



Dan Price
Cheshire
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Commissioner

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

Title of inspection: Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service

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Inspection types: Joint inspection and Thematic inspection

Recommendations: National

Report summary

This joint inspection by His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Inspectorate (HMCIPI) and HMICFRS examines how police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) collaborate to build prosecution cases. It identifies persistent inefficiencies and tensions stemming from poor communication, incompatible IT systems and differing priorities. The report highlights that bureaucratic processes, inconsistent file quality, and unclear guidance especially around redaction and disclosure which undermine case progression and frustrate both agencies. Despite improvements in senior-level collaboration, frontline relationships remain strained. The inspection found that the current digital infrastructure is inadequate, with no unified IT strategy, leading to delays and miscommunication. Training gaps and inconsistent supervision further exacerbate issues. The report makes 18 recommendations, three for police which include developing a national digital case management system, improving joint governance, standardizing training and checklists, and reviewing redaction requirements. It calls for the National Criminal Justice Board to lead strategic reforms and for greater use of joint training and early advice surgeries. Ultimately, the report stresses that resolving these systemic issues is essential to improving outcomes for victims, witnesses, and the public.

Recommendations from Inspectors and Constabulary response



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Recommendation	Constabulary response
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>By July 2026, police forces should have in place as part of their gatekeeping or comparable arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an effective governance and decision-making capability to ensure investigations are timely and completed to the appropriate standards • agreed contact arrangements in place in forces and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Areas to facilitate clear, consistent, and transparent communication between police and CPS • sufficient, trained, and competent decision-makers • effective and efficient systems and processes to manage case file submission queues, to avoid unnecessary delays and risks to cases subject to statutory time limits. 	<p>The constabulary has established a centralised dedicated Police Decision Maker function (PDM). All files are tracked and monitored from initial report to conclusion using a case file tracker which allows for significant data collation and reporting.</p> <p>PDMs work closely with CPS lawyers and triage staff and contact arrangements have been improved through ongoing work to improve joint understanding of each agency's priorities and requirements as well as an operational working knowledge of respective IT systems.</p> <p>The assessment by the Constabulary is that they are compliant.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Within 12 months of the completion of recommendation 6, police forces should ensure that every supervisor responsible for assessing case files prior to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision is trained in case file building and Director's Guidance on Charging (6th edition) (DG6) quality assurance.</p>	<p>The Constabulary are awaiting the approved training package from the College of Policing and will ensure that there is a plan to deliver the training as required. In the meantime, our Criminal Justice Department has recently completed a dedicated training day for frontline sergeants on DG6 and case file quality. Sergeants from Area Improvement Teams are also invited to complete tours of duty alongside Police Decision Makers to improve their knowledge around file quality requirements.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p>	<p>A joint training plan has already been agreed through the Cheshire / Merseyside Joint Operational Improvement Meeting (JOIM).</p>



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By July 2026, the police and Crown Prosecution Service at Joint Operational Improvement Meetings should develop a joint local training plan to increase awareness and understanding of each other's roles, including the operation of IT systems.

Recent examples of joint training include bespoke Virtual Reality Vulnerability Training delivered to all CPS lawyers to provide a better understanding around Child Neglect investigations, CPS Q&A sessions with front line officers regarding file submissions, dedicated Full Code Test training delivered by CPS to all Police Decision makers, and a number of joint training videos produced by Police and CPS highlighting new initiatives (most recently the implementation and benefits of Prosecution team Talks).

As previously mentioned, PDMs work closely with CPS lawyers and triage staff and contact arrangements have been improved through ongoing work to improve joint understanding of each agency's priorities and requirements as well as an operational working knowledge of respective IT systems.





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Commissioner's Response:

I welcome the findings of the joint inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) into case building practices between police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service. The report rightly highlights the systemic challenges that hinder the delivery of timely and effective justice which ultimately impact victims most severely.

