



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 blue crown above the text 'HMICFRS' in blue, with a red and blue diagonal line below it.	
Inspection Title:	State of Policing – The Annual Assessment of Policing in England & Wales
Date Published:	10/09/2025
Type of Inspection:	Annual Report
Key Findings	
<p>This third independent assessment by His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary offers a comprehensive review of policing across England and Wales. Based on HMICFRS inspections conducted between 1 April 2024 and 31 July 2025, the report identifies areas where forces need to strengthen performance to maintain public confidence and deliver high standards of service.</p> <p>The Annual Assessment calls for improvements in efficiency and timeliness when handling crime reports, ensuring victims are contacted promptly and supported in line with the Victims' Code of Practice. It highlights the need to allocate cases according to investigators' skills and experience, establish clear policies for investigation plans, and conduct early supervisory reviews to maintain quality and oversight.</p> <p>Additionally, the report stresses better integration of national databases to support investigations, comprehensive training and continuous professional development for investigative staff, and robust oversight of decisions not to allocate crimes for investigation. These measures aim to ensure transparency, consistency, and strengthen public trust in policing.</p>	
Recommendations:	
<p>The Annual Assessment of Policing 2024–2025 sets out key priorities for improvement across all forces to maintain public confidence and deliver consistent standards of service. The recommendations include:</p>	

- **Improve efficiency and timeliness** in handling crime reports, ensuring victims are contacted promptly and supported in line with the Victims' Code of Practice.
- **Allocate cases according to investigators' skills and experience** to enhance the quality and effectiveness of investigations.
- **Establish clear policies for investigation plans**, including guidance on when plans should be initiated, who is responsible for drafting them, and how they are monitored for quality.
- **Conduct early supervisory reviews** to maintain oversight, manage risk, and ensure victim care throughout investigations.
- **Integrate national databases more effectively** into investigative processes to strengthen evidence gathering, improve intelligence sharing, and support evidence-based decision-making.
- **Provide comprehensive training and continuous professional development** for all staff involved in investigations, including case file preparation and ongoing skills development.
- **Implement robust oversight of decisions not to allocate crimes for investigation**, ensuring transparency, consistency, and public trust.

While the Annual Assessment places significant emphasis on improving investigative standards, it also highlights broader priorities essential to maintaining public confidence and delivering effective policing. The report underscores the need to rebuild trust in policing, particularly in light of recent declines, noting that visible policing—through strong neighbourhood policing and community engagement—is central to achieving this.

In addition, it recognises that comprehensive training and continuous professional development are critical, not only within investigative roles but across the entire police workforce, to strengthen skills and capability.

These priorities demonstrate that improving public confidence, governance, and operational effectiveness is just as vital as enhancing investigative standards.

PFCC & Constabulary Response to Report and Recommendation:

"I welcome the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' Annual Assessment, which provides valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities facing policing nationally. This independent review plays a vital role in shaping the future of policing and ensuring that forces across England and Wales deliver the highest standards of service to the public.

"As part of this process, the Chief Constable and I contributed to the HMICFRS national survey that informed the Annual Assessment, ensuring Cumbria's perspective was fully represented. The report places significant emphasis on improving investigative standards across policing, and I am proud that Cumbria has already demonstrated strong performance in this area. Our recent PEEL inspection graded the Constabulary as 'good' for crime investigation, reflecting robust governance, timely investigations, and effective victim support.

"This is a positive outcome, but we cannot afford to be complacent. The Annual Assessment highlights critical areas for improvement national, such as timeliness in victim contact, allocation of cases based on investigator skills, comprehensive training, and robust oversight of decisions not to investigate; I will ensure these priorities remain under close and consistent scrutiny.

"As Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, I am firmly committed to rigorous oversight through my established scrutiny and accountability framework, including monthly Executive Board meetings and quarterly Public Accountability Conferences. By acting on national findings while building on our local strengths, we will continue to deliver policing that is transparent, responsive, and focused on keeping our communities safe.

“The Annual Report also underscores the importance of improving public confidence—a priority that is critical given recent declines. Visible policing through strong neighbourhood policing remains central to rebuilding trust and reassurance. Both the Constabulary and my office have embraced this approach, securing government funding to enhance officer visibility and engagement within our communities. We will continue to drive these efforts through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and the Safer Streets Mission, strengthening relationships, tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, and making our streets safer for everyone.”