



Cumbria's Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

HMICFRS Responses

Cumbria Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) response to inspections of Cumbria Constabulary published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Section 33 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days.

The HMICFRS logo, featuring a crown above the text 'HMICFRS' in blue, with a red and blue striped bar below it.	
Inspection Title:	An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime
Date Published:	27/03/2025
Type of Inspection:	National Thematic
Key Findings	
<p>The effective investigation of crime is fundamental to the legitimacy of policing and to public confidence. It also influences how safe people feel and it prevents future offending.</p> <p>There has been a long-term decline in successful prosecutions, meaning that too few criminal investigations are leading to justice for victims.</p> <p>Therefore, as part of our 2022–25 programme of inspections, we inspected how effectively the police investigate crime.</p> <p>During our inspection, we saw numerous examples of initiatives forces have introduced to improve the standard of crime investigations and achieve better outcomes for victims.</p> <p>In this report, we make 11 recommendations.</p> <p>These recommendations are designed to help forces improve the standard of their crime investigations and achieve better outcomes for victims by:</p>	

- building a better understanding of their crime-related demand and the resources they need so they can meet it;
- designing more effective processes for recording, assessing, allocating and investigating crime, putting victims at the heart of the process;
- providing better training for investigators, their supervisors, and any other officers or members of staff who have a role in an investigation; and
- improving the supervision of crime investigations.

The focus of this report is on volume crime.

Recommendations:

Rec 03: By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has an effective and efficient end-to-end process to deal with online reports of crime. The process should remove all unnecessary delays in recording, assessing and allocating crime reports, and make sure the force consistently complies with its requirements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

Rec 04: By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the end-to-end process for receiving, assessing and allocating reports of crime in their force minimises delays in the investigation process and the length of time before investigators contact victims.

Rec 05: By 31 December 2025, chief constables should design and operate a policy that results in their force allocating to investigators crimes that are commensurate with each investigator's level of training, accreditation and experience.

Rec 06: By 30 September 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has a clear policy relating to investigation plans. They should make sure their force communicates this policy to officers and staff.

As a minimum, this policy should cover:

- when to start an investigation plan;
- who is responsible for writing the investigation plan;
- what to consider including in an investigation plan;
- how supervisors should review and approve investigation plans; and
- how the force will monitor investigation plans to check their quality, and to make sure investigators and supervisors have followed them.

Rec 07: By 30 June 2025, chief constables should include in their investigation policies a direction stating that when an image exists, investigators should search it against the Police National Database and any other relevant databases before their force closes an investigation.

Rec 09: By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the first supervisory review of a crime investigation takes place early enough for the supervisor to be able to:

- review any actions taken, including those to assess and manage risk;
- make sure the investigator has put in place the appropriate support for victims, and is complying with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;
- set or approve an investigation plan;
- review the investigator's caseload; and
- set a date for a further review.

Rec 10: By 31 March 2026, chief constables should:

- make sure any member of staff who has a role in supporting the investigation process completes the College of Policing 'Introduction to investigation' learning programme;
- satisfy themselves that the content of their force's ongoing investigative training for responders is designed to develop their investigative skills and performance, and to improve outcomes for victims, and that their force gives responders protected time to complete this training;
- make sure their force focuses sufficiently on case file preparation when providing professionalising investigations programme level 1 training, while taking into account local procedures and case management systems;
- make sure their force gives officers and staff continuing professional development opportunities about preparing case files;
- make sure their force keeps accurate records of professionalising investigations programme level 2 accredited officers and staff, and that those officers and staff complete annual continuing professional development to maintain their accreditation, which forces should also accurately record; and
- review the investigative training their force gives to supervisors, making sure it equips them to oversee and direct crime investigations effectively.

Rec 11: By 30 September 2025, chief constables should establish and implement a process to monitor the proportion of recorded crime that their force allocates for investigation. This should include a process to make sure a decision not to allocate a crime for investigation is appropriate.

PFCC & Constabulary Response to Report and Recommendation:

As Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Cumbria, I welcome the report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Resue Service's (HMICFRS) of an inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime.

The report considers the links between effectively investigating crime and public confidence. It identified that effective investigations influence how safe people feel and it can prevent future offending. It must be noted that Cumbria Police were not inspected as part of this report however, elements of this inspection were incorporated within the PEEL Inspection Programme 2023-25.

As a result of the recent PEEL Inspection Programme, published in July 2024, Cumbria Constabulary received a grading of 'good' for its investigation of crime. HMICFRS identified that the Constabulary has effective governance and oversight of investigations, carries out thorough and timely investigations, and effectively trains and equips its investigators. In addition, the Inspectorate identified that the Constabulary pursues evidence-led prosecutions on behalf of victims, whenever possible, and provides a good level of service for victims of crime, supporting their needs and keeping them informed of the progress of their investigations.

This clearly demonstrated that the Constabulary was meeting the standards expected of HMICFRS in respect of its criminal investigations. However, we are aware that we cannot be complacent – we want to continue to learn from others and provide the best service possible to our residents. The recommendations in this report will enable me to ensure that the Constabulary is continually striving for improvement and protecting Cumbria.

As PFCC I will monitor the Force's progress in completing each of the recommendations via my scrutiny and accountability framework, specifically in my monthly Executive Board Police meetings and Public Accountability Conferences.