



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

**Monday, 08 June, 2020**

### **Refreshed version of HMICS intentions document dated 2 April 2020**

#### **Introduction**

This document outlines the approach Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) intends to adopt in providing independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland.

In recognition of the unprecedented demands associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, HMICS suspended all routine inspection activity on 19 March 2020. All serving officers on secondment to HMICS were returned to Police Scotland to assist with the national effort to protect the NHS and save lives. Joint inspection work with the Care Inspectorate and others, had already been put on hold. It is now clear that the consequences of the pandemic will alter priorities and ways of working for the foreseeable future, and there is unlikely to be any "return to normal".

Inspections that were underway at the time restrictions came into force, namely the thematic inspections of Police Scotland's arrangements for Training and Development, and Police Scotland's response to Hate Crime, are being considered for progression. Work is recommencing on the HMICS Annual Report for 2019-20, which will highlight the scrutiny we carried out last year.

Having carried out extensive consultation on scrutiny priorities for this year, HMICS analysed and discussed the results at a planning day at the end of February 2020. The draft Scrutiny Plan 2020-21 is now being revised taking account of the current situation, and will be published in the near future.

#### **HMICS Objectives**

HMICS will continue to fulfil its statutory duty, as outlined in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, looking into the state, effectiveness and efficiency of both Police Scotland and the SPA.

HMICS will respond to direction from Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to Police Scotland or the SPA as they consider appropriate.

HMICS will provide professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

HMICS will be pragmatic and flexible in its approach, minimising the burden imposed on Police Scotland and the SPA by inspection activity.

HMICS will seek to protect and support our staff throughout this period, through the provision of home working arrangements and revision of our inspection methodology to ensure compliance with Scottish Government guidelines on social distancing.

The priorities for inspection for the remainder of the 2020-21 scrutiny year are being revised. The independent review of the use of police powers, led by John Scott QC, will provide thorough scrutiny of Police Scotland's use of temporary increased powers, including the impact on specific groups. The review is supported by an Independent Advisory Group, which is reporting regularly to the SPA. HMICS is a member of the IAG.

The issues surrounding health and safety and the provision of personal protective equipment to police officers and staff, are core functions of the SPA, which is asserting its scrutiny role at meetings of both the Resources Committee and the SPA Board. The wider impact of COVID-19 is considered by the SPA using existing governance and oversight arrangements.

HMICS has identified areas of operational police business as priorities for inspection, including an examination of the adjustments that have been made in response to the pandemic, and consideration of those changes that represent sustainable service improvements:

- Criminal Justice process and procedures. Significant operational changes have been made to adapt to the current situation, which could represent more effective and efficient ways of working for 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 may result in resolution without deploying officers to an incident.

HMICS remains committed to carrying out a Crime Audit of incident and crime recording in 2020-21, building on our previous work in this important area.

We will also continue monitoring Police Scotland's progress with strategic workforce planning; performance reporting; operational delivery, and the transformation and change programme.

As a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism in line with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) requirements, HMICS maintains a scrutiny role for police custody arrangements.

We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing through independent scrutiny and objective evidence-led reporting about what we find. Where relevant, we will make recommendations to Police Scotland and the SPA to improve policing for the benefit of the public. We will also identify good practice that can be rolled out across Scotland.

HMICS will liaise regularly with Police Scotland, the SPA and the Scottish Government, and will keep the approach to scrutiny of policing in Scotland under review.

**Mrs Gill Imery QPM**

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

08 June 2020