

Crime Data Integrity – Devon & Cornwall Police Force report

August 2014

Background

The HMIC report 'Crime recording: a matter of fact' was published in April 2014. It described the early results of the inspection into the way that police forces record crime data. This interim report was limited to the findings following inspection of 13 forces including Devon & Cornwall. The report published in August built on this early report and provided a revised view of crime data integrity in Devon & Cornwall after inspections had been undertaken in all 43 forces. **The data presented in the report is not statistically significant at force level and so can at best only be taken to be indicative at force level.**

Overall the national report provides a fairly damning view of the reliability and validity of the way that the police service records crime data. This supports the findings of the recent Public Affairs Select Committee and the removal of the national statistics kite mark from police crime data by the Office for National statistics.

The following response is provided in respect of both reports.

Police & Crime Commissioners Response

I welcome the report describing the results of Her Majesty of Inspectorates inspection of the extent that police-recorded crime information can be trusted in Devon & Cornwall.

I was pleased to see that the report noted positive efforts by Devon and Cornwall Police to provide effective leadership and governance on this issue which was evident in the understanding and decision making of officers and staff.

I am committed to supporting this emphasis on strong leadership and the development of a more victim-led understanding of crime. In my most recent Police & Crime Plan I have removed performance targets focusing instead on the quality of the service provided to the public of Devon & Cornwall.

I was pleased that the report endorsed many of the approaches and processes already in place in Devon & Cornwall including direct crime processes which reduce delays in recording reports of offences and the use of a central crime recording unit to deliver better consistency in crime recording.

I note the recommendations contained within the report and will be monitoring the progress that Devon & Cornwall Police make against these over the coming months. In particular I will be starting an independent programme of scrutiny of the use of out of court disposals, which should provide additional reassurance to the public of Devon & Cornwall.

A number of changes have already been implemented by the police to address some of the concerns, especially in identifying and supporting the needs of the victim and especially where vulnerability is a concern. Nonetheless there is clearly further work

to do and I shall be working closely with the Chief Constable to ensure that we continue to ensure accurate and timely recording of crime in Devon & Cornwall.