



HMIC: PEEL Effectiveness Inspection 2015

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has published a final assessment of the effectiveness with which Northamptonshire Police keeps people safe and reduces crime. The inspection focused on the overall question: “How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?”

To answer this question, HMIC looked at four questions and made the following conclusions;

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?

Poor direction to officers and assigning of tasks means the force may not be making the best use of its available resources for preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and activities may not be fully aligned with the priorities of the force.

Partnership arrangements at senior level are strong; however, operationally (at middle management level) joint problem-solving needs to be connected and agreed better. Some use, but inconsistently, is made of an evidence-based approach to tackling crime, but the force needs to do more to systematically learn from what works.

2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

HMIC is concerned that the way in which crime is allocated for investigation is causing unacceptable delays, which puts at risk the force’s ability to properly investigate, gather the best evidence and ensure timely support for victims.

Although the force is working well with other organisations to provide initiatives and schemes to divert offenders away from crime and the force has effective multi-agency arrangements in place to manage dangerous offenders, the integrated offender management programme is managing only those offenders involved in serious acquisitive crime. Given the high levels of violent crime in Northamptonshire and the priority placed on tackling it by the force, it is disappointing that this integrated approach is not being used to manage violent offenders to prevent re-offending.

3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims?

Northamptonshire Police is trying to improve the service it provides in identifying vulnerable people and responding to them, so that the public can be confident that the force supports victims well.

Investigations of missing and absent people and child sexual exploitation are of a good standard and the force has developed strong MARAC and MASH models with good information-sharing and joint safeguarding activity. However, there are still several areas where more improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and vulnerable people are kept safe.

The force has good systems and processes in place to deal with vulnerability and risk at the initial point of contact. However, an improved awareness of vulnerability and empathy for victims by call-handlers is required to ensure that vulnerable victims feel fully engaged from the outset of their contact with police. The use of the THRIVE approach to assess threat, risk and harm and the associated training the force has provided to its staff is designed to improve this situation but the benefits have yet to be seen.

4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

The force needs to improve its understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, and improve its multi-agency response to it, including work to prevent people from becoming involved in criminal groups and protecting communities from the harm they cause. The force recognises it needs to do more to work with partners to prevent serious and organised crime.

Although Northamptonshire is well served by the specialist capacity within the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) to tackle higher level serious and organised crime, the force itself has only limited specialist capacity, and it could do more to involve local policing teams and local partner organisations to bolster its response to serious and organised crime.

Conclusion

Overall, HMIC graded Northamptonshire Police as 'requires improvement' in the way it keeps people safe and reduces crime. The grading given for each of the above areas was 'requires improvement'.

The performance of Northamptonshire Police has needed improving for well over a decade and despite the fact that it has made improvements in recent years, there is still much to do as this report shows. The main conclusions highlighted above are all areas I expect the force to improve on and maintain a highly effective service to keep people safe and reduce crime, working to make Northamptonshire the safest place in England as outlined in my Police and Crime Plan.

Northamptonshire Police has a new leader in Simon Edens, who I believe understands some of the inherent problems within the force and the county and he is beginning to take the necessary action to tackle these issues, looking at new leadership appointments and collaboration with other forces, as well as prioritising the tackling of violent crime. I believe given time Chief Constable Edens will turn the force around and improve Northamptonshire Police's rating across all manner of key performance indicators.