



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:

Homicide Prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide.

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Publication Types:

Homicide and Joint Inspection

Police Forces:

All local forces in England and Wales

Link to Report:

[Homicide Prevention \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

Section 55 Response Deadline:

6 October 2023

Key Findings

At the request of the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) included the topic of homicide prevention in their policing inspection programme and framework. Their inspection focused on eight police forces, which accounted for 37 % (260) of the 696 homicides in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2022. HMICFRS inspected: Gloucestershire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Merseyside Police, Metropolitan Police, South Yorkshire Police, Surrey Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police. HMICFRS reviewed data and documents and conducted interviews and focus groups with police personnel, NPCC police leaders, College of Policing staff, Home Office staff,

Police and Crime Commissioners, statutory partners including staff from local authorities, social services, and the NHS.

HMICFRS' report on Homicide Prevention found that most police forces inspected were able to identify the patterns and causes of homicide effectively and were able to prioritise and allocate the right resources to tackle them. However, the inspectorate did conclude that some forces did not understand the homicide threat in their area, so did not effectively prevent homicide.

The inspectorate was pleased to find that in some forces there was clear and effective leadership of homicide prevention. However, some forces did not have this leadership, which led to a lack of co-ordination and collaboration in addressing the causes of homicide.

HMICFRS also found that forces were not able to assess and link less serious crimes or incidents so they can take action to prevent these crimes or incidents escalating to homicide. In addition, they suggested that the Serious Violence Duty, which aims to improve how information is shared between police, local services, and councils to prevent serious crime, is a missed opportunity. This is due to it being unclear to the police how other agencies will be held to account for failing to share information with them.

During HMICFRS' inspection, they looked at how forces used the homicide prevention framework (HPF). The framework was developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council after the College of Policing requested forces share how they were preventing homicide. The HPF relies on forces engaging with it, but many did not contribute; they used the framework to different degrees. The inspectorate found that forces that used more of the HPF prevention techniques were generally more effective at preventing crime.

HMICFRS' report stipulates they found that some forces failed to allocate resources to manage their lists of potentially dangerous people who had been identified by analysts and other personnel.

Recommendations

There were three recommendations made by HMICFRS in their report; two of these recommendations were put forward to police forces and Chief Constables. These are detailed below using the same numbering contained within the report itself:

Recommendation 2:

By 31 August 2024, chief constables in England and Wales should devise an approach to make sure their force can, on a sufficiently frequent basis, produce an analytical report concerning its death investigations. This will help the force to:

- better understand the pattern of death reports across the force area, drawing on force data and information gathered by other organisations, including the NHS and local authorities; and
- identify any linked series of death reports.

Recommendation 3:

By 1 December 2023, chief constables should make sure their force can quickly identify lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents. The process should be capable of involving partner organisations when appropriate, so that lessons can be learned more widely.

Areas for Improvement

There are no areas for improvement made.

Chief Constable response to report and any Recommendations/Areas for Improvement

This report entitled "Homicide Prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide" by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) examined whether the eight police forces inspected had a good understanding about the homicide threat in their area, and therefore if they were able to have an effective contribution towards the prevention of homicides. HMICFRS found that most of the police forces they inspected were able to identify the patterns and causes of homicide effectively, and they were able to prioritise and allocate the right resources to tackle them, but this was not the case for all forces.

Whilst Norfolk Constabulary was not one of the eight police forces inspected, HMICFRS' findings have resulted in two recommendations being made to all forces and Chief Constables across England and Wales. Norfolk Constabulary accepts both recommendations.

The Constabulary's joint Protective Services Command has reviewed the forces' current position against each recommendation and where necessary, a plan has been developed to achieve the standards outlined, within the timescales set by HMICFRS.

Recommendation 2:

By 31 August 2024, Chief Constables in England and Wales should devise an approach to make sure their force can, on a sufficiently frequent basis, produce an analytical report concerning its death investigations. This will help the force to:

- **better understand the pattern of death reports across the force area, drawing on force data and information gathered by other organisations, including the NHS and local authorities; and**
- **identify any linked series of death reports.**

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have already produced a problem profile for Homicide and near-miss Homicide, covering the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022. With our Protective Services Major Investigations Team being a joint department across both force areas, this report includes data for both counties and provides a combined force picture and narrative. To ensure that we meet the requirements of this recommendation, this model will be extended in the future to include all death investigations and will draw data from both police forces and from other organisations, in line with the partnership working requirements set out in the Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance. The data gathered will be subject to analytical review for the regular publication of reports.

Recommendation 3:

By 1 December 2023, Chief Constables should make sure their force can quickly identify lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents. The process should be capable of involving partner organisations when appropriate, so that lessons can be learned more widely.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have already undertaken a benchmarking exercise with Essex Constabulary, who as a pilot force, have implemented and tested Rapid Reviews for homicide and serious violence incidents, which includes the involvement of partner agencies where appropriate. To ensure that we meet the requirements of this recommendation, the findings of this benchmarking exercise will be assessed against the current provision of our Joint Major Crime Review Team, who are responsible for the review and publication of learning and best practice from homicide and other complex investigations and will be presented to the Head of Joint Major Crime and Chief Officers for both forces in due course.

PCC response to report and any Recommendations/Areas for Improvement

I welcome HMICFRS' report on the police contribution to the prevention of homicide, which helpfully informs my scrutiny function. Fortunately, the number of homicides in Norfolk are low (single figures) with most occurring in the domestic abuse or mental health arenas. However, Norfolk Constabulary is not complacent and wishes to play its full part in keeping these numbers low.

Recommendation 2:

I note my Chief Constable's comments. I would like to add that Norfolk is unique in having a single County Community Safety Partnership (CCSP), which is embedded in my office. The County's Serious Violence Duty similarly has been embedded in my office as part of the CCSP. This creates conditions for close and well-coordinated partnership working between the Constabulary and other partners.

Recommendation 3:

I note my Chief Constable's comments.

For Office Use Only:

- Response forwarded to the Home Office Section 55 Responses.
- Response submitted on the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal.
- Response forwarded to the Chief Constable.
- Response forwarded to the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel.
- Response published on the OPCCN website.