

Summary of HMICFRS West Yorkshire Police PEEL Inspection Report 2021/22

Item 5

KEY CONTACTS

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OVERVIEW

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) graded West Yorkshire Police's performance across 10 areas of policing and found the force was 'outstanding' in four areas, 'good' in four areas and 'adequate' in two areas.

HMICFRS said the 'outstanding' areas included how the force disrupts serious organised crime and how it treats the public.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Andy Cooke said:

*"I congratulate West Yorkshire Police on its excellent performance **in keeping people safe and reducing crime**. I have graded the force as outstanding in four areas of policing, which properly reflects its high level of performance in a challenging policing environment.*

*"I am impressed by the force's well-established approach to **community engagement**. The force has worked well with its communities to understand their diversity and to solve local policing issues.*

*"The force has invested significantly in developing its **neighbourhood policing** model since we last inspected. I am encouraged to see that resources aren't routinely abstracted away into other areas of policing. I am also pleased to see the value that the force places on **early intervention**. This is important in supporting children and young people to divert them away from offending.*

*"West Yorkshire Police is innovative in its approaches to tackling **serious and organised crime** threats. I am impressed by the way the force has adopted a 'whole systems approach' to tackling this serious problem, and how effectively it works with other agencies to do so.*

*"The force has also done significant work to analyse its **stop and search** activity, and in the overwhelming majority of cases there are reasonable grounds for that activity to take place. There is good governance in place to make sure that stop and*

search is scrutinised properly by senior leaders. The force can show that it treats the communities of West Yorkshire fairly when they are subject to stop and search.

“However, the force needs to improve how it identifies **vulnerability** at the first point of contact because its risk assessments aren’t always effective and don’t always accurately consider the need for support or **safeguarding**. I am reassured that the force has taken immediate steps to address this after our inspection.”

BACKGROUND

West Yorkshire Police’s last PEEL inspection report (for 2018/19) was released in March last year and was received positively with ‘Good’ grades for Effectiveness and Legitimacy, and an ‘Outstanding’ grade for Efficiency. These positive headlines slightly hid the critical elements of the report, namely that WYP received ‘Cause for Concern’ notifications on how it dealt with investigations which included vulnerable individuals, and for the lack of capacity in its counter-corruption department.

2020/21 RESULTS

This latest report builds on the positive position of last year, with strong scoring across most of the categories of assessment.

The Force has received **four** Outstanding grades, **four** Good grades, and **two** Adequate grades:

Outstanding:

- Preventing crime
- Treatment of the public
- Disrupting serious and organised crime
- Good use of resources

Good:

- Responding to the public
- Protecting vulnerable people
- Managing offenders
- Developing a positive workplace

Adequate:

- Investigating crime
- Supporting victims



Comment: There have been just two PEEL reports published under this new typology, one of which is Durham Police, which is usually a high performing force. Putting WYP’s result in context - Durham achieved two Outstanding grades, seven Good grades, and one Adequate.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

The force's approach to community engagement is underpinned by its effective partnership working arrangements.

Communities in West Yorkshire are culturally diverse, and the force has worked well with its communities to understand their diversity and to be able to work together to solve local policing issues.

The force's well-established neighbourhood policing model has a strong focus on early intervention.

The force has invested significantly in developing its neighbourhood policing model since we last inspected. Neighbourhood policing is valued by the force, and I am encouraged to see that resources aren't routinely abstracted away into other areas of policing. I am also pleased to see the value that the force places on early intervention. This is important in supporting children and young people to divert them away from offending.

The force is highly effective at combating the threats posed by serious and organised crime

I am impressed by the way the force has adopted a 'whole systems approach' to tackling this serious problem, and how effectively it works with other agencies to do so.

The force's understanding of stop and search is comprehensive and sophisticated

The force has done significant work to analyse its stop and search activity, and in the overwhelming majority of cases there are reasonable grounds for that activity to take place. There is also good governance in place to make sure that stop and search is scrutinised properly by senior leaders.

The force needs to improve how it identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact

The force's call handling is good, and call handlers use THRIVE to assess the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability of an incident. But the THRIVE assessments aren't always effective, meaning that vulnerability isn't always appropriately identified. I am reassured that the force has taken immediate steps to address this after our inspection activity.

HMICFRS have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime:

- The force has a focus on problem solving and early intervention. We found good examples of the force working in partnership to divert children and young people away from offending and to safeguard vulnerable people.

- Its effective community engagement methods that help to build trust so that the public will share intelligence and information to help reduce crime;
- Its effective neighbourhood policing model, supported by a culture of working in partnership to solve problems in local communities;
- Its comprehensive understanding of capacity, capability and demand that allows it to put its resources in the right places to prevent and detect crime.

However, the following areas may negatively affect the force's ability to reduce crime:

- Not always recognising vulnerability or repeat victims at first point of contact.
- Not always providing crime prevention or evidence preservation advice at first point of contact.
- Not completing initial needs assessments in all cases, which could lead to victims withdrawing their support for investigations.

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES IN DETAIL

▪ Providing a service to the victims of crime

- The standard of investigations in West Yorkshire Police has improved *The force has undertaken significant work to improve the standards of its investigations. We found that investigations were conducted in a timely manner in 94 out of 103 cases, and investigative opportunities had been taken in 97 out of 106 cases. But we found that on the nine occasions where investigative opportunities weren't taken, these related to serious crime such as rape and sexual harassment. While overall standards have improved, the force must maintain its focus in this area so that it can be sure its investigations do not fail and that offenders do not escape justice.*
- The force should ensure that requirements for call handlers to provide advice about the preservation of evidence and crime prevention are clearly understood.¹
- The force should ensure that an auditable record is made of a victim's decision to withdraw support for an investigation, or of their wishes for an out-of-court disposal.

