



INDEPENDENT CRIME RECORDING CONFIDENCE PANEL 2018 - 2019

An examination of the HMICFRS Crime Recording Integrity Inspection
results for Lincolnshire Police



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Panel Members

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Chair

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Deputy Chair (Independent Member of Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel)

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(Chief Executive Officer, Lincolnshire Rape Crisis)

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Panel Advisor (Accredited Force Crime and Incident Registrar, Northamptonshire Police)

About the Chair

Cate Moore is the Independent Chair of Lincolnshire Police Ethics Panel. She is an ex Police Officer with expertise and knowledge in both practical Policing and the Governance of Forces. She has written articles on a wide range of Policing matters and spoken on Governance matters, with emphasis on the future and 'good change' for the benefit of the Public. Cate is dedicated to ensuring clarity and transparency are tools for public good.

Foreword



Crime Recording is a complex matter which requires attention to detail and a never ending battle between compliance and flexibility of approach – something of a paradox. What follows in this report should be read with a backdrop of severe cuts and ever more hard pressed frontline Officers. It should be remembered that where there are failures, there are almost always systems and procedures which have failed, rather than individuals. Today's frontline Officers, their immediate supervisors and the staff in the Force Control Room are dedicated people who work under increasingly difficult circumstances and austerity has been felt in support roles too, leaving ever fewer people carrying more responsibility and with fewer colleagues to share the load.

This report looks at the quantitative evidence produced by HMICFRS and seeks to form the narrative story behind the figures. Policing is a people orientated endeavour and whilst statistics are an important tool, they should be the beginning of a story, not an end in themselves. HMICFRS provide a service for the public and for Forces through their inspections and their findings should be welcomed as an opportunity for conversation. For me, the most important recommendation in this report is that the Force and HMICFRS should be aware of the impact the language used in press releases and interviews can have on members of the public.

I would like to thank everyone who came along to our Panel when invited and took part in good faith. They created the picture we needed to better understand what happened, why it happened, what might be done differently. Policing is often the art of making the least worst decision and perhaps this is true of some areas of Crime Recording, where the best interests of the individual may not always be full compliance with the counting rules. These are the conversations that Inspections such as this can invoke and we should not shy away from them.

Cate Moore

Chair, Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel for
the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Some words from Marc Jones

The decision I took to establish the Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel was taken following the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue (HMICFRS) in the recording of crime by Lincolnshire Police in 2018. <https://lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/what-our-priorities-are-and-how-we-are-doing/hmicfrs-inspections/themed-inspections/2018-crime-data-integrity-inspection/>



The report stated that crimes were not being recorded in a way that was in the public interest and clearly this had the potential to affect public confidence and this was of grave concern to me.

Aside from my expectation that the Force would address any technical and practical issues regarding the recording of crime I wanted to ensure that the public could have confidence that regardless of HMICFRS compliance, the Force was acting in the best interests of the public and importantly ensuring victims of crime were receiving the service they deserved.

Inspections by HMICFRS can generate more questions than answers. Sometimes they highlight issues that are very helpful in determining ways to improve policing but on other occasions they can appear to lack context or not recognise the reality faced by differing Forces.

In this case it was unclear how the crime recording processes by Lincolnshire Police were having an impact on crime statistics and, more importantly, the support given to victims and the perception of the Force with the public.

I believed the best way to investigate the implications for our residents and communities was to set up an independent panel to carry out a thorough review with public safety and perception as the principal concerns.

I am delighted that the panel, Chaired independently by Cate Moore has addressed its new aims with dedication and attention to detail.

The recommendations set out in this report are the result of intelligent analysis, thoughtful consideration and detailed insight.

They represent a very practical and achievable set of objectives with the primary aims of supporting the Force in its drive to create crime recording processes with openness and integrity at its heart.

In particular they set out recommendations which seek to ensure that victims are properly identified and protected.

I welcome them wholeheartedly and commend the members for their commitment and hard work.

I am delighted they will continue to monitor progress in the coming months and have every confidence the work they do, in partnership with senior officers within Lincolnshire Police, will ensure we have a system that is in the best interests of our residents.

In due course HMICFRS will re-inspect Lincolnshire Police regarding its compliance with the national standard. I have confidence that the Chief Constable has worked hard to ensure practices have been updated but that will undoubtedly have contributed to increases in crime figures. This report does not seek to comment on whether the current national inspection regime is fit for purpose or whether Lincolnshire Police are complying with those measures.

Introduction

The Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel¹ was set up by Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Marc Jones after an Inspection on Crime Data Integrity by HMICFRS² rated Lincolnshire Police as 'Inadequate'. This Inspection raised many questions which were not straight forward to answer and so the task of the Panel was to look at why the grading of Inadequate had been given, what could be done and what had been done in response, but also to look at whether the Force is acting in the best interests of the people of Lincolnshire. The primary aim for the PCC is to ensure Lincolnshire Police offers the best service it can to the people it serves and seeks to put their best interests at the heart of all it does. The Panel sought to measure their findings against this bar, whilst mindful that this may involve difficult conversations about compliance. Data collection is a tool that is used to provide that best service, not a means to an end in itself.

This report explains the background to the headlines which were generated by the HMICFRS inspection and is an opportunity for the public, the Force and HMICFRS to look deeper and gain wider understanding, beyond their own frame of reference. It is written to be accessible to those who work within Policing and Policing Governance but also for the Public who are the focus but can often seem too far removed, even from governance work. The Lincolnshire PCC has sought to rectify this by setting up the Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel.

The Panel will continue to meet in the current format until HMICFRS has conducted a re-inspection of Lincolnshire Police regarding Crime Recording Integrity. This report looks at the background to why the grading was Inadequate. The Force now has an opportunity to put in to place the measures recommended herein alongside those recommendations made by HMICFRS. After the re-inspection it is expected that the grading will have increased. At this point, the Panel proposes to meet quarterly and take an oversight approach to provide continued reassurance to the PCC and the Public and an opportunity for conversation with the Force and any other interested parties, as it is recognised that Crime Recording is an ever evolving and highly complicated area of business.

¹ For Terms of Reference see Appendix A

² <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/about-us/>

Executive Summary

The Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel was created in September 2018, at the request of the PCC. The Panel's brief was to independently look at the context of the HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Inspection findings, the way the information was disseminated to the Public, the Force's response to the Inspection findings and the impact both the Inspection and the response had on victims. The aim of the Panel was to support the PCC in his scrutiny role whilst increasing understanding of National Crime Recording Standards, thereby improving transparency.

The HMICFRS report³ on Crime Recording Integrity in Lincolnshire Police was published in July 2018 and was one of a number of such Inspection reports which saw Forces across the Country receive low or very low grading. The Panel has only concerned itself with Lincolnshire for this report but the matters discussed herein are far from unique

Compliance to Home Office Counting Rules⁴ is important for analysts and can be informative but statistics are only part of the story. A new Command and Control system is imminent, which will hopefully make recording at first point of contact more likely. This report suggests options to increase audit capacity, to give a clear picture of what is happening locally and pick up any problems as they occur. Continuous professional development (CPD) is also recommended for all staff, to keep everyone up to date on Crime Recording policy both nationally and locally. Good training goes beyond learning rules to understanding the wider implications of those rules.

Internal language used by Professional bodies and Police Forces can be alarming and misleading to members of the Public, especially if they are vulnerable or victims who have not felt able to speak to the Police. These people often go directly to 3rd Sector partners and so the impact of this Inspection was not only felt by Lincolnshire Police, but by local and national charities who had no prior warning their demand was about to increase dramatically. HMICFRS and Lincolnshire Police both seek to put victims and vulnerable people at the heart of their work and this report shows that they can only do that effectively if they are working closely with their 3rd Sector partners.

³ See Appendix B or <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/lincolnshire-police-crime-data-integrity-inspection-2018/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Force should ensure Force Control Room (FCR) staff are sufficiently trained and equipped to identify and record any crime where appropriate. (page 10)
2. Command and Control systems should support research and previous allegations, leading to effective criming of Stalking, Harassment and Domestic Abuse (including Coercive and Controlling behaviour from 1st July 2018). (page 10)
3. The Force should ensure training and CPD opportunities regarding policies, practices and supervision of Crime Recording are effective and ongoing. (page 11)
4. The Force should ensure an appropriately resourced and flexible audit function in relation to Crime Data integrity. (page 12)
5. Look at sharing audit costs across the Region, with mobile auditors spending time in each Force. (page 13)
6. The Force and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) should continue to develop and maintain strong links with victim support and 3rd Sector charities with particular emphasis on vulnerability. (page 13)
7. All parties, including HMICFRS should be aware that communications can cause an adverse effect on public confidence in Police and victims must not be discouraged from seeking assistance and support. (page 14)
8. Lincolnshire Police and the OPCC should continue to ensure that public safety is the primary objective of Crime Recording policies and procedures. (page 15)

Methodology

Before convening the first full Panel meeting, the Chair and Chief Executive Officer for the OPCC spent time in the FCR, where many allegations of crimes are first reported. This activity was undertaken in order to understand the system journey that takes place when a crime is reported. The current system is being replaced in the coming year with a significantly improved Command and Control system.

