

Greater Manchester Police HMICFRS Inspection Report (December 2020) and Local Impact Observations

1. Introduction

This report is intended to provide local Stockport context relating to issues identified in the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report into GMP's services for victims of crime. It includes:

- A summary of the scope of the inspection.
- The role of the GM Police, Fire and Crime Panel in scrutinising the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- A summary of how some other GM districts have sought reassurance and answers relating to issues identified in the inspection report.
- An overview of key multiagency arrangements for addressing community safety issues in Stockport; and how issues such as those raised in the report were addressed within these multiagency working arrangements, both before and after the publication of the inspection report.
- A summary of discussion at a special meeting of Safer Stockport Partnership's Board to 12th February which considered the Inspection report and GMP's plans to address the issues it identified.
- Conclusions relating to the current situation in Stockport.

2. Greater Manchester Police - HMICFRS Victims Services Assessment

2.1 On 10th December 2020 HMICFRS published 'An inspection of the service provided to Victims of crime by Greater Manchester Police (GMP)'. The full inspection report can be found [here](#). The terms of reference for this inspection looked specifically at:

- The management of incoming calls with specific focus on the assessment of risk and the prioritisation of resourcing.
- The recording of crime at all points of entry and whether these entry points can be trusted.
- The force's arrangements for screening and allocation of crime, with specific consideration of vulnerability and risk at each point.
- The proportionality, thoroughness and timeliness of investigations into reported crime.
- The extent to which senior-level governance provides robust scrutiny of crime standards across the force.
- Whether the force follows national guidelines and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime.

- 2.2 The main causes for concern identified in the inspection report were around failures in crime recording and services to safeguard victims.
- 2.3 GMP has a detailed action plan already underway to address the issues raised in the HMIC report.

3. Greater Manchester Level Scrutiny

Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel (GMPFCP)

- 3.1 The GMPFCP meets a minimum of three times per year (though in the last couple of years it has met more frequently). The Panel is chaired by Cllr Nigel Murphy, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council. Other members of the Panel are elected members from each of the GM Districts (Stockport's representative is Cllr Amanda Peers, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods) and two independent members. Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Police, Crime and Fire) also attends. Meetings of the Panel are held in public.
- 3.2 A key function of the Panel is to scrutinise or review relevant decisions made or actions taken by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime and to produce reports or recommendations to the Mayor with respect to the discharge of relevant duties. The Panel can also require the Mayor (or their representative) to attend meetings to report on relevant matters and to answer any questions. If the GMPFCP requires the Mayor (or representative) to attend Panel meetings, it may also request the Chief Constable of GMP to attend on the same occasion to answer questions. The Panel's full Rules of Procedure are available via the link below.



GMPFCP Rules of Procedure 2020.pdf

- 3.3 The Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel met on 29th January to consider, amongst other things, an update from the Acting Chief Constable, Ian Pilling, on the victims' services assessment. This update can be found with the Panel papers (item 7) [here](#). Stockport Council was represented at this meeting by Councillor Amanda Peers. The next meeting of the Panel is scheduled for 26th March. There will be one item on the agenda: the appointment of GMP's Chief Constable.
- 3.4 The Panel is supported by two main groups, the GM Police, Fire & Crime Steering Group and the GM Police, Fire and Crime Leads Group. These include officer representation from GM Districts and from partner organisations (and the Steering Group also includes the lead elected member for Police, Fire & Crime from GM Districts). These Groups meet approximately quarterly (not in public) and their broad remit is to oversee, drive improvements and share good practice at a Greater Manchester level. Broadly, the roles of the groups are that the Panel sets the overall direction and focus for police, fire and crime work, the Steering Group oversees detailed pieces of work and the Leads Group undertakes that work. With the exception of the Deputy Mayor, all members of the Panel are also members of the wider Steering Group. Members of the Panel therefore had an early opportunity to

discuss the findings of the inspection when Acting Chief Constable Pilling gave a presentation on it to the Steering Group on 16th December 2020. The next meeting of the Steering Group, where an update on iOPS as well as HMICFRS will be made, is scheduled for 18th March.

Scrutiny in GM Districts relating to the HMICFRS Inspection Report

3.5 A number of other districts across GM have also requested meetings with key individuals to consider the implications of the report's findings for their areas. For example:

- This is currently a standing item at Community Safety Partnership Board meetings in **Oldham**.
- The GM Mayor has been to **Wigan** and spoken with the Cabinet members about the inspection report and action plan and responded to some very challenging questions.
- In **Salford**, the scrutiny committee has asked for GM Mayor and GMP to attend a future meeting on this subject. The GM Mayor and GM Deputy Mayor also attended a meeting of a monthly all-member community safety forum (which is not a public meeting) in February to discuss the HMIC inspection report and plans moving forward.
- In **Manchester**, the Chief Superintendent gave a presentation to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 11th March. The request from Scrutiny was *“To invite representatives from GMP to address the Committee, following the recent inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary”*.

