



## **Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

Section 55 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond and publish comments on all inspection reports pertaining to your force within 56 days of report publication.

### **Inspection Title:**

Crime investigations: An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime.

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### **Police Forces:**

Norfolk Constabulary

### **Link to Report:**

[An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

### **Section 55 Response Deadline:**

22 May 2025

## **Key Findings**

As part of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services 2022–25 programme of inspections, they inspected how effectively the police investigate crime. The National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct jointly supported the inspection. HMICFRS also worked closely with the Policing Productivity Review team, which has reported separately on how police forces could improve their productivity in relation to crime investigations.

Within the terms of reference for the inspection HMICFRS were to address the following questions:

- how effectively forces investigate crime and bring offenders to justice, including through following reasonable lines of enquiry.

- how well forces understand crime-related demand in their areas and match their resources to it.
- how effectively forces prioritise their investigations to maximise all opportunities to solve or prevent crime.
- how effectively the police support victims through investigations from start to finish, including investigations that don't result in a prosecution.

The focus of the report is on volume crime. The inspectorate's fieldwork took place between May and July 2024. HMICFRS inspected Cheshire Constabulary, Cumbria Constabulary, Essex Police, Greater Manchester Police, Norfolk Constabulary, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and West Midlands Police and carried out:

- a document review, in which examined 130 documents, including policies, processes and force management statements.
- a review of all 31 published HMICFRS inspection reports from the 2023–25 PEEL inspection programme.
- a review of other relevant HMICFRS reports, and reports from other organisations.
- a case file review in which examined 180 crime investigations, including at least 20 from each force, speaking directly to the investigators and, in some cases, their supervisors, and assessing the quality of the investigations.
- a joint review with the College of Policing of 79 initiatives forces have introduced to improve the standard of crime investigations, jointly assessing whether these initiatives amounted to either innovative or promising practice and highlighting the most effective of these initiatives in case studies.
- a review of the main findings of the victim service assessments from the first 31 forces that we have inspected as part of our 2023–25 PEEL inspection programme, in which we assessed 3,199 investigations.
- a total of 63 interviews with senior police officers and staff, including leads for crime investigations and criminal justice.
- a total of 83 focus groups in police forces including supervisors, investigators, neighbourhood and response officers, and contact centre officers and staff.
- a further 32 interviews with chief officers, national police leads and external organisations.
- reality testing across each force visited by speaking to individual police officers and staff.

HMICFRS concluded that in order to investigate volume crime more effectively, forces need more officers and staff. This conclusion was reached based on the frequent and persuasive commentary heard from interviewees about extraordinarily high workloads, findings from case file reviews, and analysis of the data included in the report. Interviewees told HMICFRS that officers and staff often couldn't investigate crime as well as they wanted to because

their workloads were too high, they were under pressure, and they didn't have enough time. It is clear that too often, forces don't have enough resources to investigate crime, especially volume crime, to the standard the public would reasonably expect.

Since 2015, recorded crime rates per 1,000 population have increased. In the year ending 31 March 2015, there were 62.3 recorded crimes per 1,000 population, compared with 89.7 recorded crimes in the same period in 2024, an increase of 44 percent. Improved police recording practices, and an increase in public reporting of crime, are likely to have contributed to this increase in police-recorded crime. The increase in police-recorded crime suggests there has been an increase in demand on the police.

The number of police officers and staff per 1,000 population has decreased since 2010. Between the years ending 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2024, after accounting for changes in the population, the number of police officers in England and Wales has decreased by 6 percent. Between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2024, the number of police staff has also decreased by 13 percent.

The increase in digital evidence adds significant complexity to crime investigations. Many investigators said investigations were becoming more complex, due in part to the growing amount of digital evidence. The amount of digital evidence that investigators need to gather and examine has increased considerably over the past decade. It also takes additional time to download and review large amounts of data about communications, which is held on mobile phones and computers for example, when investigating offences such as those relating to domestic abuse, stalking and harassment.

Most forces have a good understanding of their crime patterns. Interviewees in six of the forces inspected told HMICFRS they used software to analyse their crime-related data. They told HMICFRS they used this software to understand the pattern of crimes across their force area and to determine which teams they allocated these crimes to.