Information was gathered by means of interview and discussion with the Crime Registrar⁵ and his Deputy, the Deputy Chief Constable and also with HMICFRS Inspectors. Panel members also learned of the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) document⁶ – the guide to which Crime Recorders must work. Internal publications created by the Crime Registrar and a National publication from the Chief Constable, in his role as National Lead for Crime Recording were made available.

Panel members were chosen for the experience and additional information they would bring. Representatives from Victim Support and Rape Crisis offered a 3rd Sector experience of the impact of Force and HMICFRS actions before, during and after the report. A Professor of Law from Lincoln University added an academic point of view and an analytical approach. The Chair of the Joint Independent Audit Committee and an independent representative of the Police and Crime Panel brought governance expertise. The Panel had the benefit of an advisor from another Force who works within Crime Recording and has done some work with HMICFRS also. The Chief Executive Officer for the OPCC was invited to be part of the Panel in an observational and advisory capacity. The Chair is also the Independent Chair of the Force's Ethics Panel.

The HMICFRS report provided a lot of quantitative data. The work of the Panel sought to balance this with more qualitative data, to discover why the Force might not have been compliant. Panel members looked at what happened, why it happened and what should happen next, finding a narrative and giving context to the statistics in the report.

⁵ See <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/article/crime-data-integrity/crime-recording-process/> for an explanation of the role of the Crime Registrar and what functions they oversee.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>

Findings

A high proportion of crimes recorded begin with a call to the FCR. From here, information is gathered and an early decision made as to initial action required. The HMICFRS report refers repeatedly to problems with the current system, where information is missed and subsequently not recorded. During the Panel meeting with HMICFRS Inspectors, it was suggested that Lincolnshire Police have a uniquely difficult situation due to the contract with G4S which covers the FCR staff. The Panel were not in agreement with this assertion as the Force maintains a Leadership role with those staff and certainly sets the direction and tone of the work in that Department. It should be noted that the Force has procured a new Command and Control system which should be installed in the FCR in 2020.

The HMICFRS report highlighted systemic problems when diary appointments were cancelled or missed. Without an initial record of the crime, that information was often lost. Response Officers were expected to record information they had no knowledge of. It would be more efficient to ensure crimes disclosed to the FCR are routinely recorded at that point.

Recommendation 1

The Force should ensure FCR staff are sufficiently trained and equipped to record any crime where appropriate.

Domestic Abuse, Sex Offences and Violent Crime were highlighted in the report as areas for concern re compliance to NCRS. HMICFRS repeatedly talk about vulnerable victims being deprived of the help or support they need because their crime was not recorded appropriately. In the case of Domestic Abuse victims, their vulnerability is clear but often difficult to change. A Command and Control system which allows for research of previous calls and incidents would both support compliance and offer a better service to the victim, by furnishing the Response Officer with a history of Police contact. The new Command and Control system should provide for this important function.

Recommendation 2

Command and Control systems should support research and previous allegations, leading to effective criming of Stalking, Harassment and Domestic Abuse (including Coercive and Controlling behaviour from 1st July 2018).

Throughout the HMICFRS report reference is made to opportunities for supervisory checks to correct criming decisions. These opportunities were frequently not taken. It was commonplace for Domestic Abuse allegations to be given a diary appointment, if there was no immediate risk. Very often, this was at the request of the caller or was a safer option for them, to be able to arrange to speak to Officers at a convenient time and place. Frequently, those appointments were cancelled or not kept and Officers did not make a note of the original allegation. This is a failure to meet NCRS standards, but operational Officers were thinking of the immediate workload rather than their administrative responsibilities. It was acknowledged that line management supervision should have been catching more of these instances. Given the long term and often escalating nature of Domestic Abuse, those callers who did not go through with speaking to Police were still let down by the omission to record their allegations and then record the withdrawal.

