



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

Crime investigations: An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Publication date: 27th March 2025

Thematic inspection, with reference to Cheshire in fieldwork

- Ineffective police investigation processes are not always putting the victim first focusing on quantity rather than quality when measuring support for victims.
- It found police efforts are hampered by ineffective ways of recording, assessing, allocating and investigating crime.
- Forces are recording how many times they update victims, rather than recording how effective the updates are at providing information and support.
- Increased demand on the police has increased over the last decade and as such investigators' workloads were too high, the complexity of crimes is increasing, as is the time forces take to investigate them.
- Many supervisors and investigators are inexperienced and lacking the necessary training and some operating models have prevented or discouraged all officers and staff from developing an investigative mindset.
- Many forces lose investigative opportunities from the moment when an incident or crime is reported, then at various other stages in the process, however Cheshire were praised for their 'golden hour' approach.
- Outcomes for victims are reported as not good enough, with victims often withdrawing their support for investigations.

HMICFRS has made 11 recommendations to chief constables, police forces and others to make sure they build a better understanding of their crime-related demand and the resources they need so they can meet it.

Commissioner's response

I welcome the report published by HMICFRS and am pleased to see a series of recommendations which are focussed on putting victims first and improving outcomes.

Empowering officers with investigative skills and an inquiring mindset will improve outcomes as improve victim care and satisfaction.

Cheshire Constabulary were involved in the field work, and I am pleased to see good practice illustrated in the report. As part of the performance pack that the Constabulary are required to provide, I scrutinise the positive outcomes rates which I am pleased to report have increased throughout my term in office, alongside a reduction in crime.



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

The Police and Crime Plan is well aligned with the report and the inspectorate can be reassured that there is a shared focus. Some examples included below:

- ensure victims receive the highest level of care, respect and support
- establish a victims of crime board where the voice of the victim is understood to drive improvements and understanding lived in experience
- keep a sharp focus on the training provided for police officers and staff on how to handle victims with care, respect and sensitivity, as well as make sure courses about recognising harm and vulnerability are completed
- focus on driving up positive outcomes for victims and will work to understand how there can be improvements in keeping victims engaged to get a prosecution

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Price'.

Dan Price

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner



Description	Initial Response
<p>Recommendation 7 - Image searches on PND By 30 June 2025, chief constables should include in their investigation policies a direction stating that when an image exists, investigators should search it against the Police National Database and any other relevant databases before their force closes an investigation.</p>	<p>Cheshire have been an early adopter of this technology, as recognised in our PEEL inspection report. With that said, they have reviewed and updated the policy to ensure compliance with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 - Monitoring of recorded crime allocated for investigation By 30 September 2025, chief constables should establish and implement a process to monitor the proportion of recorded crime that their force allocates for investigation. This should include a process to make sure a decision not to allocate a crime for investigation is appropriate.</p>	<p>Cheshire have reviewed and refreshed the allocation policy and have bolstered quality assurance arrangements to ensure that continued compliance with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 - Investigation plans By 30 September 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has a clear policy relating to investigation plans. They should make sure their force communicates this policy to officers and staff. As a minimum, this policy should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when to start an investigation plan;• who is responsible for writing the investigation plan;• what to consider including in an investigation plan;• how supervisors should review and approve investigation plans; and• how the force will monitor investigation plans to check their quality, and to make sure investigators and supervisors have followed them.	<p>There is a clear policy in relation to investigation plans. However, visits to a number of forces with good practice have established what actions will bring about improvement.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 - Receiving, assessing and allocating reports of crime By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the end-to-end process for receiving, assessing and allocating reports of crime in their force minimises delays in the investigation process and the length of time before investigators contact victims.</p>	<p>Cheshire have introduced a new governance framework to monitor compliance against this recommendation.</p>



Recommendation 9 - SV review of crime investigations

By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure the first supervisory review of a crime investigation takes place early enough for the supervisor to be able to:

- review any actions taken, including those to assess and manage risk;
- make sure the investigator has put in place the appropriate support for victims, and is complying with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime;
- set or approve an investigation plan;
- review the investigator's caseload; and
- set a date for a further review.

Cheshire have changed the way the Quality Assurance Thematic Testing Inspector reviews (QATT). Cheshire have appointed thematic leads to oversee the QATT process with part of their remit being to ensure compliance with the constituent elements of this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 - E2E Process for dealing with online crime reports

By 31 December 2025, chief constables should make sure their force has an effective and efficient end-to-end process to deal with online reports of crime. The process should remove all unnecessary delays in recording, assessing and allocating crime reports, and make sure the force consistently complies with its requirements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

The force leadership team have commissioned a review of position against this recommendation in light of the recently published Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines. A new governance board has been established to coordinate the response.

Recommendation 5 - Crime allocation policy

By 31 December 2025, chief constables should design and operate a policy that results in their force allocating to investigators crimes that are commensurate with each investigator's level of training, accreditation and experience.

As previously mentioned, Cheshire have reviewed and refreshed our allocation policy and have bolstered quality assurance arrangements to ensure continued compliance with this recommendation.



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

Recommendation 10 - Investigation training and CPD

By 31 March 2026, chief constables should:

- make sure any member of staff who has a role in supporting the investigation process completes the College of Policing 'Introduction to investigation' learning programme;
- satisfy themselves that the content of their force's ongoing investigative training for responders is designed to develop their investigative skills and performance, and to improve outcomes for victims, and that their force gives responders protected time to complete this training;
- make sure their force focuses sufficiently on case file preparation when providing professionalising investigations programme level 1 training, while taking into account local procedures and case management systems;
- make sure their force gives officers and staff continuing professional development opportunities about preparing case files;
- make sure their force keeps accurate records of professionalising investigations programme level 2 accredited officers and staff, and that those officers and staff complete annual continuing professional development to maintain their accreditation, which forces should also accurately record; and
- review the investigative training their force gives to supervisors, making sure it equips them to oversee and direct crime investigations effectively.

Cheshire is one of the pilot forces for the new College of Policing Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP1). They will be rolling out new and improved training to our investigators and supervisors and will ensure that our delivery complies with the constituent elements of this recommendation.