



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

Tuesday, 02 June, 2020

Updated Position on HMICS Inspections

The ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge, not only to public health but also to Scotland's public services as they contribute to the national effort to contain the spread of the outbreak and save lives.

Police Scotland continues to provide a vital policing service to the public while adapting to support the new measures designed to reduce the transmission of infection.

The temporary increased powers provided to the police by legislation in response to COVID-19, provide the means to enforce the public health measures aimed at saving lives. Police Scotland's Chief Constable and senior leadership team have been consistent in their public messages, namely that police officers will make every effort to engage effectively with members of public, provide advice and guidance about the new measures, encourage people to comply willingly, and only resort to enforcement when all else fails.

One of the advantages of having a single police service for Scotland is that the leadership direction is consistent across the country, and I am confident that police officers and staff are working hard to adjust to this evolving situation in a proportionate way and ethical manner.

During these difficult and unusual circumstances, sound scrutiny and effective governance are more important than ever. An Independent Review of Police Scotland's use of the increased powers was announced on 9 April 2020. I am a member of the Independent Advisory Group, which is chaired by John Scott QC.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) continues to fulfil its statutory role to provide independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as continuing to provide professional advice on policing matters.

I have reviewed our priorities for inspection over the coming months and will ensure that anything we do makes a meaningful contribution towards improvement in services for the Scottish public, without imposing an unnecessary burden on Police Scotland and the SPA. To this end, we are reviewing our methodology, and will be pragmatic and flexible in the use of resources.

We are in the process of revising the scrutiny plan for 2020-21, taking account of the terms of reference of the independent review of the use of police powers, and the oversight being applied by others, notably the Scottish Police Authority.

The revised plan will be published in the near future, but will include inspections of specific operational police functions, incorporating an examination of the adjustments that have been made in response to the pandemic, and a consideration of those that represent sustainable service improvements. Proposed inspections will examine:

- Criminal Justice process and procedures. Significant operational changes have been made to adapt to the current situation, which could be more effective and efficient ways of working in the long term
- Call handling, specifically the national roll out of the contact assessment model. The needs of the caller are assessed to ensure the most appropriate and proportionate response, which might not be to deploy police officers to attend.

In addition there will be ongoing monitoring of strategic workforce planning; performance framework; operational delivery; the transformation and change programme, and custody.

HMICS continues to liaise regularly with Police Scotland, the SPA, and the Scottish Government during this challenging period.

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HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

June 2020