



HMIC Crime-recording: Making the Victim Count

November 2014

I welcome HMICs report into the integrity of crime data recording. I agree that accurate and measurable crime recording data is vitally important in terms of operational deployment of policing resources, ensuring that the public is getting the best possible value for money from its local police force.

This information forms a vital part of my regular performance accountability meetings with my Force and it is crucial to the priorities that are contained within my Police and Crime Plan. It is reassuring to learn that HMIC found little evidence of the misclassification of crime, with their audit finding that 96% of crime records were classified correctly, either at the time of recording or subsequently.

The failures that HMIC identified have been mainly attributed to lapses in leadership and supervision of officers and staff, and poor knowledge of and therefore adherence to the crime recording rules. Where failings have been identified it is clear that Forces have reacted well, particularly in Merseyside and Kent.

I recognise that there is a clear need for leadership from Chief Constables and other Force leaders to ensure that Officers and Staff are complying with crime recording data rules. I particularly welcome the recommendation from HMIC that the presumption the victim should always be believed as becoming institutional. It is clear in the past that serious failings have occurred in the past (CSE) because Forces have not taken the claims of victims seriously enough and that has to change.

Whilst I recognise that the recording of crime data is a politically sensitive issue and one in which policy is constantly evolving and changing due to changes in practice, it would be helpful if a longer term view of crime data could be pursued. This would give officers and staff more familiarity in complying with guidelines and make Forces performance easier for the public to interpret.

The constant changes in policy are not particular helpful to the public or the profession as a whole, having said that, I believe that policing has a long way to go before it becomes one of the leading industries in the analysis of performance data to support its daily operational activities.

The reason that I have invested heavily in my newly established Institute for Public Safety Crime and Justice is to offer an alternative from just performance measures like crime statistics alone and offer more of a narrative around the statistics themselves.

I want to work with the profession, the public and others to understand what causes offending in the first place, what measures we can put in place to reduce offending and measure the impact that this is having not only on recorded crime but perceptions of crime within our communities.

In conclusion, it is clear that the profession has a long way to go in better understanding data and ensuring its integrity. I will do everything that I can to hold the leadership of Northamptonshire Police accountable to this through my monthly performance and accountability meetings and work with HMIC and the Home Office where we believe PCCs can add value to this debate.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Simmonds', with a horizontal line underneath the signature.

Adam Simmonds
Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner