



HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland **Improving Policing across Scotland**

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

HMICS Publish Inspection of Local Policing in Dumfries and Galloway

Police officers and staff in Dumfries and Galloway have a strong sense of local identity and work hard to provide an efficient and effective service to their communities, says a report published today (17th May 2016).

The report by HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland found that crimes rates in the Dumfries and Galloway Division of Police Scotland are among the lowest in Scotland, while detections are the highest in the country.

Importantly for a very rural division, the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads also decreased by 30% and an initiative to support more mature drivers is highlighted as an example of good practice.

However there have been increases in all categories of offences, apart from serious violent incidents.

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Derek Penman said: "The trends in Dumfries and Galloway mirror the long term trends across the country of decreasing crime and rising detection. Although there are signs these positive national trends may be slowing or reversing in Dumfries and Galloway, the area is still one of the safest in Scotland in which to live and the likelihood of offenders being brought to justice is greater there than in most other areas.

"The communities across Dumfries and Galloway should be assured that the division is aware of the issues and is taking steps to address them."

The HMICS Local Policing Inspection of Dumfries and Galloway Division, which contains four recommendations, is the latest in the rolling programme under which all 13 local policing divisions of Police Scotland will be inspected to assess their state, effectiveness and efficiency.

The inspection team found there is a strong sense of local identity in Dumfries and Galloway, not only among police officers and staff but also across the local communities. As a result, the impact of some of the changes resulting from the reform of policing in Scotland may have been more keenly felt by those who live and work in the division.

HMICS found the division has a good approach to partnership working and has developed local solutions to address a wide range of issues. In particular, it welcomes the approach to school based initiatives saying they assist in keeping young people safe.

The area has an ageing population with around one third aged 60 years and over. Analysis of road collisions showed a rise in the number of injury crashes involving older people and, as a result, the division introduced a Mature Driver Scheme which gives free driver evaluation to those over the age of 70. Other examples of effective practice identified by HMICS are the communication of 'live-time' information to the public during emergency situations such as flooding; the management of violent offenders through a dedicated database; the matching of special constables with initiatives in which their skills can be best used; schools initiatives and the involvement of the local scrutiny sub-committee in the division's Continuous Improvement Group.

The report highlights that the introduction of local, regional and national policing units, which works well in compact, heavily populated areas of the country, does not operate as effectively or efficiently in an area with long lines of communication or travel on the periphery of the force area.

During its inspections of each local policing division, HMICS also reviews custody facilities as part of its ongoing role in the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to assess the treatment and conditions for those detained. Unannounced inspections took place at the main custody centres at Dumfries and Stranraer while the other eight ancillary custody units were also visited.

The custody centres are well managed and the detainees commented positively on their treatment. Three recommendations were made for Police Scotland's Custody Division relating to the monitoring of time immigration detainees spend in police custody and the future of some of the ancillary custody units.

The inspectors also commented on the resourcing of police custody centres where any gaps in staffing are filled by officers from the local division. This impacts on resources for local policing and HMICS has said it is essential the two divisions work together to address this issue.

Due to the extensive rural nature of the division, its boundaries with England and Northern Ireland and major road networks which pass through it, HMICS looked in greater detail at how it manages cross boundary crime. There are established and effective relationships within Police Scotland, and with other UK forces and partner agencies. There is evidence of the effective management of intelligence and coordinated preventative activity, and there have been some notable successes in terms of enforcement activity.

The force will be asked to incorporate the HMICS' recommendations into its own improvement process and ensure good practice is shared across Scotland to promote continuous improvement.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and has wide-ranging powers to look into the 'state, effectiveness and efficiency' of both the Police Service of Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority.

It has a statutory duty to ensure the Chief Constable and the SPA meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, it can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the SPA or Police Scotland. HMICS has an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

HMICS' approach is to support Police Scotland and the SPA to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.

Key Findings and Recommendations from the Report are listed below.

The HMICS Inspection of Local Policing+ Dumfries and Galloway Division is available to download at the HMICS website <http://hmics.org> from 11:00hrs, Tuesday, May 17, 2016.

To arrange an interview please contact:

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Part 1 – Inspection of local policing in Dumfries and Galloway Division

Key findings:

Outcomes

- Crime rates per 10,000 of population in Dumfries and Galloway Division are among the lowest in Scotland.
- Dumfries and Galloway Division has the highest detection rates of all divisions in Scotland.
- The division has made positive progress in most of its local policing plan objectives and is delivering on all local policing plan promises.
- With the exception of a small reduction in serious violence, the division recorded increases in all categories of crime between April and December 2015 although the long-term trend remains downward.
- Between April and December 2015, the division recorded a 30.9% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.
- Dumfries and Galloway is the only local policing division in Scotland to have recorded a reduction in complaints about the police.

Leadership and governance

- Local stakeholders regard the post of divisional commander as a key public sector leader.
- Local commanders engage with officers and staff through a range of formal and informal meetings, promoting the generation of ideas, identification of local issues, identifying and praising good work.

