



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

Section 55 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

Inspection Title:	The Poor Relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people
Date Published:	17 th July 2019
Type of Inspection:	National Inspection

KEY FINDINGS:

In 2018/19, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Inspectorate (HMCPIS) conducted a joint inspection of how the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) respond to crimes against older people. The UK has an ageing population and although older people are not by definition vulnerable, studies show that as a group they are more likely to be affected by the physical and mental challenges of attending court to give evidence and are more likely to fear being the victims of crime compared to people in other age groups. HMICFRS and HMCPIS inspected six forces (Norfolk wasn't part of this inspection) and Britain Thinks conducted qualitative research by speaking to older victims of crime living across England and Wales.

In July 2019, HMICFRS and HMCPIS published a joint report which, for the first time, looks at the nature and extent of problems affecting older people within the criminal justice system, concentrating on crimes of abuse and exploitation (including financial). Their report, "[The poor relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people](#)", found that older people who have been victims of crime are often let down by the police and wider criminal justice system which does not always understand their needs and experiences. The report found that the police have only a "superficial understanding" of the nature and extent of crimes against older people, which often results in a poorer service to older victims. The two inspectorates also found that the police and CPS lacked any joint cohesive and focused strategy to deal with older victims of crime. The report praises the work of police officers in their initial dealings with older victims of crime, including attending promptly to reports of crime from older victims, but found that afterwards officers struggled to deal some of the complex needs of older people.

This means that:

- Older people were not always properly safeguarded
- Referral to victim support services for older people is too inconsistent
- Older people were not always offered the support of intermediaries, or helped to give their best evidence, for example by video-recording their evidence or using hearing loops.

As a result of the inspection, a series of recommendations aimed at improving responses to older victims of crime and vulnerable adults were made, some of which refer specifically to the police.



Cause of concerns

- The police don't consistently assess the needs of victims as set out in the relevant codes of practice and so the needs of victims aren't always met.
- Chief constables don't understand well enough the current demand for adult safeguarding arrangements, and haven't considered the likely future demand and the implications for forces.
- Some victims may not be receiving support services, and some support services don't work as well as they could. This is because the police don't always refer victims when they should, support services don't have ready access to police information, and witness care arrangements are sometimes provided separately.
- Some adults who need safeguarding are being put at risk because the police aren't always referring cases to partner organisations, and there are no effective measures to ensure that referrals have been made.

Recommendations

- Within six months, chief constables should make sure that victim needs assessments are always completed.
- Within three months, chief constables should conduct analysis of the current and future demand for adult safeguarding, including the gap in knowledge that may exist from those cases where referrals aren't made because of errors or omissions. This analysis should be incorporated into force management statements (FMSs).
- Within six months, chief constables should work with police and crime commissioners and their mayoral equivalents, and other relevant organisations, to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way.
- Within three months, chief constables should ensure that adult safeguarding referrals are always made when appropriate, with effective processes in place to make sure this happens. The NPCC lead for adults at risk should advise chief constables as to how this is best achieved.

There was also one area for improvement:

Area for improvement

- Within six months, chief constables should find good ways to assess the current demands on the police made by older people. These assessments should include a prediction of future changes in demand, account for the work of other organisations, and be incorporated into FMSs.



CHIEF CONSTABLE RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:

While Norfolk was not one of the forces inspected, we fully accept the recommendations made in this report which aims to ensure the needs of older victims are met consistently.

Victims are the priority in any investigation and work is already underway to better understand and improve our service to older victims. The Supporting Victims Sub Group, led by Detective Chief Superintendent Julie Wvendth, is working towards making sure victims needs are being properly assessed and that the right support is subsequently provided. The findings of this work will be used to inform decisions around future plans to progress our victim focused service.

PCC RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:

I note the contents of this report with both interest and concern. My office has the legal responsibility for supporting the victims of crime and as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, which has a greater than average percentage of elderly residents, the report makes for particularly salient reading.

I was pleased that the 2018/19 Peel Assessment found that Norfolk Constabulary protects the vulnerable well. I also note that while the HMICFRS inspectors visited six forces, Norfolk Constabulary was not one of these. However, we are far from complacent in Norfolk and my office has commissioned a range of services to support victims of crime whatever their age.

I will monitor the forces adoption of the recommendations made though the existing accountability framework my office has in place.

For Office Use Only:

- ✓ Response forwarded to the Home Office
- ✓ Response forwarded to HMICFRS
- ✓ Response published on the OPCCN website
- ✓ Response forwarded to Chief Constable
- ✓ Response forwarded to Police and Crime Panel