

**Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections of Norfolk Constabulary 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 to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days*

Inspection Title:	PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy – An Inspection of Norfolk Constabulary
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Link to Report:	<a href="https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/peel-assessment-2021-22-norfolk.pdf">https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/peel-assessment-2021-22-norfolk.pdf</a>

**KEY FINDINGS:**

PEEL (Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is a continuous assessment of police forces in England and Wales which is reported upon every two years. Forces are assessed and given graded judgements across several core questions set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#).

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual PEEL inspections used in previous years. The Inspectorate also integrated their rolling Crime Data Integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. HMICFRS’ PEEL victim service assessment will now include Crime Data Integrity elements in at least every other assessment.

Forces are assessed in nine areas of policing and graded as ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘adequate’, ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ on the categories contained within the PEEL Assessment Framework. HMICFRS’ approach to graded judgments has changed to that of previous PEEL assessments, which are more clearly linked to causes of concern and areas for improvement. In doing so, HMICFRS have expanded their previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, the Inspectorate can state more precisely where they consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded within the 2021/22 report with those from previous PEEL reports. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, does not necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless specified within the report. Indeed, the Inspectorate is satisfied that the forces’ performance has been maintained or improved in most areas from their previous report.

This was HMICFRS’s sixth PEEL assessment of Norfolk Constabulary. Inspectors judged that Norfolk Constabulary is:

- **Outstanding** in its use of resources
- **Good** at preventing crime, managing offenders and developing a positive workplace
- **Adequate** at investigating crime, responding to the public and protecting vulnerable people
- **Requires Improvement** in its treatment of the public
- **No areas were assessed as Inadequate**

The results for Norfolk Constabulary are very positive in several areas: HMICFRS recognised the forces' excellent performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime. The forces' approach to planning and finances is outstanding and makes sure that the public of Norfolk receive a good service despite the pressures of increasing demand. It makes excellent use of data from its own systems and from partner organisations. This provides senior and operational leaders a comprehensive understanding of demand, risks, and opportunities.

HMICFRS identified that the force has improved its crime investigation and has invested a lot of time and effort in giving its staff the skills and ambition to carry out excellent crime investigations for victims. HMICFRS determined that the force is good at tackling crime, incidents, and vulnerability through a focus on prevention activity. The Inspectorate recognises that the force has many initiatives that are making a difference to victims of crime and those who might be drawn into crime. Leadership of the force is strong and ethical, and staff feel valued and have a sense of belonging. HMICFRS were pleased to see that wellbeing is a central theme throughout the force.

Whilst there are several areas where the Inspectorate commend the force, they identified areas where improvements could be further made. More needs to be done to improve crime investigations, as supervision can be variable and, in some cases, investigative opportunities are not taken. Furthermore, the force must become much more consistent at completing initial risk assessments when victims get in touch.

**Areas for Improvement:**

The Inspectorate identified eleven areas for improvement:

- 1) The force needs to make sure that officers properly record their grounds for stop and search
- 2) The force should make sure problem-solving plans are better managed centrally and routinely assessed and evaluated, and that learning is made available to staff
- 3) The force should make sure that call handlers use and correctly record structured initial triage and risk assessments, to decide on call prioritisation and the most appropriate response
- 4) The force should make sure that repeat callers and vulnerable victims are routinely identified
- 5) The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on crime prevention and the preservation of evidence
- 6) The force should reassess the training and direction it has taken, to improve crime supervision and investigation quality
- 7) The force needs to make sure it complies with the Victims' Code
- 8) The force should make sure that there is an auditable record of the decision of the victim and their reasons for withdrawal of support. The force should make sure it records whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases
- 9) The force should make sure that ancillary orders such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) or Orders (DVPOs) are considered in all appropriate cases
- 10) The force should make sure that officers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities beyond the initial safeguarding
- 11) The force should review its capacity to manage the risk posed by registered sex offenders. It should review its policy in relation to deviation away from authorised professional practice (APP) regarding reactively managed offenders.

### **CHIEF CONSTABLE RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is pleasing to see that the Inspectorate identified Norfolk as having maintained or improved in nearly all areas since our last inspection with Stop and Search being nearly the only exception. We know there's work to be done to make sure officers are recording sufficient grounds when using their powers and to only handcuff people when it's necessary and proportionate to do so. Steps are already being taken to address these points, although, when the related body-worn video footage was reviewed, the searches themselves were seen to be at the right standard.

It is also good to see that HMICFRS recognised that, despite the levels of demand on our officers and staff, they are coping well and being supported by leaders, using innovative practice where they could. While improvements were noted in the standards of our investigations, we take on board the feedback around further work needing to be undertaken to improve crime supervision and investigation quality. This work, which is already underway, doesn't mean we're not seeking justice for victims. In fact, the Inspectorate note we are among the best forces for charging or summoning crimes. Of course, I'd like these figures to be even higher, but it does show we're committed to getting results where evidence is available.

We are also pleased to receive another Outstanding grading for how we make the best use of the funding allocated to us. We are one of only three forces to receive this grading to date and we know how vital it is that we make best use of the resources available to us, particularly at a time when most people are concerned about the rising cost of living. With HMICFRS finding that we make the right financial choices, it is essential that we receive adequate funding if we are to address the points in this report and make further improvements.

Our detailed understanding of demand was recognised in the inspection, as was the growing impact of mental health related incidents which impact our workloads. Our focus over the coming years must be preventing crime and bringing offenders to justice and reducing the volume of mental health related deployments is critical to achieving that aim.

While we still have more work to do with victims at their first point of contact with us, to ensure they give us all the information we need, I welcome the acknowledgement that we are making good use of the problem-solving plans we have put in place to resolve local community issues. Neighbourhood policing is the heart of our service, and this is evidenced by our response to local priorities and our work with local partners which has led to anti-social behaviour reports being lower on average than the rest of England and Wales.

## **PCC RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Constabulary on the findings of the report for 2021/22 and thank the Chief Constable and his police officers and staff colleagues for continuing to serve the citizens of Norfolk so well.

My [Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan for Norfolk](#) gives strategic direction for policing in the county. The plan was launched after public and stakeholder consultation with a series of six pillars identified as key areas of focus. My first is to 'Sustain Norfolk Constabulary' so, I'm delighted that Norfolk Constabulary was rated Outstanding in providing value for money, strategic planning and organisational management, a good foundation for the challenging times ahead as we face a tougher financial climate.

The rising cost of living is a concern that residents across Norfolk share, so I am really pleased Norfolk is one of only three forces to receive such a grading for its use of resources.

There is a lot to be proud of in the report, however, in the quest for excellence in policing there will always be areas for improvement, such as Stop and Search procedures, and I look forward to working with the Chief Constable to address these issues in order to further improve policing effects on the ground.

I hold quarterly PCC Accountability Meetings to publicly question, challenge and hold the Chief Constable and senior officers directly to account for their delivery of policing in the county. I scrutinised the HMICFRS report in public at one of these meetings on 25 October 2022, and a recording of that meeting is available on our website ([PCC Accountability Meeting | Norfolk PCC \(norfolk-pcc.gov.uk\)](#)). I will continue to monitor the Constabulary's work on addressing the HMICFRS findings at future meetings.

### For Office Use Only:

- ✓ Response published on the OPCCN website
- ✓ Response forwarded to HMICFRS Section 55 Responses
- ✓ Response forwarded to Chief Constable
- ✓ Response forwarded to Police and Crime Panel