Cumbria Office of Police and Crime Commissioner

**Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections of Cumbria Constabulary published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

*Section 33 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days.*

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| **Inspection Title:**  | Policing in the pandemic – The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020 &Custody Services in a Covid-19 Environment |
| **Date Published:** | 20th April 2021 |
| **Type of Inspection:** | National Inspection |
| **Key Findings**  |
| HMICFRS Inspection ‘Policing in the pandemic – The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020’ presents a snapshot of policing in the pandemic between March and November 2020. This inspection was carried out remotely, using online video technology, to provide information useful to policing as it responded to the pandemic. The evidence HMICFRS gathered will inform their continuous assessment of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and other inspection work, including their thematic reports. HMICFRS will also review force management statements to see how forces are planning to use resources differently.While HMICFRS made several recommendations following this inspection, it praised the police service for how well it has responded to the difficult circumstances presented by the pandemic. Their response was in the best traditions of the police service.* HMICFRS Inspection ‘Custody services in a Covid-19 Environment’ supplements the above inspection and provide more detailed findings on how custody services operated in a Covid-19 environment, increase the police service’s national and local understanding of how custody services operate in a COVID-19 environment;
* show how services have been/are affected and how police forces are responding; and
* establish what improvements forces and the wider Criminal Justice System can make.

In this report, HMICFRS made further recommendations relevant to the police service.  |
| **Recommendations:** To help policing in its continuing response to the pandemic, HMICFRS made five recommendations in its ‘Policing in the pandemic – The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020’, which they will assess the progress against in their future inspection work:* Managing registered sex offenders - Forces must immediately make sure that officers understand and correctly implement the guidance for managing registered sex offenders during the pandemic.
* Legislation & guidance - Forces must immediately make sure they can manage their responses to changes in coronavirus-related legislation. They must ensure frontline officers and staff are clear about the difference between legislation and guidance.
* Test, track and trace - Forces must immediately put in place a policy to make sure that they follow the guidance and self-isolation directions when members of the workforce come into contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms.
* Custody records - Forces must immediately make sure that they clearly and consistently record on custody records information about how/when/if detainees are informed of the temporary changes to how they can exercise their rights to legal advice and representation. The record must make clear how any consents are obtained about the way in which legal advice and representation are provided.
* Overall scale & impact of changes - Within six months, forces must assess the sustainability of any temporary measures introduced during the pandemic that change the way they work. They must understand positive, negative and unintended consequences of the scale and impact of the changes before determining if any of these new ways of working should continue.

HMICFRS also made two recommendation to help national bodies in their continuing response to the pandemic.In its ‘Custody Services in a Covid-19 Environment inspection’, HMICFRS made the following recommendations:* Track the numbers of detainees with, or suspected of having, COVID-19.
* Record and monitor the length of time detainees remain in police custody, and any additional detention times due to waits for virtual remand hearings.
* Record and monitor the way in which detainees receive their legal rights, and how many receive them by virtual means rather than a solicitor attending in person.
* Record the use of bail and released under investigation and assess any increases in pre-charge bail.
* The police service should evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using virtual remand hearings. It should use this information to help the wider Criminal Justice System learn from its experience and develop better working arrangements that meet the needs of justice and make best use of public money.
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| **PCC & Chief Constable Response to Report and Recommendation:** |
| The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria said “During the pandemic I have held the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary’s policing response to this unprecedented and challenging time. Through my Public Accountability Conferences (PAC), I have received assurance that the Constabulary has sufficient resource to respond to Covid-19, whilst also maintaining the vital and proactive policing service it delivers every day.“In addition, my Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) have continued to hold weekly telephone visits to all custody suites, enabling them to have direct contact with detainees to check on their welfare and wellbeing whilst they are detained. Any identified issues are discussed with the Custody Sergeant.“I welcome the two reports recently published by HMICFRS and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account against the recommendations made in these inspection report. I am confident that the Chief Constable is well positioned to complete the required actions.”The Chief Constable for Cumbria said “It has been an extraordinary year for policing, and I am very proud of the work my officers and staff, and partners have done to keep the communities of Cumbria safe, as well as keeping their families and themselves safe. They have been at the forefront of good practice for dealing with the pandemic. “Like the Police & Crime Commissioner, I too welcome the HMICFRS inspection reports as this will help us to continue to ensure the safety of the public and detainees. I will continue to provide the Commissioner with assurance against these recommendations through our formal Accountability Framework.” |