Force management statements (FMSs) include information about forces' analysis of demand. HMICFRS examined the FMSs of the forces inspected. Most had a good understanding of their current crime rates. The inspectorate did see some predictions of future crime rates. However, it wasn't always clear how forces made these predictions and on what data they based them.

Most forces use analysis of crime levels to determine the number of investigators. In four of the forces inspected, senior officers told HMICFRS they used their analysis of current and future crime levels to plan and allocate their investigative resources. Their analysis focused on the numbers of current and predicted crimes. It didn't consider other factors that affect demand, and the quality-of-service forces give victims.

Without an in-depth analysis of all crime-related demand, forces can't accurately determine how many investigators they need, or the impact of these decisions on the service they provide to victims.

Forces find it hard to recruit investigators. A long-standing challenge for forces has been to recruit enough investigators. NPCC and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) data shows that between the years ending 31 March 2018

and 31 March 2024, the number of accredited PIP level 2 investigators had increased from 20,356 to 22,832. However, over the same period, the shortfall in the number of these investigators had increased from 4,353 to 9,441. Due to the difficulty in recruiting investigators, many forces use untrained officers and staff to fill vacancies.

Across forces, there is no consistent approach to recruiting detectives. All the forces inspected told HMICFRS they intended to increase their number of investigators. In five of these forces, the inspectorate found clear plans to attract more officers and staff to these roles, or to offer more support to those applying to become investigators. For example, interviewees in three forces told HMICFRS they assessed new recruits to identify potential investigators. Not all forces use direct entry to detective routes. Direct entry detective programmes offer officers opportunities to become detectives sooner than they would through other entry routes into policing.

Officers often find it hard to move into investigative roles. Even in forces that have a direct entry detective programme, most investigator applications are from officers in response and neighbourhood teams. In many forces, HMICFRS heard there was a shortfall in the number of response officers. Those forces therefore found it hard to release officers who applied to become investigators.

Once forces have recruited investigators, it is important that they have in place a strong commitment to retaining them. HMICFRS found that most forces were taking steps to retain investigators once they had recruited them, but that they still found it hard to stop some of them leaving the force or looking for other roles. Retention is also affected by recruitment campaigns in other forces or regions. For example, senior leaders in one force told HMICFRS that the force's geographical location made it hard for them to retain detectives. The force is located between several other large forces, which can offer more competitive financial incentives or direct entry to specialist units.

Most forces identify investigators with high workloads. Home Office data shows that between the years ending 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2024, the number of crimes recorded per police constable has increased from 34.9 to 46.3 a year. This is an increase of 32.6 percent. HMICFRS found that all the forces inspected had systems in place to monitor investigators' workloads. However, these systems were usually based solely on monitoring the number of cases, rather than also considering the complexity of each investigation. In all the forces, HMICFRS heard from many investigators that their workloads were too high.

Investigators and their supervisors are frequently overwhelmed by the size of their workloads. A manageable workload and good supervision can lead to more effective investigations

All forces have well-being policies and processes. HMICFRS found that all the forces inspected had systems and processes in place to monitor and manage investigators' well-being. However, some officers and staff told the inspectorate they thought force well-being policies were just a tick-box exercise. Forces need to make sure they are fully committed to putting these processes in place. Furthermore, HMICFRS found that workload and the working environment are closely linked to well-being.

Officers and staff should have an investigative mindset from the moment the force receives a report of a crime. HMICFRS considers this to be a mindset characterised by professional curiosity, a desire to collect information, check it thoroughly, and, very importantly, maintain an open and questioning mind.

Many response and neighbourhood officers don't think their primary role is to investigate crimes. If responders don't have an investigative mindset, they may miss opportunities to secure and preserve evidence, and to identify lines of enquiry.

To achieve the best possible outcomes for victims of crime, chief officers should encourage their officers and staff, particularly those who receive and respond to the initial report of a crime, to have an investigative mindset.

Officers and staff are generally confident in their understanding of what is a reasonable line of enquiry. However, in the absence of a clear explanation of what constitutes 'reasonable', they tended to use their own judgment when deciding which enquiries to progress. This led to some officers and staff applying different interpretations of 'reasonable' and not following lines of enquiry that their colleagues would. Therefore, officers and staff need a clearer explanation of what is reasonable.

