

MEETING	POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
DATE	13th November 2014
TITLE	HMIC crime data integrity inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary
SUBMITTED BY	Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

1. Purpose of the Report

This report is to update the Police and Crime Panel on the findings of, and the response to, the HMIC inspection on crime data integrity.

2. Update

I attach a report from the Constabulary which provides an overview of the national inspection, the findings for Hertfordshire and the actions taken in response. The full HMIC report is available on the HMIC website at <http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-hertfordshire-2014.pdf>

The methodology adopted in the inspection involved a new and thorough examination of a small sample of crime records between 1 November 2012 and 31 October 2013 to give an important snapshot of the effectiveness of police crime recording in Hertfordshire. Recommendations for improvement were made based on the evidence drawn from their inspection of the crime recording arrangements.

I welcome this report and the important insight that it has given. As I noted in my response to the Home Secretary, accurate crime recording is both vital to inform operational policing and vital to make sure that victims, who should be at the heart of the criminal justice system, have confidence in policing. This is a key area for Police and Crime Commissioners. I found the results concerning and I am ensuring that actions on this are followed through.

I received personal reassurance from HMIC that there is no evidence of the deliberate manipulation of crime recording figures. Moreover, the report itself identifies instances where officers are motivated by protecting victims or

vulnerable people where they have not recorded a crime. From my detailed briefing on this subject, I am aware that crime recording can be an area of technical complexity.

Following the interim report, I asked the Chief Constable Andy Bliss to make changes and implement recommendations. This work was enacted immediately and a detailed improvement action plan put in place. I have received updates on this issue via my Executive Board and through attendance at the Constabulary's Strategic Performance Board. The HMIC inspection looked at a relatively small sample of crimes and I note the HMICs acknowledgement of the potential margin of error. I also accept reassurance from the Constabulary that further work over a larger sample of records shows that on the vast majority of occasions, police officers are getting it right by Home Office recording standards.

Appendix A of the Constabulary report gives examples where crime statistics are expected to increase because of the improved NCRS compliance processes. It is important to note that criminal activity itself will not increase as a result of these changes and they will not create any more victims. This will allow us to be clear who the victims are and through increased public confidence, increase the number of people who feel able to report crimes and know that their allegations will be taken seriously. I take comfort from the Crime Survey of England and Wales that shows that crime is reducing in Hertfordshire. I am also keen that the public should not lose sight of the fact that Hertfordshire is a safe place to live, work and visit and the Constabulary is doing an excellent job of policing it, as other HMIC reports have shown. However, there is no room for complacency in delivering good performance, and the public should be assured that I maintain scrutiny of this area of business and the ongoing response of the Constabulary to the issue.