

The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London

Our ref:TP/VS

19 January 2022

Dear Home Secretary

RE: HMICFRS - An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this thematic inspection. Suffolk Constabulary has provided an initial update on the recommendations which impact individual forces, which is attached and will be published on my website.

Yours sincerely



Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

Subject	Digital forensics: An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations
Date	21 st December 2022
Purpose	To provide Suffolk Constabulary's response to recommendations made in the above report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
Prepared by	Det Ch Supt David Cutler
Commissioned by	DCC Rob Jones

Suffolk Constabulary welcomes the report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services into how well police and other agencies use digital forensics.

Digital devices be it mobile phones, tablets, storage devices or others are part of a significant number of criminal investigations and the information held on them must be retrieved, processed, and presented in a way that is accurate, timely and can demonstrate integrity of the data at every stage. The demand related to digital forensics continues to grow.

Suffolk Constabulary's Digital Forensics unit (DFU) is a collaborated unit with Norfolk Constabulary. There are other Suffolk specific resources within local policing that also work within the world of digital forensics and there has been significant force investment in this area. The Constabulary recognises the importance of this area of policing and continues to develop its capacity and capability. Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies have commenced a project to look at how digital forensics is best managed across both forces and, as is discussed within the below recommendations, this will look at a wide range of issues associated with digital forensic work.

In relation to the recommendations that are specifically aimed at Police Forces:

Recommendation 2

By December 2023, each force in England and Wales should develop a governance and oversight framework to better understand the local demand for digital forensics.

There is already a mechanism in place to look at demand on the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) and performance against this demand through Command level and force level performance boards. It is accepted that digital forensic demand is much wider than this. Whilst this approach is more based on the short to medium term the implementation of the Digital Forensics project across both Norfolk and Suffolk will look at the longer-term prediction of demand and how force assets and processes can be best used to manage this. Within this project both a strategic and tactical level board will provide the governance and oversight as suggested in the recommendation and will look at the totality of demand across all commands.

Recommendation 4

By September 2023, the National Police Chiefs' Council and all forces within England and Wales need to include the management of digital forensic kiosks in their governance and oversight frameworks.

A specific operational board was set up to manage the use of digital forensic kiosks across both Norfolk and Suffolk. There is considerable demand for expansion of this technology as a result of the

widespread involvement of mobile phones and tablets in every-day life. There has already been discussion that the Digital Forensic project articulated above will take on the responsibility for the governance and oversight of this issue. The project will include Quality Management representation to ensure consideration of future accreditation standards.

Recommendation 8

By November 2024, Chief Constables should integrate digital forensic services under their existing forensic science structure.

Again, it will be through the Digital Forensic Board and project that the structures and underpinning processes for the management of digital forensics are considered and agreed. Norfolk (and Suffolk) have a distinct Quality Management Team managing UKAS accreditation across both wet and digital forensics, this team reports directly to the Head of Protective Services so ensuring independence. The force predicts the continuing increase in demand from digital forensics and will ensure that the alignment of resources and governance is best suited to provide the highest levels of service to both forces.