



# **HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

## **Improving Policing across Scotland**

Thursday, September 3, 2015

### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **HMICS publishes Interim Report on Independent Assurance Review of Police Call Handling**

HMICS has published its Interim Report and emerging findings from the independent assurance review it is carrying out into police call handling.

It has made one interim recommendation for Police Scotland on the future direction for Contact, Command and Control (C3) facilities and details the areas it will now be focusing attention on over the coming weeks, prior to the publication of its full report at the end of October.

HMICS was asked to undertake this assurance review of capacity, capability and processes within Police Scotland's C3 facilities by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice following the tragic incident involving the deaths of John Yuill and Lamara Bell.

HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, Mr Derek Penman, said: "In this initial phase we have carried out extensive consultation and evidence gathering. We also spent time at six call centres across Scotland and found all staff to be strongly committed, often in challenging circumstances, to providing a good service to the public.

"They continue to do a good job and are showing considerable flexibility in their working practices in their efforts to meet call demand."

Mr Penman continued: "HMICS recognises the constraints placed upon Police Scotland as a result of staff shortages in Bilston Glen, Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee, but considers that the practice of diverting overflow calls to the main sites in Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen is creating additional risk.

“This will not be resolved until there is a full complement of trained staff supported by effective systems, processes and procedures in the main sites and we strongly believe that, until that is the case, the facilities in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee should remain in place.”

In its interim recommendation to Police Scotland, HMICS has said staffing, systems, procedures and processes in East and West service centres and area control rooms should be consolidated and stabilised. At the same time, detailed planning for the previously agreed final model should continue with consideration given to accelerating the recruitment of staff and early commissioning of the North area control room, in Dundee.

During the past month, HMICS has consulted widely with stakeholders, local authorities and the general public. Call centre staff were spoken with, management meetings have been observed, documents sourced and processes followed. This initial work has identified the key areas of interest for the second phase of the review.

These include overall workforce planning, risk management, staff communication and engagement, stability of ICT systems, training and the effective management of day to day operations and the delivery of major change. It will also focus on processes for the transfer of calls between service centres across the country.

Over 3800 people took part in the HMICS online questionnaire – 46% of whom were members of the public and 46% were employees of Police Scotland.

The information submitted through the questionnaire and via other means is currently being analysed as part of the second phase of the assurance review. HMICS will now follow up on specific information that has been provided around processes or the quality of service being provided to the public and use these examples to inform its findings and any recommendations within the final report.

Mr Penman added: “This Interim Report is not a complete set of findings, as our inspection activity is still ongoing and evidence continues to be collected and assessed to further inform our final report.

“Our final report will be available by the end of October and will provide assurance on whether or not call handling is working effectively and efficiently within Police Scotland and comment on the future plans for development of the national approach for Police Contact, Command and Control.”

HMICS gave its Interim Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Michael Mathieson, who today (Thursday, September 3, 2015) has laid it before the Scottish Parliament.

**Ends**

Note to Newsdesks:

The recommendation from the Interim Report is detailed below.

A copy of the Independent Assurance Review Police Call Handling – Interim Report is available to download from the HMICS website [www.hmics.org](http://www.hmics.org).

This review is independent of the investigation being undertaken by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) into this incident.

The background to the review, the objectives and methodology are outlined within the terms of Reference which was published on July 22, 2015 and is also available on the HMICS website [www.hmics.org](http://www.hmics.org).

## **Endsnote**

For further information, please contact:

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## **Interim Report Recommendation**

**HMICS recommends that Police Scotland should consolidate and stabilise their staffing, systems, procedures and processes in both the East and West service centres and area controls rooms. While this is being progressed, detailed planning for the previously agreed end-state model should continue, with consideration given to accelerating the recruitment of staff and early commissioning of the North Area Control Room.**

To support this recommendation, HMICS notes the following:

Contingency planning should deliver flexibility around the retention of service centre staff in Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee to ensure these centres are maintained and staffed appropriately until the other key elements of the end-state model are fully in place. This should minimise operational risk and reduction in the quality of service to the public should there be delays to the project. Should it be necessary to retain specific staff beyond 31 March 2016, the Scottish Police Authority should provide that any Voluntary Redundancy/Early Retirement offers are honoured.

Governance and independent assurance processes must also be put in place to guarantee that sustainable resourcing, systems, training and processes are fully tested and ready prior to any transfer of functionality from Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee.

Detailed and independently assured stage plans will be required to demonstrate the key milestones, dependencies and timescales to deliver the end-state model, including the relocation of services from Aberdeen, Inverness and Dundee.

HMICS notes that the consequences of any delay to the planned programme of delivery will have an impact on the achievement of savings and may result in additional risk. Police Scotland must at every stage evaluate the impact of such delays, provide assurance and seek appropriate approvals to manage this process. HMICS also notes that in order to effectively manage this change process and effectively learn the lessons from previous stage implementations, Police Scotland are likely to require to secure additional resources. This should be subject to the development of a business case and associated scrutiny and approval.