

Police, Fire & Crime Panel Report

January 2020



HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report

Overview

This report covers the 2018/19 PEEL inspection of North Yorkshire Police by HMICFRS, the areas for improvement and actions intended or already underway to meet these.

The Commissioner welcomes the PEEL report and the clear improvement, especially on efficiency, which demonstrates that the Transform 2020 programme is making a difference and helping the organisation to change the way it is working so that it can more effectively support the frontline and can invest to make improvements.

The Commissioner agrees that improvement is required around the concerns raised under the legitimacy strand. Progress has already been made, and from her own scrutiny can reassure the public that she believes NYP are using stop and search and using force appropriately and proportionately.

Effectiveness

The Commissioner is very pleased that NYP received a 'good' grade across all areas of effectiveness which reflects the hard work that has gone into improving how they care for vulnerable people and are ambitious about the way that they collaborate and work closely with partners to provide the best possible response.

Caring for the vulnerable is recognised by the inspectorate as a priority at all levels of the service. Considerable work has gone into improving referral pathways for victims and vulnerable persons, including investing in training officers to better recognise signs of vulnerability and assess risk which the inspectors noted. Better recording of this is required as the final stage of this improvement, and was set out as an area for improvement, and NYP are ensuring this is the case.

Of note were the measures put in place by the Commissioner to ensure that mental health needs can be quickly and effectively understood in the Force Control Room, with the introduction of mental health nurses, and for frontline officers through working with street triage teams.

The protection of vulnerable victims of domestic abuse has improved, and much work and investment has gone into improving the victim services to support these individuals throughout the criminal justice process. However, HMICFRS did recommend as an area for improvement that

NYP review why not all high-risk cases are being referred to a MARAC for multi-agency support. This is being reviewed and recommendations will be brought forward shortly.

Improvements continue within the Force Control Room to ensure that NYP provide the best possible service at the first point of contact. Staff in the FCR continue to work hard to deliver a good, caring service for which the Commissioner is grateful. Further improvement to the FCR is required to enable them to continue to deliver the best possible service and this is well in train through the FCR improvement plan.

Efficiency

The Commissioner is very pleased that NYP have received a 'good' rating for efficiency, showing that the hard work that has gone into the delivery of the Transform 2020 programme has been worthwhile. It is good that the service is now in a better state to efficiently deliver policing and to keep people safe than before, and in a more sustainable position to continue to deliver excellent services in the future.

The Commissioner agrees with the inspectorate that evaluation of change and its impact needs to be improved so that NYP can explain more clearly to the public what it has achieved in spending public money the way it has, as benefits are often understood at a basic level internally but without the clear evidence to demonstrate this to the public.

The Commissioner agrees that NYP now better understands the known demand it faces and the time it spends dealing with this. This is improving the way it shapes its workforce and can reinforce frontline policing. However, the Commissioner is still clear that more needs to be done to move beyond known demand to understand vulnerability in our communities, especially in rural communities where there is lower levels of reporting and therefore hidden crime, as evidenced by the National Rural Crime Network's research.

Work has been ongoing to assess and embed the skills, workforce and technology necessary to deliver the best possible services. Changes have been made to recruitment and the introduction of mobile working technology has seen a step change in the ability of officers to identify jobs and record evidence more effectively. The Commissioner will continue to ensure that NYP works to understand how it can most efficiently deliver its services in different ways to provide value to the public.

The Commissioner is particularly grateful for the Chief Constable's continued commitment to Neighbourhood policing and the work that has gone on to ensure that this continues to be the bedrock of the service in North Yorkshire and York. She is pleased to see that compared to other services North Yorkshire has been able to protect and reinforce its frontline in its neighbourhood policing teams from cuts better than in other areas related to the number of officers within the service.

She is glad to see that the inspectorate recognises a renewed approach to collaboration, especially with the fire service, and that there is robust and ambitious collaborative activity and challenge going on in all areas of the service. More is required to understand, plan and evaluate the benefit of this work, and the Commissioner is keen to see this taken forward effectively and quickly.

Legitimacy

NYP received a grading of “requires improvement” for legitimacy. HMICFRS found that NYP needs to improve its understanding of how fairly its officers treat the public and that a complete picture is needed of how both use of force and stop and search powers are being used in the community. They observed that officers electronically record when force has been used, but their actions aren’t being reviewed often enough by supervisors. This was replicated for stop and search powers. They felt that training needs to be delivered consistently, and supervisors should fulfil their role so that the public can be confident about the way the force is operating.

The Commissioner agrees that improvement is required, and that training and supervisory review is essential in internally monitoring performance on these matters. She has also established an independent process for scrutinising stop and search and use of force, including a lay observer scheme similar to the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme, Community Review Groups to provide feedback to local teams, and, shortly, an Independent Scrutiny Panel similar to the panels already in place for out of court disposals and domestic abuse.

From her own scrutiny processes, the Commissioner is assured that NYP are using stop and search and using force appropriately and proportionately, and can reassure the public on this matter.

The Commissioner agrees that more needs to be done to support those bringing forward unethical behaviour as part of a learning culture to make sure that appropriate training and remedy can be put in place. It is vitally important that there is a full understanding of the issue of abuse of position for sexual purpose and will look to the Chief Constable to bring forward appropriate measures to ensure this happens.

Conclusions

Overall, the Commissioner is pleased that the report shows that NYP continue to perform well in effectively tackling crime and protecting vulnerable people and she is confident that work is in place and ongoing to help drive North Yorkshire Police toward becoming an Outstanding police service.