

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMICFRS) - Policing in the pandemic The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020 (Apr 2021).

[The report can be found here](#)

In July 2020, HMICFRS announced its intention to inspect the police response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspection took a snapshot of policing and assessed what happened from March to November 2020. Nottinghamshire Police was one of 19 forces where detailed inspections undertaken.

HMICFRS consulted many interested parties about the aspects of policing that the inspection should cover and focused on:

- Preparation for the pandemic;
- Overall leadership;
- Working with other organisations;
- Policing – workforce wellbeing, protecting people who are vulnerable, requests for service, investigating crime, enforcing coronavirus legislation (the Four Es approach – engage, explain, encourage, enforce); and
- Arrangements for keeping people in custody.

HMICFRS found that during the first lockdown the demand on policing changed. There were fewer reports of some crimes such as theft and robbery, and an increased need to support the work of other frontline services as well as enforcing lockdown restrictions. This change meant forces utilised their resources differently. For example, some forces were able to clear backlogs of outstanding arrest warrants.

Inspectors also found that the fast-paced announcement and introduction of new legislation affected some forces' ability to produce timely and clear guidance for staff. This sometimes led to confusion over the difference between legislation and government guidance, with the inspectorate stressing that the police can only enforce legislation.

The inspectorate acknowledged the criticism some forces faced for their interpretation of lockdown restrictions, including undertaking road checks to identify unnecessary journeys,

drone surveillance, and police action in relation to non-essential shopping and what was thought to be excessive exercise.

While these actions were viewed by some as heavy-handed or inconsistent, inspectors were assured that police forces had learnt from these instances and in general did well to maintain public trust.

In Nottinghamshire I believe the Chief Constable got the right balance by employing the four E's – Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce only as a final option. Also, demand for service changed; for example, there were 169,685 '999' calls received in the last 12 months, which represents a 13% reduction (-25,365, 69 calls per day). '101' calls also reduced by almost a fifth (-22.9%) from 752,136 to 579,874 (-172,262) over the same period (472 less calls per day). Victim Based crime fell by 22.6% although reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB) increased by 50% (+16,062).

All Forces experienced significant reductions in crime. Government studies show that the underlying reason for this reduction relate to falls in theft offences, particularly domestic burglary and other theft of personal property; this reflects the increase in time people spent at home during the lockdown period, a reduction in opportunities for theft in public spaces and the closure of the night-time economy.

The exception was police recording of drug offences, which increased and reflects proactive police activity as overall crime levels reduced. In contrast, because people spent more time at home, some domestic crimes increased. The large increases in ASB relate to breaches or reports of potential breaches of COVID-19 regulations.

COVID-19 impacted most aspects of policing placing huge demands on policing and the need to change and adapt working practices.

I am pleased that HMICFRS cited one of the ways Nottinghamshire Police adapted to the new challenges e.g. the enhanced quality assurance processes introduced to reduce the chances of missing elements of risk and vulnerability by including content about vulnerability in its vlogs (video blogs), updating officers and staff on how to spot and act on concerns.

HMICFRS made five recommendations for forces in relation to:

- Managing registered sex offenders
- Legislation and guidance
- Test, track and trace
- Custody records
- Overall scale and impact of changes

The Force will continue to use its dedicated 4ACTION database for tracking and responding to all HMICFRS recommendations and areas for improvement overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable. The Force also provides regular HMICFRS update reports to my Joint Audit and Scrutiny Panel (JASP) who provide additional scrutiny in these important areas.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner