



25 August 2021

Dear HMICFRS

I acknowledge that the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) team published on the 20 April 2021 – Policing in the pandemic -The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020.

Bedfordshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner notes that HMICFRS have made recommendations and learning points, to the police and other bodies, which are intended to help forces in their continuing response to the pandemic.

You made five recommendations (Force Specific) which will be assessed in your future inspection work.

1. Managing registered sex offenders - Forces must immediately make sure that officers understand and correctly implement the guidance for managing registered sex offenders during the pandemic.
2. Legislation and guidance - Forces must immediately make sure they can manage their responses to changes in coronavirus-related legislation. They must ensure frontline officers and staff are clear about the difference between legislation and guidance.
3. Test, track and trace - Forces must immediately put in place a policy to make sure that they follow the guidance and self-isolation directions when members of the workforce come into contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms.
4. Custody records - Forces must immediately make sure that they clearly and consistently record on custody records information about how/when/if detainees are informed of the temporary changes to how they can exercise their rights to legal advice and representation. The record must make clear how any consents are obtained about the way in which legal advice and representation are provided.
5. Overall scale and impact of changes - Within six months, forces must assess the sustainability of any temporary measures introduced during the pandemic that change the way they work. They must understand positive, negative and unintended consequences of the scale and impact of the changes before determining if any of these new ways of working should continue.

Bedfordshire OPCC also notes the Learning points for forces which have been set out in this report:

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To assist forces, you have listed some learning points for our immediate consideration.

Demand and pressures

1. Forces should make sure they are fully aware of the potential pressures, including new demand, that are building up as a consequence of the response to the pandemic, and prepare to manage them.
2. Force management statements should reflect fully the pressures, demand and resource implications resulting from the pandemic.

Technology

In line with the national policing approach to technology, forces (locally/regionally/nationally) should work to ensure that their IT systems are compatible with those of other forces, and of other organisations, such as social care, health and education.

Training

Forces should make sure that:

1. contact centre staff are aware of the increased risks of vulnerability for everyone in the population;
2. they provide effective support to managers on how to manage remotely, such as training, guidance and performance-monitoring tools;
3. they have senior officers who are MAGIC-trained and have the relevant competencies to contribute effectively to SCGs; and
4. relevant planning departments (force and LRF) collate a training record to ensure accreditation and competence is maintained for emergency response and recovery scenarios.

Workforce wellbeing

Forces should:

1. identify potential wellbeing pressures building up in their workforces and mitigate these;
2. make sure that staffing levels are resilient, check that bubble arrangements remain fit for purpose, prepare for more staff needing to self-isolate, and plan for a potential increase in sickness absence that could affect public-facing roles more than others;
3. introduce measures to help staff with the longer-term health and wellbeing effects of COVID-19;
4. make sure they have a plan for managing annual leave, which should recognise the importance of the workforce needing to recuperate;
5. make the most of home working opportunities and other flexible working arrangements where appropriate for the workforce and the organisation;

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6. ensure they maintain sufficient stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE), check for certification dates and have up-to-date health and safety assessments;
7. engage in meaningful consultation to listen to the views of their workforces and understand their concerns; and
8. make sure their communication is effective and that the workforce understands what is required and why it is important.

Data

Forces should:

1. collect enough of the right information at the right level and detail about the continuing effects of the pandemic (costs, new/additional demand, absence, annual leave, custody and detainees etc) so that they can resource their work appropriately; and
2. ensure duty management systems provide the data needed to effectively manage the workforce.

Learning

1. Forces should make sure they have effective ways to establish lessons learned to help inform their future practices and ways of working.

Bedfordshire OPCC will be working with Bedfordshire Police in the consideration of all recommendations which will be monitored through board meetings. The recommendations falling out of this report and they have been added to the PEEL Action Tracker and action owners allocated and will continuously monitored through the Learning, Demand and Futures Board

Yours Sincerely

Festus Akinbusoye

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