



Agenda Item 06

JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE
5th December 2024

HMICFRS Update

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members of the Committee with oversight of HMICFRS Inspection activity and recommendations

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following the 2023 PEEL Inspection HMICFRS placed WMP into Engage status on 24th November 2023 due to the identification of 4 Causes of Concern. The final report was published 22nd December 2023.

On Monday 22nd July 2024 WMP received written notification from HMICFRS that the 3 Causes of Concern relating to OCSET / SOMS / MARAC had been closed. This was as a result of re-visit activity that the Inspectorate had undertaken during May and June 2024 which had highlighted sustained improvements in the force's performance in these three areas.

This left WMP with one remaining Cause of Concern for Investigations for which we were re-inspected in September 2024. On 18th September 2024 WMP received written notification from HMICFRS that we were returned to the *default phase of monitoring*. They closed three recommendations that formed part of the Investigations Cause of Concern, leaving two that remain open for which we remain focussed on addressing in relation to outcomes.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS, CAUSES OF CONCERN and AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- 3.1 Since the last JAC there have been 4 reports published resulting in recommendations for WMP.
- 3.1.1 An inspection report on progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations in early adopter police forces (Published 22/8/24) WMP was part of the inspection activity in 2023 as a pathfinder force. [Read the report](#)

Op Soteria was described as a 'game changer' by police personnel, with the programme improving how police understand and support RASSO victims. New training was helping investigators understand how victims are targeted, however, not all staff within rape investigation teams were found to be fully qualified. Long term funding for victim services was highlighted as a concern, together with the length of time that cases were taking to get to court.

14 recommendations were made in total, of which 5 were applicable to Chief Constables.

3.1.2 An inspection into Activism and impartiality in policing (Published 10/9/24)

This inspection was commissioned in Sept 2023 by the then Home Secretary to inspect police involvement in politically contested matters. WMP were one of 12 forces inspected.

[Read the report](#)

CC and PCCs were found to not always understand the delineation of their roles and responsibilities – Chief Officers told of often experiencing what they believe to be improper pressure or interference from significant political figures. It was clear that legislation and guidance had not kept up with modern day policing issues and that overt attempts to influence operational policing challenge the police’s impartiality and could reduce public trust.

22 recommendations were made in total, of which 8 were applicable to Chief Constables.

3.1.3 Super Complaint – Suzy Lamplugh Trust – Police Response to Stalking (Published 27/9/24)

This super complaint was made by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust on behalf of the National Stalking Consortium about the way the police respond to reports of stalking. We were one of six forced for whom HMICFRS conducted investigations fieldwork between June 2023 and October 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/super-complaint-on-the-police-response-to-stalking>

The IOPC, HMICFRS and College of Policing found that police understanding of stalking is improving which is reflected in some innovative action by the police. However, too often these cases were not being taken seriously enough and the quality of investigations was inconsistent.

29 recommendations were made in total, of which 15 were applicable to Chief Constables.

3.1.4 The policing response to anti-social behaviour – PEEL spotlight report (Published 10/10/24)

This report brings together findings from the PEEL programme, force management statements and a request for promising practice from the College of Policing to all forces in E&W. In addition, evidence was drawn from academic research, national guidance and other publicly available data. [Read the report](#)

Inspectors found good examples of forces working hard at using problem-solving approaches and allocating trained officers in response. Some forces were seen making good use of technology to encourage reporting of incidents and collect information from the public – however, this was inconsistent across forces. The commitment to tackling antisocial behaviour is undermined by several difficulties in sharing data with partners.

8 recommendations were made in total, of which 5 were applicable to Chief Constables.

3.2 The force continues to concentrate its efforts upon our cause of concern and outstanding recommendations and AFI’s held on the HMICFRS portal under the direction of our DCC through his HMIC Oversight Board which is held on a monthly basis.

Total submissions for closure since change of HMIC process (August 2023) across all portfolios:

Closed (since Aug 2023)	Total Number submitted
AF1 Lv3	15
AF1 Lv2	12
Recommendation Lv4	18
Recommendation Lv3	34
Recommendation Lv2	91
Total	170 (+4)

4 INSPECTION ACTIVITY

4.1 Since the last JAC we were subject to the Investigations re-inspection between 2nd and 13th Sept. This resulted in our return to default phase of monitoring.

4.2 Forthcoming inspection activity

- i) w/c 10th March 2025 – Youth out-of-court disposals: a joint inspection of the effectiveness of the work to divert children from the criminal justice system. We have been notified we will be 1 of 6 forces inspected. Specific focus on Solihull and Walsall.

CONTACT OFFICER	
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