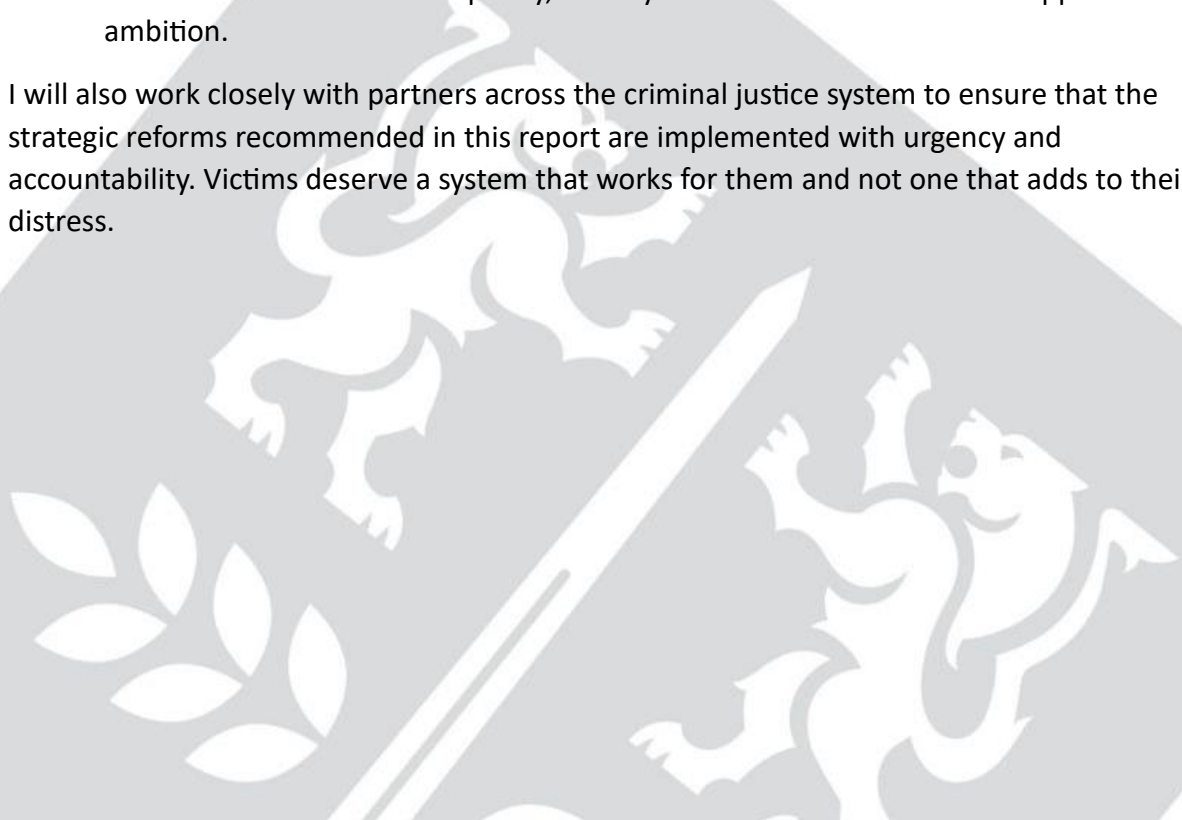
As Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, I am committed to ensuring that victims remain at the heart of our criminal justice system. The inspection's emphasis on improving digital infrastructure, communication, and training is not just about operational efficiency but about restoring confidence for victims who deserve clarity, compassion, and swift justice and align with my vision to modernise.

I am encouraged by the proactive steps Cheshire Constabulary has already taken, including the establishment of a centralised Police Decision Maker function and the implementation of joint training initiatives with CPS colleagues. These efforts are vital in reducing delays, improving file quality, and ensuring that cases progress without unnecessary barriers.

However, we must go further. I will continue to scrutinise and support the Constabulary's efforts to:

- Ensure victims are kept informed throughout the case building process, with clear communication and updates at every stage.
- Embed trauma-informed practices in training for officers and decision-makers, so that interactions with victims are sensitive and supportive.
- Champion the development of modern ways of working using technology.
- Advocate for joint structures that include victim voice and feedback in evaluating case outcomes and service quality, and my victims of crime board will support this ambition.

I will also work closely with partners across the criminal justice system to ensure that the strategic reforms recommended in this report are implemented with urgency and accountability. Victims deserve a system that works for them and not one that adds to their distress.



This inspection is a timely reminder that justice delayed is justice denied. I am committed to driving forward improvements that place victims first and ensure that our justice system is fair, transparent, and effective for all.



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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dan Price'.

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