Performance in responding to crimes reported online, and by phone, varies across forces. HMICFRS found evidence that some forces dealt with online reporting as effectively as they dealt with telephone reporting. These forces made good use of technology to make their processes for responding to initial telephone or online reports of crime effective and efficient.

Call handlers sometimes miss opportunities to give advice about securing and preserving evidence. Most call handlers told the inspectorate their knowledge of scene preservation came from their initial training, on-the-job experience and by asking colleagues for advice. HMICFRS found that some call handlers were inexperienced. They had a limited understanding of the need to secure and preserve evidence, and how to do this.

HMICFRS found that demand often outstrips the supply and availability of officers and staff. Many interviewees told the inspectorate there often weren't enough officers and staff to respond to incidents. Furthermore, HMICFRS found that too frequently, officers and staff are under pressure to leave crime scenes and respond to the next incident. High demand in response policing negatively affects the quality of investigations.

Most forces have a crime allocation policy, but some policies are more effective than others. To allocate crime effectively, forces should, without unnecessary delay, allocate crimes to appropriately trained and accredited investigators. HMICFRS also found that some forces have systemic delays in their processes to allocate crimes for an investigation.

Investigation plans can help, but only when forces use them effectively. Investigation plans help investigators record information such as the reasonable lines of enquiry they have identified, and how they intend to carry out the investigation. Some forces have clear guidance in relation to investigation plans, including what they should contain and who should complete them, however the inspectorate found that some forces don't use investigation plans effectively. Furthermore, HMICFRS found that in some of the forces

that monitored whether investigations had plans, they measured the quantity of completed plans, rather than their quality.

Investigations are sometimes delayed by forces diverting officers and staff from their normal duties. A lack of digital investigators and support can contribute to delays in investigations. Some forces have reduced delays in obtaining medical and forensic evidence.

HMICFRS found that the number of inexperienced police officers has increased rapidly. Between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2018, the number of police officers in the 43 Home Office forces in England and Wales decreased from 143,734 to 122,404. One of the consequences of the gradual reduction in police officer numbers from 2010, and the rapid increase since 2018, is the effect this has had on the level of inexperience. Home Office data shows that, in the year ending 31 March 2016, 14 percent of police officers across forces in England and Wales had fewer than 5 years' service. In the year ending 31 March 2024, this figure had increased to 36 percent.

When investigators complete files, legal requirements can cause delays. At the end of December 2020, the Director's Guidance on Charging (sixth edition), the revised Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure and the revised Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 Code of Practice came into force. These changes have considerably increased the work the police must do before sending a file to the CPS for a charging decision. Furthermore, investigators believe that CPS processes cause too many delays to investigations. The inspectorate found that improving file standards would reduce delays relating to CPS advice.

Forces are increasing their use of IT, but lack of knowledge and incompatible systems are hindering further progress. However, the range of IT platforms in use, and the incompatibility of these platforms across forces, means sharing initiatives relating to technology with other forces is unnecessarily difficult.

HMICFRS consider the Police National Database (PND) an invaluable tool for investigators. Investigators can complete several types of searches using the PND. The most common one is when investigators search for what is known about people, objects, locations or events. Investigators can also use the PND to carry out searches automatically at set times. However, forces use the PND inconsistently and officers and staff need training and a licence to use the PND.

In all the forces inspected, HMICFRS saw evidence that supervisors usually provided effective direction and advice to call handlers and monitored how they dealt with the calls. In some forces, supervisors have limited oversight of calls to report crimes and inexperienced supervisors often lack confidence and the ability to direct investigations. Early supervision of investigations is important, particularly for inexperienced investigators.

Call handlers are generally good at identifying victims. They also search on police systems to get information to help them identify victims and witnesses. HMICFRS found that force IT systems can usually identify repeat or vulnerable victims, and many forces have plans to deal with repeat and vulnerable victims.

