

21 September 2023

Dear HMICFRS

I acknowledge that the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) team published on the 11 July 2023 - An inspection of how effective police forces are in the deployment of firearms.

Bedfordshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner notes that HMICFRS have made 12 recommendations, for the Police and partners to act on:

Recommendation 1

By 31 July 2024, the College of Policing should introduce new entry criteria for those attending initial training for strategic and tactical firearms commander. The selection process should be similar to the process used to select public order commanders.

Recommendation 2

By 31 July 2024, chief constables should make sure there is access to both specialist strategic firearms commanders and specialist tactical firearms commanders, through a 24-hour rota covering their region.

Recommendation 3

By 31 October 2023, all chief constables should make sure the armed response vehicle asset tracking equipment, as provided by Counter Terrorism Policing, is available and used in their forces. They should train relevant staff in its use.

Recommendation 4

By 31 July 2024, the College of Policing should review the content and extend the length of the strategic firearms commander course. It should make sure candidates have sufficient opportunities to learn and practise the skills of strategic firearms command.

Recommendation 5

By 31 December 2023, all chief constables should make sure that all strategic and tactical firearms commanders have observed the firearms tactics and the use of specialist munitions they can authorise, before being operationally deployed.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire

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Recommendation 6

By 31 December 2023, chief constables should make sure that the annual accreditation process for strategic and tactical firearms commanders includes familiarisation with any new weapons systems and observation of any new tactics or specialist munitions the force has introduced or is planning to introduce.

Recommendation 7

By 31 October 2023, the regional armed policing lead should share armed policing exercises with the National Armed Policing Portfolio. This would allow opportunities for learning to be identified and shared.

Recommendation 8

With immediate effect, each assistant chief constable regional firearms lead should attend all National Armed Policing Portfolio meetings. If they are unable to attend, they should make sure another assistant chief constable armed policing lead from a force in their region attends on their behalf.

Recommendation 9

By 31 December 2023, the College of Policing should issue updated armoury guidance.

Recommendation 10

With immediate effect, chief constables should improve senior officer oversight of their armouries, including an independent annual audit.

Recommendation 11

By 31 December 2023, the National Armed Policing Portfolio and the College of Policing should issue minimum standard guidance for the completion of records in relation to armed policing operations. That guidance, in support of the authorised professional practice – armed policing, should include the requirement for the retention, recovery and audit of those records.

Recommendation 12

With immediate effect, chief constables, through their armed policing governance structure, should make sure that all armed deployment records are stored and auditable

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Bedfordshire Police have provided a full comprehensive update to the office of the police and crime commissioner, and we are assured with work being completed in this area of business. Recommendations will continue to be monitored through our governance board meetings.

Yours Sincerely

Festus Akinbusoye
Police and Crime Commissioner

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