

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

PUBLICATION OF THE POLICING BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTION CONDUCTED BY HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY ON THE PSNI

THE PSNI – AN INSPECTION OF HOW WELL
THE SERVICE TREATS ITS WORKFORCE AND
THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Policing Board has a statutory duty to hold the PSNI to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient policing service for the whole community. The Board carries out this work in a number of ways through engagement with the community and key stakeholders and Committee and Board meetings. However, with the exception of information gathered through research about the PSNI's policy and practice on the ground, the Board is largely reliant on information provided by the PSNI. Information is received either through scrutiny at Board and Committee meetings, correspondence with the Chief Constable, face to face meetings between the PSNI and through questions from the Board on particular issues.

The Board's accountability function is strengthened by having access to independent professional policing assessments from relevant bodies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) on how the PSNI is performing and discharging its responsibilities in a number of key areas. This enables the Board to hold the Chief Constable to account using an evidence based approach.

As there is a statutory obligation on HMIC to undertake an annual efficiency and effectiveness inspection of the PSNI, the Board agreed to request the Justice Minister to commission HMIC to undertake an inspection. The objective was to inform the public, the Board and the Justice Minister of the PSNI's strengths and areas for improvement in a number of key areas.

THE 2019/20 HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION

From 2016 to 2018 the PSNI has been inspected on the efficiency and effectiveness pillars of the HMICFRS PEEL methodology. However, for the 2019/20 Inspection, following detailed engagement with stakeholders, most notably DOJ, the Board outlined that the legitimacy pillar should not be viewed as something separate or an optional extra, but instead an absolutely integral part of an efficiency and effectiveness inspection. Therefore, the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, was based on the same

legislative premise and the legitimacy pillar seen as relating directly to the effectiveness and efficiency of the PSNI rather than something outside of the scope of HMICFRS' statutory function. Consequently, the 2019/20 inspection of the PSNI examined all elements of the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy inspection methodology. The Inspection was carried out by HMIC in January 2020 using the following methodology:

HMIC asked three main questions, supported by seven subsidiary questions. They were:

- **Does the service inspire public confidence?**
Does the service treat the public with fairness and respect? Does the service use its powers, particularly force and stop and search powers, fairly and proportionately?
- **Is the behaviour of the service's workforce ethical and lawful?**
Does the service foster an ethical culture? How effectively does it tackle corruption?
- **Does the service inspire the confidence of its workforce?**
How effectively does the service identify and resolve unfairness at work? Does it support the wellbeing of its employees? How fairly and effectively does it monitor staff performance, and conduct recruitment?

HMIC were also asked to inspect the effectiveness and efficiency of the service. The report entitled "The Police Service of Northern Ireland – An Inspection of how well the service treats its workforce and the people of Northern Ireland" was published on 10th September 2020¹.

BOARD ANALYSIS AND KEY ISSUES

At the Board meeting of 1st October 2020 Members analysed the published HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report 2019/20. Her Majesty Inspector (HMI) for Northern Ireland, Matt Parr presented Members with the report. Following this, HMI and the PSNI Chief

¹ HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report 2019/20, Available online at: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/psni-inspection-how-well-service-treats-workforce-and-people.pdf>

Constable participated in a question and answer session with Members. Members raised a number of issues in relation to:

- Use of Force – Members discussed the improvements required in the recording and monitoring systems;
- Use of Force Tasers – the Chief Constable outlined his intention to increase the number of Armed Response Unit officers with access to Tasers but that it was not intended to provide all officers with Tasers;
- Use of Body Worn Video – Members raised the issue with officers not always activating their Body Worn Video;
- The current Performance Review System; and
- The identification of talent.

In a subsequent follow up report from the Chief Constable to the Board, he welcomed the report and is pleased to note the HMICFRS,

“Rated the PSNI as “Good” overall, comparing us favourably with other Services in England and Wales despite our unique context.”

Further correspondence from the Deputy Chief Constable in November 2020- set out that the PSNI have accepted the HMICFRS Report in full and all the Areas of Improvement with the exception of the one relating to Tasers. A progress report in relation to addressing all the recommendations was made available to the Board.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall the Board welcomes the findings of the HMICFRS report and the rating of the PSNI as “Good”. The findings within the report outline that the PSNI is good in a number of areas, including its treatment of the workforce, ability to inspire confidence, the provision of a fair and respectful service to the public and a strong ethical culture.

The Board has committed to continuing to monitor the implementation of the recommendations through the work of the Committees and to continue to monitor the Use of Force recommendations. The Board has also requested that its Human Rights Advisor considers this area for further scrutiny during 2021 as part of the overall Human Rights Monitoring Framework.

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
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DOCUMENT TITLE

Publication of the Policing Board's Response to the Inspection Conducted By Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary on the PSNI

The PSNI – An Inspection of How Well the Service Treats its Workforce and the People of Northern Ireland February 2021

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