HMICFRS identified that victims don't always receive the best service. The Victims' Commissioner told the inspectorate she believes there is a general lack of understanding of the Victims' Code. She said she receives anecdotal evidence that compliance with the Victims' Code's expectations is patchy. Victims report to her that the initial contact with police is normally good, then their satisfaction decreases as the investigation continues. Victims have told her this is mainly because of the lack of updates and contact from the police.

Too many victims disengage from the criminal justice process because of delays. The inspectorate heard that these delays were often caused by problems such as high officer workloads, delays in obtaining charging decisions or the time it took for a case to be tried in court.

Most forces have a good understanding of the investigative skills and capabilities officers, and staff need. With the rapid advance in technology and the effect this has on crime, such as cybercrime, it is important that investigators have the right digital investigative skills. This means forces must also have an understanding of what investigative skills their officers and staff will need in the future.

Not all forces give the relevant College of Policing training to call handlers. The College of Policing told the inspectorate that forces have the curriculum for the 'Introduction to investigation' learning programme, but that not all forces give this training to staff who support investigations.

HMICFRS found that the training for those who investigate more serious offences was structured and standardised across forces, as was the training for their supervisors. However, many investigators and supervisors who work on volume crime told the inspectorate their training was insufficient.

The current crime outcomes framework helps forces understand the way they finalise investigations. HMICFRS found that since 2015, positive outcomes have steadily decreased. In the year ending 31 March 2024, they recorded 5.4 million crimes. Of these, 605,695 resulted in a positive outcome. However, in the main, between the years ending 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2024, the positive outcome rate across forces in England and Wales has steadily decreased. Over this period, the rate has decreased from 25.4 percent to 11.3 percent. The inspectorate also saw evidence that some forces understood the factors that affected outcome rates. These forces scrutinised and monitored outcome rates to minimise the opportunities for individuals to apply an incorrect outcome.

Forces are improving their focus on out-of-court resolutions (OOCRs). The Norfolk Constabulary force management statement says that the constabulary encourages officers to use OOCRs for some offences. Neighbourhood officers told the inspectorate they were very supportive of the use of community-based OOCR schemes. They felt that these schemes gave similar outcomes to those that a court would impose but were much quicker to finalise.

If officers and staff understand that carrying out high-quality crime investigations is a priority for the force, and chief officers make this clear, they are more likely to focus on it.

Generally, HMICFRS found that chief officers were effective at communicating this, but sometimes the message got lost when there were too many other priorities and competing demands.

HMICFRS found that the proportion of crimes that forces finalise within 24 hours has decreased. This might indicate that the force automatically screens out some crime types, even though there are some lines of enquiry to follow. Alternatively, it might mean that the force has correctly assessed the crime and there are no reasonable lines of enquiry. Between the years ending 31 March 2018 and 31 March 2024, the proportion of offences that forces in England and Wales closed within 24 hours decreased from 24 percent to 16 percent.

Retailers don't believe the police take shoplifting seriously. Whether or not this view is correct, it is clear that from 2014 onwards, shoplifting offences in England and Wales began to increase. In the year ending 31 March 2014, forces across England and Wales recorded 319,175 shoplifting offences. In the year ending 31 March 2018, the figure had risen to 377,151. By the year ending 31 March 2024, it had risen further to 440,413. HMICFRS established that the police are improving their response to shoplifting, but they need to do much more.

## **Recommendations**

Eleven recommendations are made within the report, eight of which are directed at Chief Constables nationally:

### **Recommendation 3:**

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.

### **Recommendation 4:**

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.

### **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
- 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 their 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 their force closes an 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
- set a date for a further review.

#### **Recommendation 10:**

By 31 March 2026, chief constables should

- make sure any member of staff who has a role in supporting 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, while taking into account local procedures and case management systems
- 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, and that those officers and staff complete annual continuing professional development to maintain their accreditation, which forces should also accurately record
- review the investigative training their force gives to supervisors, making sure it equips them to oversee and direct crime investigations effectively.

**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**

There were no areas for improvement.

## Chief Constable response to report and any Recommendations/Areas For Improvement

This report entitled "***Crime investigations: An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime***" was a thematic inspection conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Norfolk Constabulary was one of the six police forces inspected in May 2024.

The report has resulted in eleven recommendations, eight of which were directed to all police forces and Chief Constables across England and Wales. Norfolk Constabulary welcomes this report and its findings and accepts all the recommendations that have been made.

