

Policing inspection programme and framework 2021/22

An inspection programme and
framework under Schedule 4A to the
Police Act 1996

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An inspection programme and framework prepared under Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996

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Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces in the public interest.

We ask the questions that we believe the public wish to have answered, and publish our findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence. We provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their police force against others, and to determine whether performance has improved or deteriorated over time. Our recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.

Foreword

While national lockdown restrictions have now eased, policing in England and Wales continues to adapt and respond to the challenges caused by the pandemic. The work of HMICFRS goes on, to promote improvements in policing, to help keep people safe and reduce crime and disorder. We will do this in a way that reflects new ways of working developed during the pandemic.

We have amended our organisational strategy. This inspection programme and framework complies with our statutory obligations and is designed to facilitate the achievement of our four strategic objectives. We will:

- focus on those areas that make the most significant difference to the public and those areas that have the greatest influence on improving public safety;
- adopt a collaborative and more targeted ‘smarter systems’ approach to the work of the inspectorate and our work across the inspected sectors and the wider criminal justice system;
- capitalise on our independent insight and learning, maximising the benefits of our unique insights across the whole of our inspected sectors; and
- be more proactive in responding to major changes, using our insight to identify intractable problems and try to find evidence as to how they could be resolved.

Our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) programme has restarted. The continuous assessment model that we explained in our 2020/21 policing inspection programme and framework is now under way. The areas we will inspect as part of the programme will be the same as those in the 2020/21 programme and are aligned, where possible, with the structure of the service-wide template force management statement.¹

¹ A force management statement is a self-assessment that chief constables (and London equivalents) prepare and give us each year. It is the chief constable’s statement and explanation of:

- the demand the force expects to face in the foreseeable future;
- the performance, condition, composition, capacity, capability, serviceability and security of supply of the force’s workforce, and the extent to which current force assets will be able to meet expected future demand;
- how the force will change and improve its workforce, policies, practices and other assets to cope with future demand;
- the effect those changes are expected to have and the effect of any residual risk of service failure; and
- the money the force expects to have to do all this.

As the inspectorate continues to move into a post-pandemic world, we will reflect on how we operated during the pandemic and what improvements we can make to future inspections. For now, the safety of our staff and those we inspect remains paramount. We will adapt our inspection processes as local and national conditions require.

Introduction

This document is HMICFRS's inspection programme and framework for policing for 2021/22.

Types of inspection in 2021/22

PEEL assessments

The [PEEL inspection programme](#) is a continuous assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales. Its principal aim is to promote improvements in policing. Our PEEL assessment provides graded judgments on a number of aspects of forces' performance. It identifies where forces need to improve and helps the public understand how well their force is performing.

National thematic inspections

Our thematic inspections are in-depth examinations of particular policing practices or processes, or of the policing approach to preventing and tackling specific offences. Themes are identified through our continuous monitoring and they are generally chosen because:

- there are current acute problems in policing practice that are harming the public interest;
- there are inconsistencies in outcomes across England and Wales, which force-level work cannot adequately explain; or
- further improvement in practice would benefit the most (or the most vulnerable) victims.

Expanding on the force-specific information from PEEL inspections and force management statements, inspectors build a national picture of police efficiency and effectiveness in the selected areas through a combination of:

- all-force data and responses to document requests;
- interviews with national, regional and local policing bodies, government and other interested parties;
- case file audits, and testing the understanding and application of policies and procedures with operational staff in forces; and
- a victim, offender or witness focus.

Thematic inspections tend to identify areas of strong or weak practice in specific forces but result in recommendations that are relevant to the police service as a whole.

Commissions from the Home Secretary and local policing bodies

The Home Secretary may, at any time, require us to carry out an inspection of a police force, part of a police force, or particular activities of one or more police forces.

Similarly, local policing bodies may, at any time, ask us to carry out inspections or reviews of the police forces they oversee.

Inspection of national agencies and other non-Home Office forces

We have a statutory responsibility to carry out inspections of the following national agencies and non-Home Office forces:

- the National Crime Agency;
- the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- the British Transport Police;
- the Armed Forces Police – Royal Military Police, Royal Navy Police and Royal Air Force Police;
- the Ministry of Defence Police;
- the Civil Nuclear Constabulary; and
- HM Revenue & Customs.

Also, at the request of the relevant dependency or overseas territory, inspections may take place of forces in British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, such as Gibraltar, Jersey and Guernsey. Similar voluntary inspection arrangements are in place with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. We also conduct audits of the Police National Computer.

Joint inspections

We work with other organisations to conduct joint inspections. Such inspections allow us to inspect the way in which the police approach and tackle a particular type of crime or problem as part of a wider assessment of the service provided by all the relevant agencies and organisations.

For instance, as part of our joint targeted area inspections, we work with Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation to examine how local authorities, police, probation and health services work together to help and protect children.

We work most often with the other criminal justice inspectorates: HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Prisons. This allows us to assess police efficiency and effectiveness in both contributing to, and being affected by, the wider criminal justice system. The joint inspection work we conduct with these inspectorates is detailed in the separate [Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Business Plan 2021/23](#) which was published in June 2021.

State of Policing report

As in previous years, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary will produce his annual *State of Policing* report, which reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales.

An overview of HMICFRS's inspection programme for policing 2021/22

PEEL programme

In 2020/21, we consulted on our revised PEEL programme and our new continuous assessment model. The inspection programme was then paused due to the pandemic. It restarted in October 2020.

Our PEEL assessment will include both continuous assessment and formal reporting on every force. This will include graded judgments based on everything we know about that force up to the point that we make our judgments. We will produce such judgments every two years.

National thematic inspections and rolling programmes

Some elements of planned thematic inspections for 2021/22 will be integrated into the PEEL all-force inspection programme. Some may also be included in the criminal justice joint inspection plan. Topics for thematic inspections in 2021/22 will, subject to the availability of resources, include:

- rape: part 1 of the inspection will focus on those cases where either the police or the Crown Prosecution Service made the decision to take no further action (that is, not to proceed with the case); part 2 will consider cases from the point of charge to an outcome;
- domestic abuse;
- digital forensics;
- advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in policing;
- ethnic disproportionality in the criminal justice system; and
- serious youth violence.

Request by the Home Secretary for HMICFRS to consider inspection activity in relation to the concerns raised by the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel (DMIP) report published on 15 June 2021

During 2021/22, we will also conduct inspection activity focusing on the matters raised by the DMIP report to establish the extent to which the public can have confidence that the concerns raised in it are being addressed. The final details of this activity will be agreed with the Home Office.

Follow-up force inspections in 2021/22

Assessments of some forces' progress against recommendations from previous inspection reports

Follow-up inspections are bespoke and focus on progress against previous recommendations in PEEL, child protection or commissioned inspections. Forces are selected for follow-up inspections through our monitoring processes.

Vulnerability and child protection inspections

Protecting vulnerable people is fundamental to policing. We assess the police's approach to tackling threats to, and crimes against, vulnerable people in several of our inspection programmes, including thematic inspections, and through specific questions in the PEEL inspections.

We will also continue to carry out three rolling child protection programmes as follows.

National child protection inspections (England and Wales)

Our national child protection inspections examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the police at each stage of their interactions with or for children, from initial contact and early identification of children who are at risk, through to investigation of offences against them. These offences include child sexual abuse and exploitation, online offending and neglect. We also examine cases of children present at the scenes of domestic abuse and those who are in custody. The flexible methodology and specialist inspection team allow us to include assessments of areas of child protection practice that are of particular interest or concern to a force, national policing or government. For instance, in recent years, we have increased our inspection of criminal exploitation cases and of the ways in which the police tackle the incidence of indecent images of children.

In 2021/22, we will conduct six inspections, four re-inspections and further follow-up work. We will publish a separate report collating and expanding on our findings on the police approach to preventing and tackling online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Joint targeted area inspections (England)

We work with Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and HM Inspectorate of Probation to examine how English local authorities, police, probation and health services work together to help and protect children.

As well as examining the efficiency and effectiveness of these child protection partnerships from the perspective of the children referred to them, each cohort of six inspections has a 'deep dive' theme. In 2021/22, these themes are likely to be domestic abuse and the exploitation of children. The final plans will be confirmed as each of the inspectorates returns to routine inspections.

We will communicate these thematic findings – for example, through national and regional events, reports and close work with other inspectorates – to ensure that all forces can consider common themes and take action as needed.

Joint inspection of child protection arrangements (Wales)

We work with the Care Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Estyn (the education and training inspectorate for Wales) and HM Inspectorate of Probation to examine how Welsh local authorities, police, probation and health services work together to help and protect children.

This new inspection programme shares with the (England-only) joint targeted area inspections a focus on the experiences of children as a way of assessing the effectiveness of partnership working. However, the methodology and approach are tailored to the context and different partnership arrangements and responsibilities in Wales.

A pilot inspection was carried out in December 2019. In 2021/22, we will conduct a further two pilots and one substantive inspection.

Violence against women and girls

In several of our inspections, we examine the police's approach to tackling and preventing crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls. These include PEEL and our child protection inspection programmes (in which we consider the experiences of girls who are victims of abuse and exploitation).

In 2021/22, we will publish spotlight or thematic reports on how the police tackle domestic abuse and rape. We will also continue to monitor progress made by policing against recommendations from our previous thematic inspections of the police approach to tackling [harassment and stalking](#), and [honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation](#).

Home Secretary commission on police engagement with women and girls

In March 2021, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary received a commission from the Home Secretary, under section 54(2B) of the Police Act 1996, to conduct an inspection of the quality and effectiveness of interactions between the police and women (whether as victims, offenders or witnesses), with a focus on the experiences of women and girls. Our interim report was published in July 2021, and the final report will be published in September 2021.

Custody suite inspections

Police custody inspections are carried out jointly by HMICFRS and HM Inspectorate of Prisons. The inspections examine strategy, treatment and conditions, individual rights and health care. They also make a major contribution to the United Kingdom's discharge of its international obligation to ensure regular and independent inspection of all places of detention.

Criminal justice joint inspections and inspection programmes

Details of joint inspections are set out in the separate joint inspection plan published by the chief inspectors of policing, prosecution, prisons and probation. Topics include youth offending services; serious youth violence; and the multi-agency approach to suspects and offenders who have mental ill health. Timings for joint work are discussed with the other criminal justice inspectorates.

Inspection of national agencies and other non-Home Office forces

Subject to further discussion with the organisations concerned, in 2021/22 we intend to carry out inspections of the following:

- HM Revenue & Customs;
- the police forces concerned with the armed services;
- the National Crime Agency;
- the British Transport Police;
- the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority;
- the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- one or more threat areas specified in the Strategic Policing Requirement; and
- police forces in British Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man Constabulary) and British Overseas Territories (Sovereign Base Areas Police (Cyprus) and one further territory yet to be determined).

Initial planning of potential thematic inspections for 2022/23

We gather data and work with interested parties in developing intelligence-led proposals for thematic inspections in 2022/23. The themes to be considered will include issues of race and disproportionality. Activity this year includes assessing the current climate and examining how our PEEL programme approaches these topics.

Super-complaints

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 established a new system of police super-complaints. A super-complaint is a complaint made to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary that a feature, or combination of features, of policing in England and Wales by one or more police forces is, or appears to be, significantly harming the interests of the public. Super-complaints can be made in respect of any one or more of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, the National Crime Agency, the Ministry of Defence Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the British Transport Police.

Only a body designated by the Home Secretary may make a super-complaint. Sixteen such bodies were designated by the Home Secretary in June 2018.

Although each super-complaint must be made first to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, HMICFRS will decide with the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) whether it is eligible for investigation. If it is, we will jointly investigate the super-complaint and representatives from HMICFRS, the

College of Policing and the IOPC will then consider what action, if any, should be recommended. The outcomes could include:

- an inspection by HMICFRS;
- an investigation by IOPC;
- changes to existing policing standards or support materials from the College of Policing;
- a recommendation that another public body is better placed to deal with the concern;
- a recommendation to one or more police forces to change practices or local policies;
- a recommendation to another public body or government department to take action to respond to the super-complaint or a related matter;
- finding the super-complaint needs no action; or
- finding the super-complaint is unfounded.

