey.

Thames Valley Police is one of the few forces across the country to have seen a decrease, while national figures show a 5.2 per cent increase. Nationally, high-value tractors stolen for export, a substantial rise in sheep rustling and opportunist thefts of garden tools and ornaments helped push up the cost of rural crime to near record levels.

In Buckinghamshire, rural crime claims cost £590,000 in 2013, compared with £820,000 in 2012. In Oxfordshire, the figure was down to £680,000, from £1 million the previous year.