We are reviewing our current position against each recommendation and developing plans to help us achieve the standards outlined by HMICFRS within the timeframes that have been specified.

### Recommendation 3:

**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.**

There are a number of online options available for the public to report crimes to Norfolk Constabulary. These include the Single Online Home digital contact platform, by email, and via our LiveChat facility. Online contacts via Single Online Home and email are both received into the same 'Digital Contact' inbox which ensures that a consistent service is provided, regardless of how a member of public chooses to make their report. An automated mechanism identifies risk words within online reports so that they can be prioritised for attention. Our LiveChat facility is managed by our Switchboard and Control Room operatives in the same way that 101 phone contacts are managed.

Our processes for dealing with all reports of crime on initial contact, including those that are made online, are clearly set out in our Contact and Control Room (CCR) Prioritisation and Demand and Call Grading policy, and performance against this policy is tracked and closely monitored by our Contact and Control Room Senior Management Team.

Any crime report that is recorded, regardless of how it is reported, will be managed in line with our Crime Allocation policy and our Investigations policy.

### Recommendation 4:

**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.**

The Constabulary's Crime Allocation and Investigations policies and processes ensure that supervisors are involved promptly once a crime has been recorded. This is achieved via our

8-Point Plan process which is well embedded and supports the timely allocation of crimes to the appropriate resource. We have an Investigation Management Unit (IMU) who are responsible for quality assuring all investigations according to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) to ensure that all reported offences have either been negated or recorded correctly. The processes that IMU follow are also designed to ensure that crimes are assigned promptly and appropriately to departmental supervisors for allocation to a named Officer in the Case (OIC) who will lead the investigation.

Our Crime Allocation policy states: - *As soon as possible after an investigation is allocated to an officer, they must make attempts to contact and update the victim. The expectation is, as far as possible, that this is done within the next shift the allocated OIC is at work.*

#### **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.**

Norfolk Constabulary has a policy for crime allocation which is currently being reviewed. This review is linked to an Area for Improvement (AFI) that HMICFRS set the Constabulary following our 2024 Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection. As part of this review, communications and guidance will be renewed to improve workforce understanding of the revised policy. The newly formed Norfolk Investigations Continuous Improvement Board will have oversight of the implementation of the revised policy to ensure that investigations are being appropriately allocated in line with it. The allocation of crime investigations is also monitored via our force Daily Management Meeting (DMM) structures.

The introduction of District Crime Units (DCUs) has helped us to ensure that volume crime reports are allocated to officers who have the skills, experience, and capacity to appropriately manage the investigation. This was recognised by HMICFRS during our 2024 PEEL inspection with the Inspectorate concluding that DCUs are improving our response to crime investigation. They remarked that officers on these teams had manageable workloads with clear investigation plans and supervisory oversight, that they were dealing with cases in a timely way, and they were carrying out reasonable and proportionate crime enquiries.

#### **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

- **how the force will monitor investigation plans to check their quality, and to make sure investigators and supervisors have followed them.**

The Constabulary's Crime Allocation and Investigations policies cover the requirements for investigation plans. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring initial 8-point investigation plans are in place and that there are ongoing meaningful supervisory reviews of crimes every 30 days. This expectation is clearly set out in both policies and associated guidance and training. Additional supervisor training is being planned for the Autumn of 2025 which will provide an opportunity to further re-enforced this position. Investigation plans are monitored for compliance with policy and quality through a monthly audit process which is undertaken by a cohort of Inspectors.

HMICFRS' most recent PEEL inspection of Norfolk Constabulary found our 8-point investigation plans to be effective, which was supported by their assessment that appropriate investigation plans were evident in 83 of the 87 cases that they audited, and appropriate investigative opportunities were taken from the outset and throughout the investigation in 92 of the 100 cases they reviewed.

#### **Recommendation 7:**

**By 30 June 2025, chief constables should include in their 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 their force closes an investigation.**

Guidance and communication highlighting the opportunities that facial recognition searches present to support criminal investigations have been provided to our workforce.