We expect to receive further super-complaints during 2021/22. Based on the experience of the first five super-complaints, these may each be on a very different topic and (if established to be eligible) will require very different investigations.

We will continue to work with the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct to put in place a process to manage future investigations.

Inspectorate capacity

This inspection programme and framework is predicated on there being a full complement of inspectors of constabulary, working full-time on the affairs of the inspectorate during the inspection year in question. To the extent that this is not the case, and subject to the requirement for consultation specified below, this inspection programme and framework will have effect for such period and with such modifications as the HMCI shall specify and publish.

Before the HMCI makes any such modifications, he must first have consulted the Home Secretary and those local policing bodies and chief officers, and such other law enforcement bodies and policing institutions, as he considers likely to be affected by the modifications he proposes to make, and have taken into consideration their observations and representations timeously made.

HMICFRS's inspection framework

PEEL programme

The [PEEL inspection programme](#) is a continuous assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales.

In 2021/22, we will continue the development of the PEEL programme, implementing an intelligence-led continuous assessment model. This means making greater use of the breadth of evidence we already collect on each force throughout the year to come to an assessment of performance. Evidence sources include:

- the relevant police and crime plan;
- the relevant force management statement;
- findings from thematic and joint inspections;
- crime data integrity inspections;
- progress against established causes of concern² and areas for improvement;³
- routine data collections;
- knowledge gained through regular liaison between the force and the inspectorate; and
- evidence collected through regular engagement with the force, in order to gain insight into its activities.

There will be less reliance on an intense annual on-site fieldwork period, with the intelligence-led approach determining the need to collect further evidence during this period.

In the PEEL inspection programme, we will continue to use evidence collection methods, including:

- analysis of documents and data;
- reviews of case files;
- surveys of the public and others;
- interviews;
- focus groups; and

² Causes of concern: if HMICFRS's inspection identifies a serious or critical shortcoming in a force's practice, policy or performance, this will be reported as a cause of concern.

³ Areas for improvement: if HMICFRS's inspection identifies an aspect of a force's practice, policy or performance that falls short of the expected standard, this will be reported as one or more area(s) for improvement.

- observations of police practice.

During the pandemic, we used remote methods of inspection. We have evaluated our approach and a blend of those face-to-face and remote methods that have been found to be the most effective will be used in future PEEL inspections.

The areas of policing we inspect, based on 12 principal questions (called 'core questions'), will remain the same as those stated in our 2020/21 programme and inspection framework. These are aligned, where possible, with the structure of the service-wide template force management statement.

In relation to each force, the 12 core questions are concerned with:

1. the quality of the service the force provides to victims of crime;
2. the quality of the force's engagement with the people it serves and the extent to which they are treated fairly, appropriately and respectfully;
3. the quality of the force's work to prevent and deter crime and anti-social behaviour, and its work in respect of vulnerable members of the public;
4. the force's response to the public;
5. the quality of the force's investigation of crime;
6. the quality of the force's protection of vulnerable people;
7. the management of suspects and offenders;
8. the force's work to disrupt serious and organised crime;
9. the quality of the force's compliance with the Strategic Policing Requirement;
10. the quality of the force's work to protect communities against armed threats;
11. the establishment, development and care of its workforce, including in respect of an ethical and inclusive working environment; and
12. the efficient planning and management of the force, and the extent to which it achieves and is likely to achieve value for money.

We will inform a force of a cause of concern as soon as we identify one. This could trigger monitoring activity sooner and help forces improve their own performance by taking rapid action. It will support local policing bodies in holding their chief constables to account and assist the public in holding their local policing bodies to account.

When we discover a significant service failure that is putting public safety at risk, we may also (in certain circumstances) publish a cause of concern and recommendations as soon as possible. We intend to release this information on our website.

Local policing bodies' priorities

In the design of each inspection, and before carrying out fieldwork in each force, we examine and review in detail the local policing body's police and crime plan for the force, in order to be clear on its established local priorities. The police and crime plan is also used as a material source of information about the local circumstances and characteristics of the force, the police area in question and the factors that affect considerations of public protection, crime and disorder, including demand – latent and patent – for police services.

