

Publication of the Northern Ireland Policing Board's
Response to the Inspection Conducted by His Majesty's
Inspector of Constabulary and the Fire and Rescue
Service on the Police Service of Northern Ireland

The Police Service of Northern Ireland
An Inspection of Police
Effectiveness, Efficiency,
Vetting and Standards

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Policing Board has a statutory duty to hold the PSNI to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient policing service for the whole community. The Board carries out this work in a number of ways through engagement with the community and key stakeholders and Committee and Board meetings. However, with the exception of information gathered through research about the PSNI's policy and practice on the ground, the Board is largely reliant on information provided by the PSNI. Information is received either through scrutiny at Board and Committee meetings, correspondence with the Chief Constable, face to face meetings between the PSNI and through questions from the Board on particular issues.

The Board's accountability function is strengthened by having access to independent professional policing assessments from relevant bodies such as His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) on how the PSNI is performing and discharging its responsibilities in a number of key areas. This enables the Board to hold the Chief Constable to account using an evidence-based approach.

As there is a statutory obligation on HMICFRS to undertake an annual efficiency and effectiveness inspection of the PSNI, the Board agreed with the Department to commission HMICFRS to undertake this inspection. The objective was to inform the public, the Board and the Department of the PSNI's strengths and areas for improvement in a number of key areas.

THE 2022/23 HMICFRS PEEL INSPECTION

HMICFRS Inspection Report – “An Inspection of Police Effectiveness, Efficiency, Vetting and Standards” 2022/23

The inspection assessed how good the Police Service of Northern Ireland is in five areas of policing. It made graded judgments in all five areas as follows:

Area	Grade
Investigating crime	Good
Protecting vulnerable people	Adequate
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Adequate
Vetting arrangements	Adequate
Detecting and dealing with misogynistic and predatory behaviour	Good

The Inspection fieldwork was carried out in January and February 2023 and the following areas of inspection were set out in the terms of reference:

- How well does the PSNI investigate crime?
- How well does the PSNI identify and protect vulnerable people?
- How effective are the PSNI’s arrangements for strategic planning and organisational management?
- How well does the PSNI prevent those unsuitable to serve the public from joining and remaining in the service?
- How well equipped is the PSNI to detect and deal with misogynistic, prejudicial and improper behaviour, and predatory behaviour?

HMICFRS were also asked to inspect the effectiveness and efficiency of the service. The report entitled “The Police Service of Northern Ireland – An Inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency, vetting and standards was published on 10 October 2023¹.

BOARD ANALYSIS

Members considered the Inspection Report at Board and Committee meetings and the Chief Constable has welcomed the report and considered it to be positive, stating that;

¹ HMICFRS Inspection Report 2022/23, Available online at: [The Police Service of Northern Ireland: An inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency, vetting and standards - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/reports-and-publications/the-police-service-of-northern-ireland-an-inspection-of-police-effectiveness-efficiency-vetting-and-standards/)

“In particular, our performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime, and the ‘Good’ ratings that we have received for Investigating Crime and our determination to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour. This is despite the unprecedented financial circumstances that we operating in.”

A progress report in relation to addressing all the recommendations was made available to Board Members for consideration in December 2023.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Board welcomes the findings of the HMICFRS report and the rating of the PSNI as “Good” in two areas, investigating crime and detecting and dealing with misogynistic and predatory behaviour.

The report also suggests a number of areas for improvement for the PSNI, in particular the need to improve its understanding of and response to child criminal exploitation. It also suggested improving its vetting arrangements, how it detects and deals with misogynistic, prejudicial and improper behaviour and predatory behaviour and to improve its workforce planning performance management framework.

The Board has committed to continuing to monitor the implementation of the recommendations through the work of the Committees.

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

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Northern Ireland Policing Board

James House, Block D
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue
The Gasworks
Belfast, BT7 2JA

 028 9040 8500

 information@nipolicingboard.org.uk

 www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

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DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, the Northern Ireland Policing Board will not be held liable for any inaccuracies that may be contained within.