4. Stockport Impact and Observations

Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP)

4.1 The Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP) is Stockport's statutory Community Safety Partnership. It is jointly chaired by Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and includes a range of local public service representatives who work together alongside voluntary and community organisations to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, re-offending and substance misuse.

4.2 Membership of SSP's Board currently consists of the organisations below. The Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods is also a member of the Board which strengthens the link between GM governance in relation to police and crime matters and local governance.

- Greater Manchester Police – Stockport Division.
- Stockport Council.
- National Probation Service.
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.
- Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company.
- Stockport NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.

- Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.
- Stockport Homes.

- 4.3 The SSP Board meets every three months to review progress against the five strategic priorities and to consider any new areas of concern. The SSP has been aware of the challenges faced through the implementation of iOPS and has received regular updates from GMP colleagues.
- 4.4 SSP has five strategic priorities which are underpinned by a range of partnership delivery groups and targeted initiatives. To consider the impact of the GMP failings identified in the inspection on Stockport Borough, observations from the perspective of a number of these key partnership delivery groups and areas of community safety activity are set out below.

Protecting Vulnerable People/Safeguarding

- 4.5 Strong working relationships exist within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) between GMP and council staff (council and police officers work together in the MASSH, a co-located team). Police officers have always responded effectively whenever necessary. Whilst this very much remains the case, in late 2019/early 2020, the well-documented issues with GMP's IT services had an impact on the MASSH. **It is important to emphasise however that no known issues of vulnerability were left unaddressed.**
- 4.6 Prior to the introduction of the new GMP system, there was an awareness that implementation of the new systems would lead to some disruption at least, and work was undertaken to prepare for that. This involved reverting to the previous IT system (OPUS) as well as use of paper files. The effect however was more significant than anticipated and from late summer 2019, backlogs of cases began to build up resulting in delays in a number of cases coming to the attention of the MASSH and potentially leaving victims in a vulnerable situation and/or being left without a service during such delays.
- 4.7 The issue was quickly identified, and partners worked together to identify and implement (largely through police overtime) a solution to work around these problems.
- 4.8 These issues were escalated to the GMP team leading the operation relating to the introduction of the new IT system, who provided support with mitigation measures. In addition, the council's Corporate Leadership Team sought, and received, reassurance that these issues were being addressed. By November 2019, the backlog of cases had been largely cleared and new referrals were able to be dealt with quickly.
- 4.9 Following publication of the inspection report, the MASSH received a verbal update on how the recommendations of the report were being addressed in Stockport. This did not identify any specific issues or problems in Stockport (though there is an element of "we don't know what we don't know").

Public Safety and Protection Partnership Delivery Group (PDG)

- 4.10 The Partnership Delivery Group covers the Public Safety and Protection theme of SSP. The Group meets on a two monthly basis and includes a small number of SSP members focussed on this theme. As part of the meetings the group considers the most recent Tactical Data from Stockport Division. This is complemented by data from other service areas to provide an overall picture of crime and disorder in the Borough and develop partnership solutions. In addition, any current areas of concern are discussed.
- 4.11 During these meetings GMP has acknowledged the well-documented difficulties that surrounded the introduction of their new IT system. They have however been able to provide updates based on available information and their knowledge of the local area and crime patterns and this was complemented by local knowledge from, and public reporting via, partner organisations including council officers. GMP were able to provide assurances that areas of concern were being identified and dealt with.
- 4.12 GMP Neighbourhood Inspectors meet with service managers on a regular basis and are in close contact. Similarly, where serious incidents have occurred council officers have been invited to relevant gold level meetings. At a divisional level GMP officers have acknowledged the difficulties encountered in the introduction of the IT system whilst also providing wider reassurance as part of partnership meetings.

Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support (YOS)

- 4.13 During the last two years there has been a continued focus on youth related antisocial behaviour, crime and violence. The multi-disciplinary Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support Service (YOS) has a dedicated Police Officer based within the service. Despite the difficulties outlined in the HMI report therefore, there is a strong partnership response to incidents the and the PDG through its partnership approach has been able to identify current trends and individuals involved, identify priorities as they emerge and target resources and funds (via SSP's PDG fund) at them. Such intelligence sharing has also facilitated access to other funding streams to support priorities – for example, work is currently underway to develop a Detached Youth Work offer.
- 4.14 The Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support service is not aware of any specific problems relating to any emerging issues identified in the HMICFRS report that affect its service users as joint partnership working and information-sharing with GMP has consistently enabled a more proactive response that is focused on early intervention (though, as with the safeguarding team, there is an acknowledgement that “we don't know what we don't know”).

- 4.15 A number of GM-wide Youth Justice forums exist, with active involvement from Stockport representatives, such as the GM Youth Justice Transformation Board and GM Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel. These also have senior police representation. Within such forums, GMP has always been receptive to looking at issues relating to data and information and new ways of working, for example to work around any issues that are identified re data. Any concerns raised have always been dealt with openly and comprehensively.
- 4.16 The establishment of the GM Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in 2019/20 has also helped to identify and address issues such the data recording concerns highlighted in the HMIC report.
- 4.17 From a Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support perspective therefore, work across GM forums and the establishment of the VRU has enabled many of the issues highlighted in the report to be pre-empted and addressed. The HMI report however, and the corrective actions that it has prompted, serve to strengthen measures already in place.

5. Special meeting of Safer Stockport Partnership Board 12th February 2021

- 5.1 A special meeting of the Safer Stockport Partnership Board was convened, specifically to consider the inspection report and to seek reassurance from GMP colleagues relating to the extent of the risks in Stockport and that sufficiently robust measures have been put in place to rectify the issues highlighted within the report.
- 5.2 The meeting took place on 12th February 2021 and discussed measures in place including:
- A programme of internal engagement with all officers and staff, including an extensive internal training programme to be rolled out force-wide to all frontline officers and supervisors which emphasises a culture of 'Think Victim' and ensures standard processes put the victim GMP actions and decisions.
 - Getting crime recording, investigations and service to victims to the best possible standard e.g. by identifying and addressing gaps in systems and processes for recording all reports of crime and enhanced crime recording training for all supervisors, officers and staff in a crime recording role.
 - Working closely with victim services and other stakeholders to understand how support services to victims can be improved. GMP is also reviewing cases of a number of different crime types, e.g. domestic abuse.
 - Ensuring force governance arrangements implement an adequate level of authority to oversee activity and the services provided to victims at any stage of engagement with the force to ensure a high level of service is delivered at all times. This will be long-term improvement delivery and clear and accountable governance will support the long-term aim.

- 5.3 Well-publicised problems with the suite of IT applications (iOPS) were felt to have exacerbated issues relating to the quality of crime recording.
- 5.4 Undertaking this remedial work however has had a knock-on effect on the amount of time available to have police officers out on the street. Officers however have access to comprehensive wraparound support to help them with implementing these changes.
- 5.5 Stockport however was felt to be one of the better-performing GM districts and significant improvements in Stockport were already perceived.
- 5.6 The Safer Stockport Partnership Board also received an update on how the GM Police, Fire and Crime Panel was scrutinising these changes and that work to address issues identified in the inspection report will be a standing item for the Police, Fire and Crime Panel for the foreseeable future.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The HMI report highlights serious failings in reporting of cases in GMP that may have led to under-prioritising of certain cases. We have strong partnership structures which have enabled us to introduce workarounds to mitigate the impact of these failings and we are unaware of any examples of vulnerable residents being significantly impacted because of police recording failings. Clearly, we cannot be complacent and the ongoing rectification measures being undertaken by the police will identify whether there are any specific cases in Stockport with serious concerns.

Awareness of the issues identified in the inspection report

- 6.2 Since the publication of the inspection report in December 2020, GMP has worked hard to ensure that all partners are aware of the issues raised in the report and to provide reassurance that the force fully accepts these findings. Discussions have taken place at GM wide groups, including in public, at the last meeting of the GM Police, Fire and Crime Panel. At a more local level, the Mayor and his Deputy, as well as senior GMP officers, have attended meetings within a number of GM districts to discuss the inspection. In Stockport, as well as the GM Mayor and Deputy Mayor attending this Scrutiny meeting, the Territorial Commander for Stockport attended a specially-convened meeting of Safer Stockport Partnership's Board to explain the issues identified in the report and how the force is addressing these issues. There is significant awareness therefore at both a GM and Stockport level of challenges GMP faces and how it intends to overcome these.

Close joint working relationships within Stockport

- 6.3 At both a Strategic level, through the Safer Stockport Partnership Board, and through a number of operational joint arrangements, working relationships between GMP and partners, including the council are close and productive – for example, arrangements relating to youth justice, safeguarding and targeting of resources through the PDG are summarised in this briefing. In each case, GMP has worked

with partners within these working arrangements to outline the issues and to find solutions to them – in many cases these “work arounds” were identified well in advance of the report’s publication. These close working relationships have helped to mitigate the impact of the IT and other issues highlighted in the inspection report.

Confidence that GMP are working through their remedial measures

6.4 Through strategic forums such as the GM Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the Safer Stockport Partnership Board, senior GMP Officers have acknowledged the issues that exist relating to their services for victims. They have also however set out actions they are taking to address these issues. This reassurance from senior officers, together with the practical measures being worked upon within operational joint working arrangements in Stockport, have provided a significant degree of reassurance that GMP is taking the inspection report extremely seriously and is working hard to ensure it meets the challenge set by the inspection to address the issues it identifies.

7. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

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