



# **HMIC's approach to monitoring forces in England and Wales**

© HMIC 2012

[www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

# Contents

Introduction	3
The HMIC Risk Construct	4
HMIC's Approach to Monitoring	5

## Introduction

This document sets out the approach Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) takes to monitoring the police forces of England and Wales.<sup>1</sup>

The monitoring of forces is integral to the *HMIC Inspection Framework and Plan 2012/13*.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Home Secretary has advised Parliament that HMIC will monitor forces and escalate serious concerns to ministers;<sup>3</sup> and HMIs have a statutory duty to keep abreast of complaints and misconduct.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This includes 42 of the 43 Home Office-funded police forces, but excludes the City of London Police (who remain accountable through the local police authority) and national forces such as the British Transport Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

<sup>2</sup> Available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Home Secretary 23/05/2011, Hansard, C716.

<sup>4</sup> Police Reform Act 2002, Section 15.

# The HMIC Risk Construct

The HMIC Risk Construct sets out the purpose of monitoring, and how we will go about doing it.

## The purpose of monitoring

Monitoring enables HMIC to identify those areas which, in its professional judgement, might present significant risks to the public.

Monitoring will inform our risk-based inspection programme.

HMIC will escalate serious concerns about performance to ministers and, from November 2012, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

## How HMIC will monitor forces

### 1. Performance

HMIC will judge whether we have “serious concerns”, independently and professionally, following a consideration of performance in the following areas:

1. Efficiency and / or effectiveness (see below).
2. The extent to which the police recognise that there is a problem.
3. The prospect that the police will succeed in tackling the problem (taking account, for example, of their capacity and capability).
4. Whether the problem is likely to be short-lived or enduring.

In considering these issues, HMIC will draw on a wide range of existing data, information provided by forces, inspection findings and any response from the authority (or, from November 2012, the PCC).

### 2. Efficiency and effectiveness

HMIC will consider efficiency and effectiveness using the following criteria:

#### Effectiveness:

- **Crime & Public Protection** – if a systemic failure exposes the public to serious harm in cases where mitigation was expected.
- **Legitimacy** – if a systemic failure undermines the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public.

**Efficiency:** if financial or resourcing decisions that impair the crime-fighting capability or sustainability of the service, or mean that the public are not getting a good deal for their money.

### 3. Criteria for escalation

**HMIC will escalate serious concerns about performance to ministers and, from November 2012, PCCs.**

HMIC envisage that a “serious concern” would need to be both severe (posing significantly higher risks for the public) and enduring (extending beyond two consecutive quarters of a year).

These criteria will only be met in exceptional circumstances. Since 2010, for example, while there have been some rises and falls in crime, HMIC has not escalated any “serious concerns” to ministers.

## HMIC's approach to monitoring

Monitoring enables HMIC to focus its resources on those areas that appear to present the greatest risk, so optimising the return on the investment in the Inspectorate.

### ***The information HMIC will use in monitoring forces***

HMIC's professional judgement will be informed by:

- Data and other evidence (such as inspection findings<sup>5</sup>), looking at change over time and differences between forces. Comparisons of the core data set we will use are available to the public, the Service and PCCs at <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/> and are updated quarterly. HMIC may from time to time draw on additional data sources.
- Research on what concerns the public.
- Consultation with police authorities (PCCs from November 2012) and chief officers.
- Consultation with HMIC's Crime and Policing Monitoring Group. This includes representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Home Office, and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). HMIC also occasionally consults other bodies, such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

### ***How monitoring will inform HMIC inspections***

Monitoring will inform HMIC's risk-based inspection programme.<sup>6</sup>

In all but exceptional circumstances, HMIC will only inspect if commissioned to do so by the Home Secretary or (from November 2012) a PCC. In exceptional circumstances, we may also inspect if we judge that it is in the public interest to do so; we have done this in the past, but infrequently.

As HMIC's inspection programme must be approved by the Home Secretary, any new inspection that would alter an approved programme would need to be agreed in consultation with the Home Secretary.

HMIC will publish inspection reports and provide copies to PCCs, forces and the Home Secretary. PCCs have an obligation in the 2011 Act to prepare comments on HMIC reports and arrange for these to be published.

<sup>5</sup> This includes inspections of police force partners undertaken by other inspectorates or auditors working alone or jointly with HMIC.

<sup>6</sup> Outlined in more detail in the *HMIC Inspection Framework and Plan 2012/13*, available at [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

### ***HMIC's commitment to avoiding unnecessary burdens on forces and authorities / PCCs***

HMIC's risk-based approach to inspection also seeks to reduce the burden on forces.

In identifying those areas that might be considered for inspection, HMIC will review a wide range of information – not a small set of pre-defined performance indicators which, it has been said, led to perverse incentives.

HMIC will not be setting any targets (explicitly or implicitly), expected levels of performance, or standards.

Through monitoring and inspection, HMIC provides independent professional assessments which *inform* forces, the public and their elected representatives. HMIC will not be involved in the *management* of police performance, which is rather a matter for chief constables.

We will minimise the impact on forces by increasing the time spent on desk-top inspection (so reducing on-site activity), and by seeking data that we would expect to be already available for management purposes, collected where possible through existing data collection arrangements.

Wherever possible, we will use information that is already provided by forces to organisations such as the Home Office and CIPFA<sup>7</sup>. Where we need additional information from forces, we will endeavour to balance the timing of our requests with the need to ensure that our reports are topical, relevant and independent.

### ***HMIC's commitment to keeping forces and authorities / PCCs informed***

HMIC is adopting a principle of 'no surprises'. In practice this means:

- Home Office officials and representatives of ACPO and the APA will be kept informed through quarterly meetings. HMIC does not plan to publish the papers and minutes of these meetings, in order to prevent attendees from feeling inhibited from having a free and frank exchange of views.
- HMIC will keep authorities / PCCs and chief constables informed by issuing this document<sup>8</sup> to them, and subsequently through quarterly contact by their regional HMI – in person or by letter. Those forces subject to inspection will be advised of this in advance. HMIs will inform forces and authorities / PCCs of monitoring and inspection findings and of whether they have any serious concerns.

### ***HMIC's commitment to transparency***

HMIC will keep the public informed by publishing (1) this document on its website; (2) the core monitoring data (Crime and Policing Comparator);<sup>9</sup> and (3) inspection reports.

<sup>7</sup> The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy.

<sup>8</sup> "HMIC's approach to monitoring forces in England and Wales"

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/>