



Sussex  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner

Ms Zoe Billingham  
HM Inspector of Constabulary  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary  
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Dear Zoe,

### **HMIC – Crime Data Integrity**

I write in respect of the recently published findings for Sussex Police in the "Crime Data Integrity" report. I very much welcome the opportunity to comment on the HMIC report and have carefully studied its recommendations and findings.

I am pleased that the HMIC inspection report highlighted that there is a clear and unambiguous expectation from the Chief Constable that reports of crime should be recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS).

However, I acknowledge that in the past Sussex Police have not always got crime recording right, or often enough, achieving an 83% level of compliance against NCRS, which was below the national average. A lack of understanding of crime recording rules, complex processes and duplicating data-entry procedures were all identified as contributing factors.

I was disappointed to note that of the 157 incidents examined by HMIC as part of the inspection, only 111 out of 133 crimes were recorded, which meant that 22 crimes were not recorded. I acknowledge that this was simply not good enough for victims, some of whom would not have been offered the right support or access to specialist services, and I fully endorse HMIC's recommendation that "reports of crime are recorded as crimes". However, it was pleasing to note that there was no evidence to suggest that any of the crime recording errors were intentional or malicious.

Consequently, the Chief Constable commissioned an evidence-based review of crime data integrity, in March 2014, which identified 105 recommendations. It is worth emphasising that a significant proportion of these recommendations have already been implemented and the others remain ongoing work-in-progress.

I am satisfied that the report identifies a number of areas where the Force could further strengthen its accuracy of crime recording, taking into account the five recommendations specifically outlined by HMIC for Sussex, as well as the 13 recommendations made for all forces, set out in the national report.

Crime data integrity is also something I have challenged the Chief Constable on during our monthly Performance & Accountability Meetings (PAMs). In my September PAM, the Chief Constable gave me strong assurances that the Force has developed a comprehensive action plan and taken measures to ensure that staff, processes and systems have all been aligned to ensure that Sussex Police comply with HOCR and NCRS. In particular, it was pleasing to note that crime recording accuracy has improved to 97% (against NCRS) as a result of more efficient processes and the removal of unnecessary duplication in the system. This session is archived and can be viewed on my webcast using the following link: [www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/](http://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/)

I am also satisfied that this much improved performance over the last six months has been driven by strong leadership and an organisational determination to ensure the crime recording processes and culture in Sussex Police are thorough, and officers are now better placed to serve victims of crime and retain the trust of the public.

I will continue to closely monitor the progress of Sussex Police in this area and will hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the recommendations identified in the report to ensure that public confidence in crime reporting remains high across Sussex. I will also seek to use my position as Chair of the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners Performance, Standards & Accountability Standing Group to further drive improvement in this important area.

Yours sincerely



Katy Bourne  
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner