

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 ON THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2017



'Significantly stressed' police forces need to continue to change

In an environment of increasingly complex crime and changing demand, police forces are generally continuing to manage their resources well, according to the latest report into police efficiency, published today by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

These are the third annual efficiency reports to examine how well police forces in England and Wales understand demand, use their resources and plan for the future. Two forces have been graded as 'outstanding', thirty forces as 'good', ten forces as 'requiring improvement' and no force as 'inadequate'. Two more forces than last year have been graded as requiring improvement, although, as was the case last year, the majority of forces have been graded as good.

HMI Mike Cunningham, who led the inspection, said:

"The findings from this inspection are positive, with the majority of forces able to demonstrate that they have absorbed budget reductions well and have improved the efficiency with which they operate.

"We recognise the pressures forces are facing are increasingly complex. The speed with which forces can improve efficiency relies on the continued resilience, adaptability and commitment of those working in policing. From speaking to staff and officers throughout every police force in England and Wales, we can see that policing is under significant stress.

"In the last year, we have seen bravery and professionalism in dreadful circumstances, showing that policing relies on the commitment and dedication of its workforce, whatever their rank or role, to help keep the public safe.

"Forces continue to have to make challenging financial decisions. However, the majority of police forces need to be much more ambitious in their plans for changing how policing services are offered in the future, and to accelerate those plans, especially when improving their digitally enabled services."

The report concludes that policing is becoming increasingly complex, both in terms of the types of crimes that the police deal with and the number of different organisations with which they have to work, as forces strive to provide the best service to the public

Against this backdrop, the report recognises that policing has had to make, and will continue to have to make, very difficult decisions about where to focus its resources. The policing workforce has shrunk over the last few years; in most forces, this has resulted in a better use of resources and a more focused policing model that is more efficient.

The report highlights that every force faces different circumstances in terms of the problems it has to confront and its financial position. The findings from this inspection again show that even when their financial position is particularly difficult, it is possible for forces to gain a positive grade in relation to their efficiency.

Almost every force has an adequate understanding of its current **demand**, while the best forces use sophisticated models and a range of data to understand trends. The best forces also have completed sophisticated analyses to identify where the greatest risks to them lie in terms of under-reported or otherwise hidden demand. However, the majority of forces could do more to improve their understanding of this area.

HMICFRS remains concerned that few forces have taken sufficient steps to understand the **skills** they have, or need, in their workforce. Although more forces have started to improve their understanding of this, most of them still focus on current skills, rather than on the skills they are likely to need in the future. This makes it harder for those forces to plan effectively for skills, according to the report.

More and more forces are using some form of risk-based analysis to inform their allocation of **resources**, but some remain unable to allocate adequate resources to meet the needs of their demand model. There are many examples of forces using their resources flexibly. However, not many forces have carried out sufficient analysis to be confident of their ability to predict the overall effect of moving resources from one area of operations to another.

This is particularly true within force control rooms, which primarily deal with public 999 or 101 calls. At the time of inspection, some control rooms appeared to be struggling to meet demand, particularly in relation to 101 non-emergency calls. Many forces have found it difficult to retain control room staff and a number of them rely too much on outdated technology. Some forces are considering different ways of managing demand through online tools, although only a small number of high-performing forces can demonstrate the effectiveness of these tools.

The report concludes that while most police forces throughout the country have risen impressively to the challenges they face, policing remains under significant stress. Forces need to be more ambitious and innovative in terms of their plans for the future; the problems facing those forces that fail to do so could potentially prove overwhelming.

Notes:

1. The report can be found at: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2017/
2. Forces graded as 'outstanding' are: Durham and Thames Valley.
3. Forces graded as 'good' are: Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Derbyshire, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire,

Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Merseyside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Suffolk, Staffordshire, Surrey, Sussex, South Wales, Wiltshire, West Midlands, West Mercia, Warwickshire and West Yorkshire.

4. Forces graded as 'requires improvement' are: Bedfordshire, Dyfed-Powys, Humberside, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Metropolitan Police, Nottinghamshire, North Wales, North Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.
5. On 19 July 2017 HMIC took on responsibility for fire & rescue service inspections and was renamed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.
6. HMICFRS is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest. It assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMICFRS inspects all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing and law enforcement bodies.
7. For further information, HMICFRS' press office can be contacted from 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday on 020 3513 0600.
8. HMICFRS' out-of-hours press office line for urgent media enquiries is 07836 217729