- The small size of the division supports visibility and openness between leaders and staff.
- Senior leaders are not recording working time.
- The division has good working relationships with local elected representatives.
- A consensus exists between stakeholders and the division that there are strong relationships between police and communities in Dumfries and Galloway, which the division has sought to maintain and develop.
- The division's use of social media provides local communities with up to date information about current incidents, which helps to reduce calls to police service centres.

Planning and process

- The closure of the local control room has presented some challenges to local policing with a number of functions being transferred to local resources.
- The division has effective arrangements to meet demand associated with pre-planned events and receives support from regional and national resources.
- The provision of specialist support to the division from regional and central resources is perceived by some to overlook local skills.
- The virtual operations support team is an example of good practice in communicating effectively with the public during major emergencies.
- The division has a co-ordinated approach to managing violent offenders using a locally generated 'check-list' of interventions to reduce risk of further harm to victims.
- Dumfries and Galloway Division has used opportunities presented by the creation of Police Scotland to adopt good practice identified in other divisions.
- The inclusion of the chair of the local Police, Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Sub-committee as a member of the divisional Continuous Improvement Group enhances local scrutiny and is an example of effective practice.

People

- Police Scotland has embarked upon a programme of measures to address the key findings from the staff opinion survey.
- Officers, staff and communities in Dumfries and Galloway have a strong sense of local identity with a willingness to support each other in their roles and communities.
- The division could improve its approach to equalities through the introduction of a local delivery plan.
- The division has worked well to address hate crime, having the highest detection rate in Scotland.

Resources

- The rural nature and geographic size of the division present significant challenges in meeting community expectations.
- Regionalisation and centralisation of some policing functions has affected flexibility to address local issues.
- National reorganisation and reductions in support staff locally are having a significant impact on their morale and the efficiency of support to the local division.
- Police Scotland is supporting the division to improve local recruitment of special constables.

- The division's estate is in good order and discussions are underway to identify potential sites for locally integrated public services.

Partnerships

- The police in Dumfries and Galloway are making an effective contribution to partnership working and the achievement of better outcomes for local communities.
- The division works in partnership with the local authority Community Safety Team and is exploring opportunities to develop this service by the direct deployment of wardens to some incidents of antisocial behaviour.
- Five dedicated school campus officers and community policing teams work with local schools to promote the safety and well-being of young people through initiatives such as 'Small World' and 'Big World', which are examples of good practice.
- Gradual changes to the role of school campus officers presents a risk to the overall effectiveness of their role.
- Police Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Division are committed to keeping rural communities safe through their support for initiatives such as Rural Watch and Farm Watch.
- There is strong and effective leadership within Dumfries and Galloway Division in relation to the management of cross-boundary crime. There are established and effective relationships within Police Scotland, and with other UK forces and partner agencies. There is evidence of the effective management of intelligence and co-ordinated preventive activity, and there have been some notable successes in terms of enforcement activity.

Recommendation 1

The Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland should complete their planned review of scenes of crime examination call out processes at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the service provided focuses on the needs of victims. (Paragraph 146)

Recommendation 2

Police Scotland should review the sustainability of its specialist support operating model. This should include consideration of where specialist resources should be geographically located to support demand and also identification of which specialist skills could better be delivered within local policing divisions. (Paragraph 152)

Recommendation 3

Police Scotland should review the resourcing of outstanding corporate reviews and expedite their implementation. (Paragraph 155)

Recommendation 4

Police Scotland should ensure that professional leadership, support, process standardisation and development pathways are in place for each corporate function centrally, even if management is local. It should also ensure that local support functions work effectively together as a virtual unit to ensure that local divisions receive the required level of flexibility. (Paragraph 160)

Part 2 – Inspection of custody centres located in Dumfries and Galloway Division

Key findings:

- The primary custody centres at Dumfries and Stranraer are well managed. The staff should be commended for their commitment to providing a safe environment for detainees.
- The staff at both centres were professional and respectful, and detainees commented positively on their treatment.
- At both Dumfries and Stranraer, we observed effective risk assessment processes and clear, evidence-based rationales for detainee care plans.
- The custody ICT system used in Dumfries and Galloway supports the effective recording of information regarding risk assessments and care plans.
- There were effective handover processes between teams working at both centres, and good briefing of incoming teams on the history and needs of individual detainees.
- Detainees at both centres were routinely offered the opportunity to shower, and take up was good.
- Officers in Dumfries and Stranraer sought to ensure that detainees understood their legal rights and were willing to repeat or simplify complex information for detainees' benefit.
- The staffing of the primary custody centres, particularly at Stranraer, has proven challenging with the local policing division often having to provide cover due to custody vacancies and long term absences.
- There is scope for the ancillary custody estate in Dumfries and Galloway to be rationalised.
- The cells in the ancillary custody centres at Gretna and Sanquhar are not of an appropriate standard.

Recommendation 1

Custody Division should monitor the length of time immigration detainees spend in police custody and, where necessary, liaise with relevant partner organisations to minimise the duration of their stay.

Recommendation 2

Custody Division should consider rationalising the ancillary custody estate in Dumfries and Galloway, taking into account any impact on local policing.

Recommendation 3

If the ancillary custody centre at Sanquhar is to remain open, Custody Division should ensure that the water damage to the cells is repaired and new windows are installed.

Ends notes