▪ Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

- The force is highly effective at working with its communities to seek their views about what matters to them
- The overwhelming majority of stop searches have been carried out with reasonable grounds
- The force has a comprehensive and sophisticated understanding of its stop and search data
- The force empowers communities to get involved in local policing

¹ (Note – 'areas for improvement' highlighted in orange text)

- The force is improving its understanding of its data on use of force

▪ Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

- The force has a highly effective neighbourhood policing model that is focused on the prevention of crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability
- The force works well to support vulnerable victims of hate crime to report
- The force is very effective at identifying high demand and vulnerable locations, including repeat victims
- The force carries out effective problem-solving to protect vulnerable people and reduce demand
- The force is carrying out early intervention with a focus on positive outcomes

▪ Responding to the public

- The force understands demand in the force contact management centre and it is well resourced
- The force provides a timely response to incidents, but appropriate allocation of incidents can sometimes be affected by the THRIVE assessment
- Domestic abuse risk assessments by patrol officers are completed to a good standard, but sometimes the level of risk is inappropriately graded as high
- **The force should ensure that call handlers provide an effective assessment and structured triage that is consistently applied, and that all risks are identified and recorded on force systems.**

Vulnerability is not always identified by callers at the first point of contact. While we found evidence of THRIVE being used, there was often not a full assessment of the caller's vulnerability. This means that callers who are vulnerable or who are repeat victims of crime may not always receive appropriate levels of service or response. The force may also miss opportunities to reduce the incidence of repeat victimisation.

▪ Investigating crime

- The force has a good understanding of its crime demand and what resources it needs to meet it effectively
- The force has reduced the backlogs in its digital forensics unit
- The force is improving its understanding of its outcome data and of why victims sometimes withdraw support for prosecutions
- **The force should take action to ensure that investigators work with and support victims and witnesses to understand their needs. They should consider, record and provide victims and witnesses with any appropriate special measures.**

▪ Protecting vulnerable people

- The force has effective governance in place to make sure that vulnerable people are protected
- The force has made improvements to the way it shares information about vulnerable people with local authorities

- The force has processes in place to share information with children’s social care organisations about children who go missing, but this does not always happen
- The force is working with schools to share information about children at risk of child criminal exploitation
- The force has multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs) in place, but there is a lack of clarity about working practices
- The force is undertaking work to divert young people away from serious and organised crime
- The force has multi-agency risk assessment arrangements in place to assess domestic abuse incidents, but safety planning could be more robust
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) are used by the force, but this is inconsistent between districts
- The force is working in partnership to safeguard vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn babies
- **The force should ensure that when it is sharing information with children’s social care organisations about vulnerable children, a full picture of information is shared.**

We found that the force does not routinely screen referrals that are sent to children’s social care about children at risk of harm. This means that referrals are often made based on information about a single incident rather than the family history. This means that there is a risk that single-agency decision-making by relevant agencies is not based on a full picture of the potential cumulative risk to that child. It also means that agencies may be missing opportunities to intervene early in that child’s life to prevent an escalation of risk into significant harm.

▪ **Managing offenders and suspects**

- The force effectively pursues offenders and manages outstanding suspects to protect the public from harm
- The force is effective at managing the risk posed to the public by the most dangerous offenders
- Neighbourhood policing teams are aware of RSOs in their area
- The force has systems in place to proactively identify the sharing of indecent images of children from all sources. It understands the benefits of, and how best to use, specialist software to proactively identify people sharing indecent images of children. It takes appropriate action in a timely manner and based on an assessment of risk

▪ **Disrupting serious organised crime**

- The force works well in partnership with other organisations to tackle SOC
- The force has the right systems, processes and people in place to tackle the SOC threat
- The force has highly effective ways to prevent people being drawn into SOC, and it works with other relevant agencies to implement ‘prevent’ initiatives.

▪ **Building, supporting and protecting the workforce**

- The force has an ethical and inclusive culture at all levels
- The force is taking action so that its workforce better reflects its communities
- The force is good at developing and investigating potential counter-corruption intelligence
- The force should ensure that the workforce understands the relevance of the internal ethics panel, and that its findings are better communicated. During our last inspection, the force was issued with an area for improvement about its internal ethics panel.

The force still needs to raise awareness of the panel among the workforce and make sure its findings are better communicated. This remains an area for improvement.

▪ **Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money**

- The force has an effective strategic planning and performance management framework, making sure that it tackles what is important both locally and nationally
- The force has a comprehensive understanding of all areas of demand
- The force understands its future demand and has plans in place to address it
- The force is making the best use of the finance it has available, and its plans are ambitious and sustainable, but it is facing financial challenges

The causes of concern and associated recommendations from the last PEEL inspection on the standards and quality of investigation and vulnerability are now 'areas for improvement' after HMICFRS recognised the significant progress made. The Force will be required to maintain its focus in these areas until the next PEEL inspection.

The full report is available at: [PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy – An inspection of West Yorkshire Police \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/peel/2021-22-police-effectiveness-efficiency-and-legitimacy/)