

Report on Police Scotland's progress regarding call handling published today



A report considering the current state of police call handling and the progress made by Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in the past three years has been published today.

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Gillian Imery QPM, said: "Throughout a challenging period of intensive change and development, the management and staff in Contact, Command and Control (C3) division in Police Scotland have continued to be strongly committed to providing a good service to the public.

"A number of key milestones have been achieved, staff morale and confidence has improved and performance has stabilised. However there are still some areas where further progress is required."

All the recommendations made in the HMICS report in 2015 are now closed either due to their satisfactory completion or because changes within Police Scotland mean they are no longer relevant or best addressed elsewhere in the organisation.

To ensure that key areas of development and risk continue to be addressed by the SPA and Police Scotland, eight further recommendations are contained in the report published today.

The new recommendations relate to development and investment in ICT, developing a C3 procedures manual, upgrading the C3 demand and forecasting tool, developing a public contact strategy, and maintaining C3 continuous improvement and business development teams.

A risk and vulnerability assessment model to consider the wide range of demands on C3, and the supporting provision of Public Assistance Desks, should be developed as should a cohesive approach to reduce the number of calls which result from a failure to effectively route or handle some types of calls at initial contact.

Additionally, HMICS recommends the methods which have been adopted by the SPA and Police Scotland in terms of the governance, management and quality assurance of the C3 work should be adopted as standard when implementing significant change in the future.

A number of elements of the 10 year strategy for Police Scotland, known as Policing 2026: Serving a Changing Scotland, will involve call handling and contact with the public and HMICS will be monitoring its delivery and implementation.

Since February, a single national command and control system has been in place giving a complete picture of all incidents across Scotland. However HMICS found there are still issues with terms and conditions for police staff, training structures, the technology to implement a single national gazetteer for all emergency services and standardised national processes.

Mrs Imery added: "It is important to recognise there will always be a level of risk in police call handling. Given the volume of calls and the nature of the contact with the police, it is sadly likely that notable incidents will take place. What is key is to ensure that these incidents are

appropriately investigated and lessons learnt. HMICS will closely monitor C3 and make unannounced visits to ensure that the development to date continues.”

Police Scotland and the SPA will be asked to create an action plan to address the recommendations contained within the report. HMICS will scrutinise progress against this plan.