

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

Title of Inspection	Homicide prevention: An inspection of the police contribution to the prevention of homicide.	
Date Inspection Published	11 August 2023	
Type of Inspection	Thematic	
	Cheshire Specific	No
	Cheshire Quoted	No
Recommendations	National	Yes
	Local	

Report Summary

The Government has set a target of reducing homicide nationally by 20 percent.

The report states that most forces can identify patterns and causes of homicide effectively, but there were concerns that some forces did not understand the homicide threat in their area.

It also refers to there being too much emphasis on the links between homicide and drugs, which has been attributed to challenges in data collection. Furthermore, the gap in analytical capability which is preventing effective understanding of homicide threats often giving insufficient regard to potentially linked incidents.

Concluding that the police alone cannot tackle homicide in isolation, the need for agencies to share data and recognise the importance of doing so in an efficient and cooperative manner is a mindset that needs to change.

Recommendations:

By 31 August 2024, chief constables in England and Wales should devise an approach to make sure their force can, on a sufficiently frequent basis, produce an analytical report concerning its death investigations. This will help the force to:

- better understand the pattern of death reports across the force area, drawing on force data and information gathered by other organisations, including the

NHS and local authorities; and

- identify any linked series of death reports.

In line with the Homicide Prevention Strategy, published in 2022, and to better understand data and to be able to identify patterns, analysis has been conducted looking at homicides and near misses conducted in Cheshire over a 7-year period.

The Constabulary has also hosted a homicide prevention exercise with strategic leads from all identified causation factors. There is commitment in the Constabulary to continue to engage with partners to build on this approach and to ensure compliance with the recommendation.

By 1 December 2023, chief constables should make sure their force can quickly identify lessons from homicides and serious violence incidents. The process should be capable of involving partner organisations when appropriate, so that lessons can be learned more widely.

In line with Authorised Professional Practice, the Constabulary will continue to identify effective practice and organisational learning through the completion of major crime and safeguarding reviews. In addition to this, the Constabulary has introduced a homicide prevention rapid debrief process to identify and apply learning quicker in order to prevent future homicides or near misses. Because rapid debriefs run parallel to ongoing investigations, it means that there is no wait until the post-trial / conviction debriefs which could be over a year or more down the line.

Commissioner's response

Homicide is a truly atrocious crime with devastating consequences. Not only destroying lives of those directly affected, more widely the impact of homicide can shake the foundations of communities leaving their sense of personal safety decimated and community tensions high.

I was pleased to receive the report and have discussed it with the Chief Constable. Whilst the homicide rate in Cheshire is low, we both are aligned that there is never an acceptable threshold. I am confident the Constabulary is cognisant to the threats that have potential to escalate into more serious incidents. Furthermore, of the three tragic cases seen in Cheshire in the last 12 months, offenders have been swiftly identified and removed from causing further harm achieving justice for victims and alleviating community concerns.

My Police and Crime Plan shows the importance I place on homicide prevention with clear focus on preventing violent crime, including knife crime and the disruption of serious and organised crime. What has been clear in my scrutiny of the Constabulary's approach to Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is how the Constabulary are acutely aware that domestic incidents and stalking offences can predicate homicide. Because there has been a robust approach to Domestic Abuse (DA), with attention on prompt attendance to incidents and a significant increase in arrests I am without doubt that this has been instrumental in preventing serious harm.

The report is correct in noting that homicide prevention is not a matter for the police in isolation. Aggravating factors can surface within other agencies, and work being done by my office with partners through the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) is an area that is addressing this. I intend to continue funding the posts seconded to my office linked to this activity for a further twelve months in order to achieve this aim. Under the SVD, there is work underway that will explore additional analytical software capability and focuses on partnership data

through collaboration. This includes an ongoing project with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to obtain data extracts relating to violence.

I hope that from the work that is underway there is sufficient reassurance that the prevention of homicide and serious violence remains a priority for both myself and the Constabulary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dwyer'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'J' and a prominent 'D'.

John Dwyer

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire