

Have you got what it takes?

Working with Her Majesty's Inspectorate
of Constabulary (HMIC)



Have you got what it takes?

Working with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has a critical role in the new policing landscape and is responsible for 'shining a light on issues of national and strategic importance'. HMIC is in the unique position to inform both the public and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) on the performance of individual forces, in comparison to the performance of all other forces, and challenging those areas of national and strategic importance to support the entirety of police activity.

Being both independent of the government and the police, the 2011 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act strengthened the Inspectorate as an independent body and included:

- powers of entry
- powers of direct access to information
- powers to be commissioned by the PCC to look into specific areas

The Policing and Crime Bill includes a number of provisions relating to HMIC. The package of measures includes:

- An extension of HMIC's remit to include:

b) inspection of PCC staff that are employed to support the force and are therefore delivering policing functions.

- Giving HMIC the power to acquire information from third parties for the purposes of an inspection, including private contractors and PCCs, specifying the format in which it is to be presented, and to gain access to relevant people and premises (some bodies, including the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office are excluded);
- A requirement for PCCs to respond to HMIC reports within 56 days, for their response to address each recommendation, and for them to copy their responses to the Inspectorate;
- A power for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) to initiate inspections between inspections programmes, subject to consultation;
- A power for HMCIC (rather than the Home Secretary) to appoint Assistant Inspectors of Constabulary.

a) inspection of private contractors who are engaged to support the police force and are therefore delivering policing functions; and

Background

HMIC's role and remit

HMIC is charged in statute with inspecting and reporting on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces in England and Wales. As well as the 43 police forces, HMIC is also responsible for inspecting the following: the British Transport Police (BTP); National Crime Agency (NCA); Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC); Police Service of Northern Ireland; Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) and the Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency. The Inspectorate ensures standards are achieved, good practice is spread, performance is improved and the public are engaged and assured.

HMIC operates in the public interest. Its remit includes:

- monitoring and reporting annually on the efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of police forces, making the findings and judgments available to the public and PCCs to support effective accountability;
- inspecting high profile thematic issues of national interest such as police integrity, child protection and stop and search. Inspection findings are communicated to the public through HMIC's website and the media;

- escalating serious performance concerns to PCCs and to Ministers, and advising the Home Secretary on the performance of individual forces and thematic issues spanning the Service as a whole;
- developing a substantial programme of joint inspections with other bodies – in particular the Criminal Justice Inspectorates and Ofsted – focusing on cross cutting issues such as protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people;
- in addition to inspecting the 43 police forces in England and Wales, having statutory responsibility to inspect other constabularies as well as inspecting HMRC and the NCA;
- inspecting, by invitation, the police forces in Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar; and
- HMCIC providing their professional judgement in the event that a PCC decides to dismiss a chief constable.

Monitoring force performance

The Inspectorate plays a critical role in the current policing landscape.

All HMIC work is made public (subject to national security considerations), providing an independent view of the effectiveness of the local police force. The PCC, police and crime panel, chief constable and Home Secretary are the key recipients of HMIC's core inspection work, and HMIC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

HMIC has moved to inspecting all forces every year, known as the PEEL (Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy) programme, to ensure that information is available to support proper accountability. Further detail will be available in the Inspectorate's 2016/17 Inspection Programme and Framework.

HMIC also publishes information on Value for Money. The Value for Money profiles, produced annually by HMIC, cover the full range of police expenditure based on data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA), together with workforce and output data. These Profiles provide comparisons between forces and may be used as a basis for discussion between Inspectors and forces.

What if local accountability fails and the public are put at risk?

HMIC will continue to monitor forces and will, where necessary, escalate serious concerns about force performance to Ministers. The Home Secretary retains backstop powers to direct PCCs and chief constables to take action if they are failing to carry out their functions efficiently and effectively, in circumstances where not doing so would result in either the policing in the force area or national security failing.

Why was the PEEL programme developed?

Previously, HMIC undertook inspections of specific subjects or services, known as thematic inspections. Such inspections consider subjects in depth and provide detailed judgments in relation to specific aspects of policing. Even when the findings of thematic inspections are viewed together, they cannot provide a rounded assessment of every aspect of what police forces do.

The Home Secretary was keen to ensure that independent information was available to the public and PCCs to support effective accountability in policing, so she asked HMIC to develop a programme of annual all force inspections.

In response, HMIC developed the Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) programme. The effectiveness of a force is assessed in relation to how it carries out its responsibilities including cutting crime, protecting the vulnerable, tackling anti-social behaviour, and dealing with emergencies and other calls for service. Efficiency is assessed in relation to how a force provides value for money. Legitimacy is assessed in relation to whether a force operates fairly, ethically and within the law.