



## **Response to HMICFRS Homicide Prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide, August 2023**

**Link to report:** [Homicide Prevention \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

### **Key findings**

At the request of the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) included the topic of homicide prevention in their policing inspection programme and framework. Their inspection focused on eight police forces. They accounted for 37 percent (260) of the 696 homicides in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2022. They inspected: Gloucestershire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Merseyside Police, Metropolitan Police, South Yorkshire Police, Surrey Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police. HMICFRS reviewed data and documents. They conducted interviews and focus groups with police personnel NPCC police leaders, College of Policing staff, Home Office staff, police and crime commissioners, statutory partners including staff from local authorities, social services, and the NHS.

HMICFRS' report on Homicide Prevention identifies how most police forces inspected were able to identify the patterns and causes of homicide effectively and they were able to prioritise and allocate the right resources to tackle them. However, the inspectorate did conclude that some forces did not understand the homicide threat in their area, so did not effectively prevent homicide.

The inspectorate was pleased to find that in some forces there was clear and effective leadership of homicide prevention. However, some forces did not have this leadership, which led to a lack of co-ordination and collaboration in addressing the causes of homicide.

HMICFRS also found that forces are not able to assess and link less serious crimes or incidents so they can take action to prevent these crimes or incidents escalating to homicide. In addition to this they suggest that the Serious Violence Duty (SVD), which aims to improve how information is shared between police, local services, and councils to prevent serious crime, is a missed opportunity. This being as it is unclear to the police how other agencies will be held to account for failing to share information with them.

During HMICFRS' inspection, they looked at how forces used the homicide prevention framework (HPF). The framework was developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council after the College of Policing requested forces share how they were preventing homicide. The HPF relies on forces engaging with it, but many did not contribute. They used the framework to different degrees. The inspectorate found that forces that used more of the HPF prevention techniques were generally more effective at preventing crime.

HMICFRS' report stipulates that they found that some forces failed to allocate resources to manage their lists of potentially dangerous people who had been identified by analysts and other personnel.

### **Response**

This report entitled "Homicide Prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide" by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) examined whether the eight police forces inspected had a good understanding about the homicide threat in their area, and therefore if they were able to have an effective contribution towards the prevention of homicides. HMICFRS found that most of the police forces they inspected were able to identify the patterns and causes of homicide effectively, and they were able to prioritise and allocate the right resources to tackle them, but this was not the case for all forces.

Whilst Suffolk Constabulary was not one of the eight police forces inspected, HMICFRS' findings have resulted in two recommendations being made to all forces and Chief Constables across England and Wales. Suffolk Constabulary accepts both recommendations.

The Constabulary's joint Protective Services Command has reviewed the forces' current position against each recommendation and where necessary, a plan has been developed to achieve the standards outlined, within the timescales set by HMICFRS.

## **Recommendation 2**

By 31 August 2024, Chief Constables in England and Wales should devise an approach to make sure their force can, on a sufficiently frequent basis, produce an analytical report concerning its death investigations. This will help the force to:

- better understand the pattern of death reports across the force area, drawing on force data and information gathered by other organisations, including the NHS and local authorities; and
- identify any linked series of death reports.

*Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have already produced a problem profile for Homicide and near-miss Homicide, covering the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022. With our Protective Services Major Investigations Team being a joint department across both force areas, this report includes data for both counties and provides a combined force picture and narrative. To ensure that we meet the requirements of this recommendation, this model will be extended in the future to include all death investigations and will draw data from both police forces and from other organisations, in line with the partnership working requirements set out in the Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance. The data gathered will be subject to analytical review for the regular publication of reports.*

## **Recommendation 3**

By 1 December 2023, Chief Constables should make sure their force can quickly identify lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents. The process should be capable of involving partner organisations when appropriate, so that lessons can be learned more widely.

*Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have already undertaken a benchmarking exercise with Essex Constabulary, who as a pilot force, have implemented and tested Rapid Reviews for homicide and serious violence incidents, which includes the involvement of partner agencies where appropriate. To ensure that we meet the requirements of this recommendation, the findings of this benchmarking exercise will be assessed against the current provision of our Joint Major Crime Review Team, who are responsible for the review and publication of learning and best practice from homicide and other complex investigations and will be presented to the Head of Joint Major Crime and Chief Officers for both forces in due course.*