

Joint Inspection of the Investigation and prosecution of Fatal Road Traffic Incidents

February 2015

Background

The joint thematic inspection of road death investigation and prosecution was conducted by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSP) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). The main purpose of the inspection was to provide assurance that the investigation and prosecution of fatal road traffic incidents (FRTIs) are of high quality.

The inspection included case review of police of CPS files on road deaths, interviews with police, prosecutors, and others in the judiciary as well as campaigners, and a survey of bereaved families. Six police/CPS areas **including Devon and Cornwall** (Durham, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire and London) were visited. In each area 12 cases files were reviewed. In addition a further two files were reviewed where the decision was not to prosecute.

In summary the review assessed:

- The quality of decision making
- The impact of budget cuts on the police
- The service provided to the bereaved families
- The effectiveness of police training
- Collaboration between the police, CPS, coroner and with community / campaign groups and identify good practice.

Police & Crime Commissioners Response

I welcome the report describing the results of HMCPSP and HMIC joint inspection. I am pleased to see that overall, police investigations of fatal road traffic incidents are both thorough and professional.

I was particularly encouraged that inspectors found the performance of police staff generally good and often excellent in their service to bereaved families. I commend the dedication and commitment shown by Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) who perform a sensitive role in assuring both victims and the public.

In relation to budget cuts, the review found little evidence that this had negatively impacted on the investigation of road deaths. I am encouraged by this finding and reassured that this position will continue to be closely monitored by the police.

Despite the positive commentary, it is clear that more could be done to improve the standard of investigations and evidence gathering.

I note the recommendations contained within the report and will be monitoring the progress against them. They are aimed at improving and standardising the training of all road death investigation officers and especially senior investigating officers and family liaison officers; recognising and supporting the family liaison role, and reassuring both victims' families and the public that a road death investigation is not treated as in any way less important than any other homicide.