In response to this recommendation the Constabulary will be reviewing our 7-point investigation closure plan and associated policies and processes to ensure compliance with searching images against the Police National Database and other relevant databases before investigations are closed.

#### **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**
- **set a date for a further review.**

The Constabulary's Crime Allocation and Investigations policies cover the requirements for the supervision of investigations. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring initial investigation plans are in place and that there are ongoing meaningful supervisory reviews of crimes every 30 days. Both of these policies and the guidance and training that is

provided for supervisors and investigators in support of these policies makes this position clear.

This is monitored for quality and compliance through the Inspector's monthly audit process which is referenced under Recommendation 6 above.

Through their PEEL inspection activity in 2024, HMICFRS reported positive findings with regards to our supervisory reviews of crime investigations, commenting that "*the Constabulary supervises investigations well and keeps victims regularly updated*".

#### **Recommendation 10:**

**By 31 March 2026, chief constables should**

- **make sure any member of staff who has a role in supporting 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, while taking into account local procedures and case management systems**
- **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, and that those officers and staff complete annual continuing professional development to maintain their accreditation, which forces should also accurately record**
- **review the investigative training their force gives to supervisors, making sure it equips them to oversee and direct crime investigations effectively.**

The newly formed Norfolk Investigations Continuous Improvement Board will coordinate our response to each element of this recommendation. This Board includes a representative from our Learning & Development Department who lead the delivery of training across the Constabulary. It also includes a representative from our Joint Justice Services Department to provide join-up with the Joint Norfolk and Suffolk File Quality Board which will support the delivery of the case file preparation elements of this recommendation.

Norfolk frontline Response Officers have training and development days built into their shift pattern which are used to provide inputs that are aimed at improving the quality of crime investigations. These are delivered as part of our investigation standards improvement programme (Operation Investigate).

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RaSSO) First Responder training has been delivered to all frontline responders, the principles of which can be applied to all crime investigations.

A new supervisor training programme is also being planned from the Autumn of 2025.

#### **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.**

As referenced under Recommendation 4 above, we have an Investigation Management Unit (IMU) who are responsible for quality assuring investigations in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) who will file investigations at the point of review when deemed appropriate. The quality assurance and data capture processes that we have in place in relation to this will be discussed initially by the newly formed Norfolk Investigations Continuous Board which feeds into the Norfolk and Suffolk Joint Force Investigations Standards Board.

Through our 2024 PEEL inspection process HMICFRS recognised the significant effort that we have already made to improve crime investigation standards across the Constabulary, with His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for the Eastern Region, Roy Wilsher, commending us for the progress that we have made in this area. HMICFRS assessed that our investigations are well-supervised, are effective, and are being carried out in a timely way, with a focus on looking after victims and making sure their needs are met. They also recognised that through our sustained focus on improving our investigation standards we have one of the highest outcome rates for bringing offenders to justice in the country.

Over the coming months we will seek to further improve our crime investigation standards in response to the findings and recommendation outlined in this thematic report, building on the positive progress that we have already made.

## PCC response to report and any Recommendations/Areas For Improvement

This report entitled “***Crime investigations: An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime***” was a thematic inspection conducted by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). I welcome the report and note the Recommendations to chief constables made within it.

Norfolk Constabulary was one of the six police forces inspected in May 2024. As such, it will reassure people living and working in Norfolk to see that their county’s police service was included in the Case Studies highlighting good practice in the effective investigation of crime.

The recommendations made in the HMICFRS report sets out practical means by which crime investigations in Norfolk can be continuously improved. Some of these measures are contingent on software provided by third parties such as the Single Online Home, while others are constrained by existing infrastructure which cannot be readily changed. However, there are a range of steps that can be taken to reinforce good practice in the constabulary, and I anticipate that these will be identified by the constabulary through their detailed review of the report and its outcomes. In turn, through accountability processes, there will be opportunities to ensure that these steps are being embedded in the constabulary’s practice in future to ensure that the public’s reasonable expectations that crimes are effectively and efficiently investigated will be met across all crime types and across all parts of the county.

### For Office Use Only:

- Response forwarded to the Chief Constable.
- Response forwarded to the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel.
- Response submitted to the HMICFRS monitoring portal.
- Response published on the OPCQN website.