



HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland Improving Policing across Scotland

Tuesday, 29th June, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Police Scotland has made good progress in understanding the demand for its services

In a report published today, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) commends Police Scotland for its work to date in analysing demand, and highlights areas for further improvement.

The importance of assessing and managing the demand on policing services in Scotland is heightened by the twin pressures of the impending UN climate change conference and continuing to police restrictions aimed at limiting the spread of Covid-19.

Being able to articulate the wide and competing demands for policing is not a new concept, but has become more acute as pressures on budgets have increased, states the assurance review by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS).

Mrs Gill Imery QPM, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, said: "Demand data and analysis are vital for making informed plans for resources and budget, and to create a sustainable model of policing. The ultimate aim must be to ensure that public resources are deployed to best meet the needs of the public.

"This inspection highlights the significant efforts the service has made to develop its understanding of demand, as well as identifying some areas for improvement. There have been various attempts over the years to capture the demand for policing and indeed it featured in the work leading to the formation of the single national service.

"Present circumstances make it all the more important for Police Scotland to equip itself with reliable and accessible information on current and future demand, assets and resources, to inform the strategic direction of the service."

During the review, comparison was made with other UK forces, which rely predominantly on volumetric information, and Police Scotland was found to have developed a more sophisticated approach to assessing demand. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in respect of the forecasting of demand.

The main factors hindering the service's progress are the limitations on the capacity of the Demand and Productivity Unit, and the lack of a delivery plan informed by the strategic and tactical needs of the organisation.

The report notes a lack of consistency across Police Scotland in the terminology used and a lack of trust and understanding of the value of demand information within the organisation. There was also minimal evidence that demand analysis was considered in financial and investment decision making.

Mrs Imery added: "There requires to be a fundamental culture shift from reactive to increasingly proactive decision making and planning. The inconsistencies identified speak to a lack of overall clarity about how the demand approach should be used to impact on policing delivery for the benefit of communities.

"There are still many areas of internal, hidden, unknown or unmet demand which remain a challenge to quantify and have not yet been fully identified or addressed. Where demand information has been used, for example in the restructuring of national tasking and co-ordinating processes, it has been beneficial and led to improvements."

The consequence of inherited levels of officer and staff numbers has been an issue since the inception of Police Scotland with current estimations by the service on future staffing based on judgement with limited demand-led evidence. HMICS states it is essential that demand analysis and management are used more effectively to demonstrate the requirement for resources to ensure transparency and to create a sustainable policing model.

The report contains 12 recommendations and identifies a number of areas for further development which will help Police Scotland to meet future financial and operational challenges.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The HMICS Assurance Review of Police Scotland demand analysis and management will be available to download at the HMICS website www.hmics.scot from 1100hrs, Tuesday, 29th June, 2021.

For media inquiries, please contact

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