

Sir Thomas Winsor ws
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

All chief constables (and MPS ACs and above)
All police and crime commissioners
& London local policing bodies

6 November 2015

Dear chief constable / police and crime commissioner

CRIME-RECORDING – ACCURACY – FURTHER INSPECTIONS

This letter tells you how HMIC will inspect forces' crime-recording practices in future.

2. It is almost a year since the publication of our report on the accuracy of crime-recording – *Crime-recording: Making the Victim Count*. It did not reveal an attractive picture.
3. As you know, the 2014 national average of under-recording of crimes – 19 per cent – was inexcusably poor. The position was even worse in the cases of sexual offences (including rapes) where under-recording was at 26 per cent, and the national rate of incorrect decisions to no-crime rapes was 20 per cent. In the case of violence against the person, 33 per cent of crimes went unrecorded.
4. This was the national picture. Of course some forces performed significantly better, and some much worse. Some forces, such as Kent and West Yorkshire, showed how rapidly a poor position should and could be remedied.
5. In our report, we said that failure properly to record crime is indefensible, and a continuation of the reported national failure rate would be deplorable.
6. We said that accurate crime-recording is essential if forces are to be able to make sound decisions on the deployment of resources, and to operate with the highest practicable levels of efficiency. Further pressures on police budgets will intensify the need for reliable information about crime. Public safety and the needs of victims must not be compromised by such failures.
7. The importance which HMIC – and those who hold police forces to account – attaches to accurate crime-recording is undiminished.
8. In future, in relation to crime-recording, HMIC will carry out unannounced inspections. These will not be confined to those forces in which crime-recording was found in 2014 to be especially bad. Every force will be inspected. The intensity of each inspection and the aspects of crime-recording inspected will be at HMIC's discretion. Forces will be told what is required when the inspectors arrive.
9. Any force which is found not to be taking all necessary steps to record crimes accurately and in accordance with the published rules and standards should expect appropriate criticism from HMIC. Our findings and judgment in each case will be published.

10. It is often objected that forces have to spend a lot of time preparing for HMIC inspections. In the case of our inspections of crime-recording, the only preparation which is necessary is to ensure crime-recording is always as good as it should be.

11. Our inspections will also assess the extent to which recommendations in HMIC's 2014 crime-recording inspection have been implemented.

12. It is in the interests of every force to ensure that materially adverse public criticism of any force is avoided.

13. This letter is published.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sir Thomas Winsor', written in a cursive style.

SIR THOMAS WINSOR

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Copies:

Home Secretary

Minister for Policing

Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee

Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee

Chief Executive, UK Statistics Authority

National Crime Registrar, Home Office

Chair, NPCC

Chair and CEO, College of Policing