

## West Yorkshire Police:

### Crime Data Integrity inspection 2018

#### Overall judgment

 Outstanding

West Yorkshire Police is one of only two forces, from the 34 inspected so far in this programme of inspection, that have been judged as achieving an outstanding performance on our first visit.

Since our 2014 inspection, the force has made substantial progress to achieve a high standard of crime-recording accuracy. Victims are at the forefront of the force's crime-recording arrangements.

We found:

- officers and staff understand the importance of crime-recording;
- a comprehensive training programme for officers and staff;
- effective supervisory and governance arrangements help to sustain improvements;
- a comprehensive feedback system, so officers and staff who make errors can learn the correct requirements for their future crime-recording decisions; and
- the force crime registrar (FCR) and his deputy are highly visible, accessible and actively promote good crime-recording standards across the force.

We examined crime reports from 1 March 2018 to 31 August 2018. Based on this, we estimate that the force records 94.6 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.64 percent) of crimes reported to it. [We estimate that the force fails to record over 16,000 reported crimes each year.](#)

The force is determined to get crime recording right, to understand clearly how crime affects its communities and to respond appropriately to this demand.

However, in a few areas the force acknowledges that it still has more work to do. It recognises that it still does not always make the correct crime-recording decisions and that it must work to:

- make sure it records all third-party professional reports at the first point of contact;
- improve its recording of crimes associated with modern slavery; and
- improve understanding of the principal crime rule, to only record the most serious crime which the same offender has committed against the same victim.

We also found that officers and staff didn't always fully understand and apply changes made in April 2018 to the recording requirements for stalking and harassment.

## **Summary of findings**

The force has substantially improved its crime-recording accuracy since our 2014 report. We found it has:

- created a culture in which officers and staff fully understand the importance of crime recording;
- an audit and inspection team to conduct reviews into areas of risk;
- provided comprehensive training which has improved officer and staff understanding of crime-recording requirements;
- effective supervisory oversight, including feedback processes which support its commitment to continual improvement;
- strong governance arrangements to make sure that it maintains the improvements made to its crime-recording accuracy;
- completed all the recommendations from our 2014 report; and
- completed all the recommendations from the national action plan developed in 2014 to improve crime recording by police forces.

The FCR and his deputy are responsible for oversight and audit of crime-recording requirements. We found that they have completed a national College of Policing course for FCRs and are fully accredited for the role. A small team supports them and undertakes regular audits of reported and recorded crime.

However, there are a few areas where the force acknowledges that it still has further work to do. It recognises that it still doesn't record some reports of crime and that it must work to:

- make sure it records all reports of crime received from third-party professionals; and
- improve understanding among officers and staff of the principal crime rule.

## How effective is the force at recording reported crime?

 Good

### Overall crime-recording rate

**94.6%** of reported crimes were recorded

The force has made significant progress with its processes, ensuring it now records more reports of crime in accordance with the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) (HOCR). We examined reports of crime which the force received, and for which it had created an [auditable record](#). The force told us that 88.1 percent of crime it records (excluding fraud) comes through an auditable route. This doesn't mean that 88.1 percent of crimes reported to West Yorkshire Police come through these routes, but that 88.1 percent of crime is recorded this way.

We found that the force recorded 94.6 percent of these crimes (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.64 percent). [We estimate that this means the force is not recording more than 16,000 reports of crime each year.](#)

We found the supervision and oversight of crime-recording decisions was effective. A feedback process to officers and staff supports this and ensures continuous learning.

In most cases where the force still doesn't record crimes, we found this was because:

- officers and staff don't always fully understand and apply changes made in April 2018 to the recording requirements for stalking and harassment offences;
- it doesn't always record all crimes reported in incidents involving more than one crime;

- it transferred some major crime investigations and investigated them through standalone systems, preventing proper oversight of the crime-recording requirements; and
- it didn't always follow the rules for recording third party crime reports.

We note that the force responded immediately to our findings and is already acting to address them.

Of the 812 reports of crime that we audited, we assessed 198 as related to domestic abuse. Of these, the force had recorded 184. Of the 14 cases where it had not recorded crimes:

- in three cases it undertook investigations;
- in a further three cases investigations were being conducted by other third-party professionals;
- in four cases the victim did not support police investigation; and
- in four cases there was no investigation because the crime wasn't recorded.

Safeguarding was provided to the victim in all relevant cases.

The high recording rate for domestic abuse incidents has contributed significantly to the force's overall crime-recording results. This is a testament to its hard work and commitment to crime recording.