Each force's force management statement must be sensitive to, and reflective of, local conditions and circumstances. It must show clearly how the chief constable discharges his or her statutory duty to have regard to the local policing body's police and crime plan.

College of Policing standards

College of Policing standards are of great importance to the improvement of policing and the achievement of consistency in practice. We always consider the College's current standards in the design of our inspections and assessments of forces.

Methodology, monitoring, assurance and insight

HMICFRS's monitoring process

HM Inspectors of Constabulary (HMIs) routinely and continuously monitor all police forces to promote improvements in police practice. If an HMI identifies a cause of concern about police practice, it is raised with the chief constable and the local policing body so that they can take action.

Our routine monitoring activity is an integral part of continuous assessment. It is the process that provides essential information as to whether or not performance is improving. It establishes the extent to which causes of concern have been or are being addressed. Onsite evidence collection is just one source of information that we use to assess and monitor force performance. Other sources of evidence that we use are force management statements, thematic inspections, and the knowledge and insight of our inspection staff throughout the year. We use this information to understand progress that forces are making against causes of concern using our digital monitoring portal. This helps to make our monitoring activity more effective.

Follow-up from previous inspections

We conduct several follow-up activities throughout the year. These range from formal revisits (for instance, as part of the child protection inspection programme and aspects of our PEEL programme) to offering support to forces in responding to our findings (for instance, in the custody inspection programme). We also track the progress that forces have made against the recommendations in our reports.

Approach to PEEL judgments

Using a five-tier structure, we will give judgments against each of the 12 core questions. The aim is to make it clearer where we consider improvements are needed, and better reflect force performance, by adding more nuance to judgments. The new structure will separate the very good from the barely good. It will encourage those forces that are currently stable in 'good' to continue to improve in line with our principal aim for PEEL.

Following public testing, the descriptors for the five tiers of judgments are:

Tier	Descriptor
Outstanding	The force has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance
Good	The force has demonstrated substantially all the characteristics of good performance
Adequate	The force has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but we have identified areas where the force should make improvements
Requires improvement	The force has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance and we have identified a substantial number of areas where the force needs to make improvements
Inadequate	We have causes for concern and have made recommendations to the force to address them

We will continue to test and evaluate the five-tier approach as part of our pilot activity in three forces. This will enable us to test the methodology in a range of geographic, social and operational contexts.

In addition to judgments, PEEL inspections will report on whether forces are meeting the legitimate expectations of the public in respect of the prevention and detection of crime and disorder, bringing offenders to justice and protecting vulnerable people. These will take the form of narrative assessments, considering evidence across our inspection activity in each force.

HMICFRS's assurance obligations

As well as our statutory obligations to inspect and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and certain other bodies, we monitor and provide assurance about other aspects of policing. These include matters such as compliance by chief officers with the requirements of the Police National Database's statutory code of practice and the *Strategic Policing Requirement*. We continue to conduct monthly reviews at force level to monitor statistics relating to the usage of the Police National Computer.

Advisory and reference groups

We regularly convene advisory and reference groups, involving experts who have specific skills and experience in the areas that are inspected. We use their knowledge and advice to establish a sound methodology for inspections.

We draw members from a wide range of relevant organisations, including several universities, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the College of Policing.

Our Technical Advisory Group (TAG) helps to design inspection programmes so that they are as effective and efficient as possible. TAG members include representatives of the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the offices of police and crime commissioners, the College of Policing, the Home Office, the Office for National Statistics, staff associations, police forces and other specialist agencies.

Our Academic Reference Group (ARG) provides expert advice and discussion on the design and ethical considerations of new research projects that support inspections, the development of methodologies, and the evaluation of inspection methodologies and outcomes. The ARG members include academics from several universities with specialities in policing, research leads from other inspectorates (including the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted and HMI Probation), the Home Office, and other policing bodies including the College of Policing and the Police Foundation.

We also have other programme-specific reference groups covering, for example, our overall approach to PEEL inspections and specific aspects such as child protection and crime data integrity.

We received consultation responses asking us to consider using greater public input when establishing our inspection methodology. As far as practicable, we will do so.

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