

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Crime Recording in Kent Police

Summary:

This paper provides an overview of the findings from HMIC's original inspection and outlines the force response.

Background:

1. In February 2013, I commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to conduct an inspection 'to determine if the people of Kent can have confidence in Kent Police's crime figures'.
2. To answer this, HMIC reviewed the force's practices at every stage of the crime recording process, from the point at which a member of the public calls the police, to the final resolution of the crime. HMIC also examined the extent to which the culture in Kent had an impact on crime recording practices.

Introduction:

3. The HMIC report 'Crime Recording in Kent' was published in June 2013. The report concluded with a commitment to return to Kent Police later in the year to conduct a further crime recording audit and assess how well the force had responded to the issues identified.
4. Following the report, the force implemented a range of improvements to ensure the public could have greater confidence in the crime figures.
5. This paper, prepared by the force, provides an overview of HMIC's original inspection findings and outlines the force response. In November 2013, HMIC returned to the force and their follow-up report is expected on 31 January 2014.

HMIC findings and force response:

6. The original HMIC audit involved listening to, and reviewing a total of 303 incident records created as a result of calls made to Kent Police between March and November 2012. It was concluded that 198 incidents should have resulted in the recording of a crime. The force had recorded a crime in 179 cases, equating to a 90% accuracy rate.
7. In addition, when a crime is recorded it can only be declassified (which is referred to as 'no-crime') if the criteria set out in the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCRs) and National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) apply. HMIC reviewed 58 cases where the decision had been made to 'no crime', of which 15 were determined to be incorrect - equating to a 75% accuracy rate.
8. The inspection also found that a target-driven culture had led to some officers pursuing crimes on the basis of how easy they were to solve, rather than on their seriousness, or their impact on victims or communities. HMIC concluded that this was motivated by a desire to meet monthly performance management targets.

9. With oversight by the then Deputy Chief Constable (now Chief Constable, Mr Pughsley), a comprehensive action plan was developed and implemented. The plan dealt with and discharged 7 'Principle Issues' identified in the HMIC report:
- Explore if crimes are not being recorded correctly due to officers giving inaccurate accounts, or Investigation Management Unit (IMU) Investigators failing to ask probing questions.
 - Ensure all no-criming decisions meet the required standard and put in place better arrangements for checking this is happening.
 - Review cannabis warning form to ensure it includes clear explanation to the offender of implications of receiving the warning.
 - Ensure staff are adequately trained in the various means of disposal open to them and they fully understand the requirements of each.
 - Supervision of crime detection and resolution should be strengthened to ensure consistent standards applied.
 - Develop clear understanding of how continuous improvement will be defined and measured in the future.
 - Ensure effective process in place to monitor impact of changes made to performance framework and assess if anticipated benefits are delivered.
10. The plan delivered a root and branch review and restructure of the crime recording process to ensure compliance with HOCRs, NCRS and to improve the level of service provided to the public. Examples of activity either undertaken or on-going include:
- Training and live time monitoring of interface between officers and the IMU.
 - Administrative forms redesigned, distributed and explained.
 - Satisfaction survey and appeals process for 'No Crime' decisions implemented.
 - Audit regime to ensure on-going compliance.
 - Training to officers on 'Out of court Disposals'.
 - Effective PCC scrutiny through monthly meetings.
11. In order to focus where HMIC identified most audit failures, the force introduced a daily audit of incidents that hadn't been recorded as a crime. In excess of 2,400 incidents (1 July to 1 September 2013) were reviewed for compliance with HOCRs and NCRS. This audit demonstrated continuous improvement as the new processes embedded. Whilst a small variance is inevitable (due to the subjectivity of the assessment), the audit evidenced average compliance of 95%, with the latter results showing even higher levels (96% to 100%).
12. The Chief Constable at the time, Mr Learmonth, also launched the Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities for Kent Police providing the bedrock to a change in culture. All numeric targets were, and remain withdrawn as is any red/green response to performance, and whilst supervisors and managers are encouraged to use data as management information the one clear message is that it will not be the catalyst for setting numeric targets.
13. These changes have, and continue to be subject to a schedule of reality testing across the force supported by the Federation, Unison and Superintendents Association to gauge the level of progress. This includes a set of Standards Inspections, the criteria of which is based around key Force documents, in particular 'Managing Expectations' and 'Minimum Standards of Supervision' which provide guidance to staff on delivering a victim focused service and minimum levels of supervisory standards.

14. During 2013, the then Deputy Chief Constable (Mr Pughsley) chaired a Crime Detection and Performance Culture Board to oversee action plan progress, demonstrate the commitment of Chief Officers and provide strategic direction for embedding a qualitative culture throughout Kent Police. This Board sat for the final time in November 2013, but in closing the Board, Mr Pughsley directed that outstanding activity be reviewed and recognised the importance of synchronising cultural change within the current model with any future remodelling.
15. Whilst significant progress was made, it is recognised that to effect real culture change is an on-going process. As a result, Mr Pughsley (as the new Chief Constable) is now chairing a monthly Culture Board. The Board provides strategic direction, governance and oversight for the delivery of change to: improve the accuracy and quality of crime recording and investigation within a new service delivery framework; and establish a culture which puts victims and witnesses at the heart of service delivery consistent with the Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities. Representation on the Board consists of officers/staff at all ranks and from various departments across the force as well as the Federation, Unison and Superintendents Association.
16. In addition, and focusing on improving the service provided to the public in the future whilst meeting the budgetary challenges, the force also has work streams relating to:
 - Reviewing demand management and seeking to provide staff with more time to complete tasks and reduce bureaucracy whilst managing public expectations.
 - Providing staff with the skills and knowledge to perform their role, particularly in relation to HOCRs and crime investigation should the model change in the future.

HMIC re-visit:

17. From the 4-7th November 2013 the force Data Accuracy Auditors replicated the original HMIC audit testing levels of HOCRs and NCRS compliance. The approach and methodology used was the same, and to validate the process, an experienced HMIC auditor (involved in the original audit), remained with the Kent auditors for the duration. This provided HMIC with reassurance that the Kent auditors' were applying a similar standard to that used in the original audit.
18. The incidents audited were selected from those records created as a result of calls made to Kent Police between 1st September and 18th October 2013. HMIC provided the force with an electronic audit workbook which was populated with all incidents for that period. HMIC analysts then returned a random selection of incidents to be audited.
19. In addition to the crime recording re-audit, HMIC returned to force on the 21st November 2013 to conduct a follow-up review focussing on the culture of the organisation. As well as interviews with chief officers, senior staff and Federation representatives, it included two focus groups with operational officers and staff within the crime recording function.
20. HMIC are now in the process of preparing a formal public report in relation to the findings of both their crime recording re-audit and follow-up culture review. It is anticipated that the final report will be published 31 January 2014.