## Violent crimes

**93.8%** of reported violent crimes were recorded

Over **6,200** reports of violent crime a year are not recorded

We found that 93.8 percent of violent crimes reported to the force are recorded (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.79 percent). [By our estimate, this means the force fails to record over 6,200 violent crimes that are reported to it each year.](#)

This recording rate is very good and better than most forces that we have inspected to date. This is indicative of the improved recording standards achieved by officers and staff and of the scrutiny given to reports of violence since our 2014 report. This is particularly important as many of these crimes are very serious in nature and cause significant harm to their victims.

Most unrecorded violence offences are either disclosed during investigations of other recorded crimes or are additional crimes reported during the victim's initial contact. So although the force didn't record these crimes, it did provide safeguarding and a proper service to the victim. It should review its systems and processes to make sure it identifies and records all reports when more than one offence is disclosed to it.

Victims of violent crime often need a lot of support. This should come from the force, and other appropriate agencies such as [Victim Support](#). In these circumstances, crime recording is even more important. If the force fails to record a crime properly, it can mean victims aren't referred to Victim Support. This may deprive the victims of the support they need and deserve.

## Sexual offences

**98.8%** of reported sex  
offences were recorded

The force records 98.8 percent of sexual offence crimes that are reported to it (with a confidence interval of 1.68 percent). This is an exceptional standard of crime-recording accuracy. [We estimate that this means the force fails to record over 100 reported sexual offence crimes each year.](#)

This recording rate is illustrative of the close attention given by the force to reports of sexual offences and ensures victims receive the service and support they deserve. This is welcome and is particularly important as many of these crimes are very serious in nature and cause significant harm to their victims.

## Rape

**78 of 87** audited rape  
reports were accurately recorded

Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience, so it is especially important that reports of rape are recorded accurately. It helps to make sure victims receive the service and support they deserve. And it helps the police identify the nature and extent of sexual violence in their local area.

West Yorkshire Police didn't always record a reported crime of rape. But in all cases, it provided support and safeguarding, referred victims to partner organisations when appropriate and carried out an investigation.

We found the force had failed to record nine rape crimes. Of these:

- one involved a historic report which another force was investigating;
- one involved historic reports which West Yorkshire Police was investigating; and
- seven originated from one incident where the force had moved the investigation onto a standalone system.

By transferring this investigation onto a standalone system, the force unwittingly prevented appropriate oversight of the crime-recording requirements. It took immediate steps to address this issue. This should make sure it always records crime reports it manages this way in the future. This is welcome.

The force also generally made proper use of the [Home Office classification N100](#). The N100 was introduced in April 2015. Its purpose is to explain why reported incidents of rape or attempted rape, whether they are reported by victims, witnesses or third parties, haven't immediately been recorded as a confirmed crime. This can include instances where additional information confirms the rape didn't take place, or where the rape took place in another force area and was transferred to the relevant force to record and investigate.

We found 14 incident reports for which the force should have applied an N100 classification. It did so on 13 occasions. Separately, we also reviewed 20 sample records where it had applied an N100 classification. Among these, we found it had correctly recorded 17.

## How efficiently do the systems and processes in the force support accurate crime recording?

 Good

### Crime reports held on other systems

# 13 out of 20

**vulnerable victim crimes  
were recorded**

For vulnerable victims to get the support they need, the force must improve how it records crimes reported directly to its public protection teams.

We examined 70 vulnerable victim records. We found that the force should have recorded 20 crimes, of which it had recorded 13.

Two of the unrecorded crimes involved child victims and five involved adult victims. All of them were third-party professional crime reports where other agencies were investigating and providing safeguarding. Some officers and staff didn't understand that in this situation, the police must still record the crimes. The force responded immediately to this finding by addressing this gap in crime-recording training.

We were impressed to find that the force has a safeguarding governance team. This team audits standards of investigation, with particular focus on crimes affecting the vulnerable. The force has now trained the team to consider crime-recording requirements and to ensure good standards in this important area.

## **Modern slavery**

Offences relating to modern slavery are an important and recent addition to the crimes that forces must record and investigate. So, we examined how well the force records reports of modern slavery offences. We also examined its understanding of the origin of such reports.

We found that West Yorkshire Police needs to improve its recording of these offences. We examined 19 modern slavery records and found 41 crimes that should have been recorded. But the force had only recorded 29 of these. The crimes not recorded included:

- one of modern slavery;
- eight of rape;
- one of sexual activity with a child under 18;
- one incitement of a child to engage in a sexual act; and
- one assault.

We also looked at 22 modern slavery reports that the force received through the national referral mechanism. We found that it should have recorded 19 crimes but had only recorded 14. The unrecorded crimes included one each of:

- modern slavery;
- rape;
- threats to kill;
- assault; and

- kidnap.

We also found that it had failed to record one classification N100 involving a third party professional report of historic rape.

