



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

**Wednesday, 20 October, 2021**

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Police Scotland Progress on Diversity and Equality Issues**

The recent progress made by Police Scotland in tackling challenges relating to diversity and equality within the organisation, has been acknowledged in a report published today by HMICS (Wednesday, 20 October 2021).

The report is Phase 2 of the Thematic Inspection of Police Scotland Training and Development, and looks specifically at the recruitment, retention, development and promotion of people from under-represented groups.

The inspection found evidence of genuine commitment at the most senior levels of Police Scotland to ensure that the service is welcoming and inclusive. There are fewer signs that the leadership message is being translated into action that has a consistent positive impact on the day-to-day experience of police officers and staff from under-represented groups.

The report is published against a background of increasing concerns about racism and sexism in society, with recent events bringing the challenges facing policing into sharp focus.

The report recommends that Police Scotland should assert a strong and bold position in its internal and external communications that it is an anti-discriminatory and inclusive organisation.

In her introduction to the report HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMCI) reflects that issues of equality, diversity and inclusion are more important than ever.

Mrs Gill Imery, QPM, said: "Racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of intolerance are pressing issues for the whole of society, not any one organisation. Positive action aimed at helping to overcome barriers for people from under-represented groups, is misunderstood by some of the general public. It would be naïve to think some of these views are not shared by some of the 23,000 employees of Police Scotland.

Mrs Imery added: "To maintain public confidence, it is important the police service reflects the communities it serves. Attracting police recruits from the full range of communities depends on the levels of trust and confidence those communities have in the police. Whilst we looked at all protected characteristics, we concentrated on the representation of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Recruitment from these groups has increased over the past year, however challenges remain with overall representation, and in the visibility of under-represented groups in senior ranks and management levels."

This report follows the Phase 1 report which was published in September 2020 and highlighted a lack of diversity training for police officers and staff in leadership roles, and the HMICS report on Hate Crime, published in June 2021, which also identified shortcomings in training, and in the support given to police officers and staff subjected to hate crime on duty.

HMICS is encouraged by the progress made since the earlier report, particularly as it has been delivered in the challenging context of the pandemic.

HMICS noted that Police Scotland has rolled out leadership training; facilitated sessions where officers from under-represented groups can share their experiences with the force executive; established an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Strategic Oversight Board, and an Independent Review Group, which will provide an external assessment of Police Scotland's progress.

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) have agreed joint equality outcomes for the first time, demonstrating a shared commitment to achieving equality goals.

The work of the Positive Action team is praised, however HMICS considers that Police Scotland has not devoted sufficient resources to engage and proactively recruit from under-represented communities. The role and purpose of the Positive Action Team need to be better understood both within the service and society in general.

Mrs Imery said: "Retention is equally as important as recruitment. There is little point in attracting more individuals from under-represented groups if they are not retained. I expect Police Scotland to understand both the challenges facing people from under-represented groups who want to apply to join the police, and the challenges for those already working in the organisation"

As part of this inspection, HMICS conducted an online survey to seek the views of both current and former police officers. Analysis of the 542 responses is included at the end of the report. This is a self-selecting group of respondents, and the survey does not purport to be statistically significant nor to describe the experience of the majority of people in Police Scotland. HMICS believes it is vital to listen to the voices of people from under-represented groups describing their experience of working in Police Scotland.

The report contains 10 recommendations and HMICS will monitor progress towards their achievement.

## **Ends**

The Terms of Reference for the Thematic Inspection of Police Scotland Training and Development – Phase 2 were published in March 2021.

## **Ends notes**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The HMICS Thematic Inspection of Police Scotland Training and Development – Phase 2 is available to download at the HMICS website [www.hmics.scot](http://www.hmics.scot) from 1100hrs, Wednesday, 20 October 2021.

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## **Ends**