

## Cheshire PCCs Response to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

<b>Title of Inspection</b>	Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system	
<b>Date Inspection Published</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Thematic – Partner Agencies	
<b>Recommendations</b>	National	x
	Local	

### Report Summary:

This was a joint inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), His Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation). In this inspection, it was assessed whether the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Probation Service understand what victims need, whether their needs are met and whether a good quality service is provided. However, it was found that for many victims this wasn’t the case.

The police and the CPS recognise the importance of providing a good service for victims of crime but too often high workloads and competing demands meant they couldn’t invest the time and attention needed at every stage of a case.

The police, the CPS and the Probation Service all have policies, procedures and guidance in place that have been drafted to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (the Victims’ Code) but they weren’t always followed, and officers and staff didn’t have the skills and knowledge to give a good service.

Instead of trying to meet the needs of victims, the three bodies focused on whether they complied with the 12 rights set out in the Victims’ Code. This focus on complying with the letter of the Victims’ Code, rather than the victim’s individual needs, has resulted in an emphasis on process rather than quality. Compliance with the 12 rights also varied.

A lack of good-quality information and poor communication between criminal justice bodies added to the problems of an already overstretched criminal justice system and criminal justice bodies need to work more collaboratively and focus on

the quality of their contact with victims and not just on the process.

**Recommendations:**

By 31 December 2024, the College of Policing should work with the National Police Chiefs' Council and chief constables to develop minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments. These should include standards for timeliness of completion and clarity on the information to be recorded.

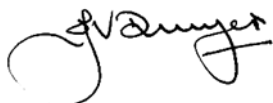
**Commissioner's Response:**

I have been reassured by the Constabulary that they will look to implement the minimum standards for the completion of victim needs assessments as soon as they have been established by the College of Policing.

Ahead of this, and in line with an ambition to provide an outstanding police service work is underway to improve in this area. In addition to the mandatory training provided by the College of Policing, the Constabulary have provided extra training to supervisors on the importance of completing victim needs assessments to the required standard and in a timely manner. In the spirit of continuous performance improvement, Chief Officers have fast-tracked the development of a new power BI app in order to mainstream the reporting of compliance with this and other victim rights into the 'Raising the Bar' performance framework.

Through the Local Criminal Justice Board which I chair, I am working with partners across the criminal justice system to develop mechanisms to monitor victim code compliance, and prepare all agencies in respect of their duties arising out of the Victim & Prisoners Bill. I am also keen to explore ways in which we can work within that legislation to look at how we can better co-commission services for victims.

Alongside the good work being done by the Constabulary, I am proud of my achievements in commissioning services for victims of crime. These services are wide reaching and whilst not a replacement for the work of criminal justice partners, offer ways for victims to cope and recover from their experiences.



**John Dwyer**

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire**