



## **Response to HMICFRS Race and Policing: An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making, August 2023**

**Link to report:** [Race and policing: An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/reports-and-publications/race-and-policing-an-inspection-of-race-disparity-in-police-criminal-justice-decision-making/)

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) undertook a national thematic inspection to examine whether there is race disparity in police criminal justice decisions.

This report entitled "Race and Policing: An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making" (HMICFRS) is one of a programme of reviews being conducted by HMICFRS into race and policing. It follows a recommendation made by the Home Affairs Select Committee in July 2021, in a report summarising progress on the recommendations of the 1999 Macpherson report, for HMICFRS to carry out thematic reviews of race and policing to provide scrutiny of the police service response. The overarching question for the race and policing programme is: how effectively are the police responding to race-based inequalities and disparities that negatively affect community confidence?

The inspection focused on decisions made during criminal justice processes that affect individuals who are the subject of criminal investigations. For the purposes of the inspection, 'criminal justice processes' mean those activities that take place after the police have decided that a criminal act may have taken place.

HMICFRS began their inspection by asking all forces to complete a survey. The inspectorate then developed the criteria and indicators for the inspection.

HMICFRS carried out force fieldwork in two phases. Phase one consisted of interviews and focus groups in five forces. These were Hampshire Constabulary, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gwent Police, Northamptonshire Police and Staffordshire Police.

In phase two HMICFRS carried out a case file review in the same five forces as well as Merseyside Police. The inspectorate asked these six forces to give them information about a range of offences that had been recorded between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, and decisions made in relation to them. The inspectorate decided to choose the following offences for review:

- Arrest
- Voluntary attendance (often used as an alternative to arrest)
- Community resolution (Home Office crime outcome type 8)
- Caution
- Charge (police only decision)
- Post-charge bail.

The fieldwork forces provided HMICFRS with information about a total of 22,624 relevant crimes that had been recorded between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. HMICFRS conducted analysis of these records, then they randomly selected 1,470 for their case file review.

In many cases, the inspectorate found clear differences between the experiences of people from different ethnic backgrounds.

## **Suffolk Constabulary Response**

HMICFRS' findings have resulted in 13 recommendations in total, with four of these being made to all forces and Chief Constables across England and Wales. Suffolk Constabulary accepts all of these recommendations.

The Constabulary's Joint Justice Command has reviewed the force's 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 6**

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that forces carry out comprehensive analysis of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making. Where this analysis indicates that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are disproportionately affected, police forces should explain, or revise, their ways of working.

*This recommendation includes analysis relating to arrests, voluntary attendance, community resolutions, cautions, charge, and post-charge bail. Some analysis of racial disparity has been completed by our Joint Strategic Business and Operational Services (SBOS) department. This recommendation will be taken forward by our Head of Joint Justice Services Command, who has commissioned a review to determine whether the analysis that is already being undertaken is sufficient to meet the first part of this recommendation. Depending on the outcome of this review, further analytical work may need to be commissioned. When we have a sufficiently developed product, it will be subject to review and scrutiny in line with Recommendation 10, and should any disproportionality be identified in relation to people from ethnic minority backgrounds, we undertake to provide an explanation or if necessary, to revise our ways of working.*

### **Recommendation 8**

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information from the Youth Justice Board summary disproportionality toolkit relevant to the force area is included in their force's analysis of police criminal justice disparity.

*The Head of Joint Justice Services Command is currently working with Suffolk Constabulary's representative on the Suffolk Youth Justice Board (YJB) to identify the availability of data that can be fed into an analytical product. This data will be incorporated into the race disparity analysis that will be produced by our Strategic Business and Operational Services (SBOS) department in accordance with Recommendation 6.*

### **Recommendation 10**

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that work takes place with communities, police and crime commissioners, and other agencies to establish or build on arrangements for the scrutiny of police criminal justice disparity.

*Suffolk Constabulary is in the process of recruiting for a Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Panel. This Panel will work alongside our established Gold Group to monitor our progress against the PRAP objectives.*

*Each of the PRAP workstreams has been allocated to strategic leads, and we have recently commenced a data capture exercise to benchmark our performance in a number of areas (including Criminal Justice) to identify areas of disparity that may exist.*

*Suffolk Constabulary has developed a maturity matrix (self-assessment tool) to measure its progression against all key PRAP objectives outlined in the National Police Race Action Plan. As part of workstream 4 of the PRAP which focuses on 'A police service that protects Black people from crime and seeks justice for*

*Black people', we are tracking activity against a range of areas including the service provided to Black victims.*

### **Recommendation 11**

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information about criminal justice disparity is published on force websites, or that force websites clearly link to other websites where this information can be found. Published information should include any explanations for identified disparity and actions forces will take to address it.

*This recommendation will be delivered once the Constabulary has had the opportunity to progress the actions required to achieve recommendations 6, 8 and 10. When we have a fully developed police criminal justice disparity analytical product (informed by Youth Justice Board disproportionality data), which is subject to scrutiny by appropriate forums, we will then be in a position to publish the data, publish our findings, and publish our actions on the Constabulary website. Alternatively, should we agree with our partners that it would be better to publish this information on any other website, we will provide a clear link to it from our own website.*