The force chooses to record modern slavery crimes that happen overseas, which isn't a requirement. It does this to make sure the victim gets appropriate support and that it has a full record for intelligence purposes.

## **Timeliness**

If the information the force gets at the first point of contact satisfies the national crime recording standard, it should record crimes straight away, and in any case within 24 hours.

We found that, of the reports West Yorkshire Police had recorded, it had recorded the following number within 24 hours of receiving the report:

- 224 out of 270 violent crimes;
- 128 out of 158 sexual offences; and
- 248 out of 266 other offences.

Generally, when the force makes correct crime-recording decisions, its processes work well to make sure it records the crime within 24 hours as the rules require. But it could improve how quickly it records reports of violence and sexual offences.

## **Cancelled crimes**

If additional verifiable information shows that a recorded crime didn't take place, the record can be cancelled. A recorded crime can also be cancelled when it was committed in another force area and is subsequently transferred.

We reviewed a sample of cancelled recorded crimes of rape, other sexual offences, violence and robbery.

We found that the FCR had correctly authorised 18 out of 19 cancelled rape offences. Designated decision makers (DDMs) are responsible for other crime cancellation decisions. The DDMs had correctly authorised the cancellation of:

- 17 out of 18 sexual offences;
- 17 out of 20 violence offences; and
- 15 out of 18 robbery offences.



If a crime has been cancelled or transferred to another force to investigate, victims should always know the status of their reported crime. If the force decides to cancel a recorded crime, the very least the victim should expect is an explanation of why the force decided this. We found that of the 43 victims who should have been informed of the transfer or cancellation, 39 had been.

These findings show that the process for dealing with crime cancellations is generally effective.

## **Code of Practice for Victims of Crime**

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) gives police forces clear guidance about the service they should give crime victims. We have concluded the force is aware of its responsibilities under this code.

West Yorkshire Police is supported by Victim Support, but also offers a register of victim services within the force area. So victims can access services from other organisations as well as those available through Victim Support.

## **Equality**

Protected characteristics, such as gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion and age, don't necessarily make someone more vulnerable to the risk of crime. However, it is important that the force records information about victims' characteristics. This helps to identify any patterns between different community groups and how vulnerable they are to (or how likely they are to report) different types of crime.

So far, we have examined 35 forces in this inspection programme. West Yorkshire Police is the first in which we found a proactive approach to fulfilling this requirement. The force has introduced a recorded message which it gives to victims when they contact it on 101. The message explains why this information is important and why victims may be asked to provide it. And the force has updated its incident and crime-recording system, so it can record and analyse this information. The force Equality Board then oversees this data. This is good practice for which we commend the force.

## **Officer and staff survey**

We carried out a survey of officers and staff in West Yorkshire Police about their experience of crime recording. Some 597 respondents took part. We were pleased to find that the vast majority believed the chief officer team clearly communicates the need for ethical crime recording.

Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents said supervisors encourage officers and staff to challenge unethical, unacceptable or unprofessional crime-recording behaviours. This is welcome.

## **How well does the force demonstrate the leadership and culture necessary to meet the national standards for crime recording?**

 Outstanding

The leadership team in West Yorkshire Police is clearly committed to good crime recording. This has helped to set a culture where officers and staff fully understand the importance of crime recording.

We found the governance arrangements for crime-recording to be well established and effective. These include:

- a chief officer-led gold group which sanctions and oversees crime data integrity (CDI) work;
- a CDI performance management framework;
- local accountability meetings; and
- personal development objectives for officers and staff which are linked to crime-recording standards.

We noted how agile and effective these arrangements were when we made the force aware of problems raised during this inspection.

The force has used different communication tools to share important messages about crime recording, which staff have received well. The FCR and his team were improving crime-recording standards by making themselves visible, accessible and active within departments and districts. This gives staff confidence to ask them for guidance when they are unsure about the crime-recording requirements. This is welcome.

The force's new training programme is engaging, innovative and informative. It supports the programme using forums, avatars and videos. These allow the FCR and deputy FCR to answer questions, communicate rule changes and increase understanding of crime-recording and its importance.

We were pleased to find that the force had completed all the recommendations from our 2014 report and from the 2014 national action plan.

## **Conclusion**

The force has made excellent progress in improving its crime recording standards since our 2014 inspection.

The leadership shown has created a cultural change regarding the importance of crime recording among officers and staff. This has made sure that more victims receive the service which they are entitled to and have access to support and safeguarding where required.

## **What next?**

We welcome the steps taken by West Yorkshire Police to improve its crime-recording arrangements. We expect the force to continue to make progress and to build on its improvements made so far. We will monitor this progress.

As with all forces, we may carry out another unannounced crime data integrity inspection of this force at any time.