The Crime Registrar told the Panel that a series of training events had been implemented for all front line supervisors and he showed his internal newsletter which was full of advice and useful information for staff and Officers. It should be noted that the independent advisor to the Panel considered this publication to be excellent and an example of best practice, with potential use for other Forces too. Whilst there is evidence of action in this area, it is important that this is maintained and that training is ongoing. A National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT)⁷ package is a mandatory training piece for all Officers of all ranks. The Panel have not seen this training package but would encourage the Force to continue face-to-face training through frontline supervisor seminars as well as relying on NCALT.

Recommendation 3

The Force should ensure training and CPD opportunities regarding policies, practices and supervision of Crime Recording are effective and ongoing.

From both the HMICFRS report and the interviews conducted by the Panel the challenges of audit capacity were immediately apparent and in fact the only audit facility for Crime Recording was the Crime Registrar himself. This meant that where some other Forces had several people simply auditing the work, here in Lincolnshire Police, the Crime Registrar and his Deputy were doing their job and that of auditors. The Panel felt this to be an inappropriate use of their skills and that the audit function should be separate from the role of the Registrar. It was further acknowledged by the Panel that budgets are very tight and we were told there was no money to provide auditors for this area of business at the moment. The Force acknowledged that this lack of audit capacity played some part in the eventual rating of Inadequate from HMICFRS. They had made a presumption as to what they hoped was being done

⁷ http://www.ncalt.com/about_us.asp

well and used what capacity they had to look at areas they assumed were higher risk. This led to a position of surprise when HMICFRS found some anomalies, especially around the recording of Domestic Abuse.

HMICFRS also highlighted a problem with the accuracy of recording sexual offences, including rape. The Panel acknowledges this is a highly emotive area and many people choose not to report sexual offences to the Police, instead choosing to contact Lincolnshire Rape Crisis or other 3rd Sector organisations for help and support. Whilst some of this is undoubtedly due to a very clunky Criminal Justice System, some of it is also because of a lack of confidence in the Police to do the right thing by victims of this type of crime. For this reason, this report will explain one function of NCRS regarding sexual assault allegations, to ensure it is clear that whilst there are still issues to be addressed (which we will revisit in the body of this report), everything the Panel looked at suggested a will on behalf of the Force to do the right thing and put victims first.

The Home Office provides codes by which to classify crime types when they are recorded. One classification is N100. HMICFRS describe N100 as *'a record created to describe why reported incidents of rape or attempted rapes, whether from victims, witnesses or third parties, have not been immediately recorded as a confirmed crime. This can include where additional information confirms the rape did not occur, or where the rape occurred in another force area and was therefore transferred to the relevant force to record and investigate.'* The classification can be changed at any time, but Lincolnshire Police took a strong view on this and decided they would always believe the victim and therefore record as a crime at the outset. This means that Lincolnshire has zero N100s which is unique in the Country. It is against the Home Office guidelines but the Force and particularly the Deputy Chief Constable in post at the time, felt very strongly that they were doing the right thing by always believing the person making the allegation at that very early point and therefore was prepared to be marked down accordingly in Inspections. The Panel believes it is important that the Public hear this kind of detail, to help them to understand why some of the figures look the way they do. This is not to say that mistakes were not made – they were – or that improvements are not possible.

The Domestic Abuse (and probably violent crime) under recording would have been known in advance of the inspection and the Force would have had an opportunity to address matters, had there been adequate audit capacity available to the Crime Registrar.

Recommendation 4

The Force should ensure an appropriately resourced and flexible audit function in relation to Crime Data integrity.

Following on from the above recommendation, currently all Forces make their own arrangements for audit within their own individual Forces. This is a necessary cost and it is clear that the lack of reasonable audit capacity seriously disadvantages everyone, as it is difficult to get a clear picture of what is happening across a Force in any one area of business. This was certainly the case for Lincolnshire but with ever shrinking budgets and no clear news regarding a fairer Police funding formula it is very likely that other Forces are also finding it difficult to find the money for effective audit. It was suggested during the Panel meetings that perhaps several Forces across the region could share the cost of auditors, who could spend several weeks in each Force, providing a snap shot to help governance and better prepare for Inspections. Collaboration has seen some success in this Region, more so than in other areas across the Country so this may be something worth looking in to in more depth.

Recommendation 5

Look at sharing audit costs across the Region, with mobile auditors spending time in each Force.

The Panel has two members from the 3rd Sector, who reported on the impact both the HMICFRS report and the Force response had on their demand. Internally, the Force had seen little response from the Public and therefore reasonably assumed that there had been minimal impact on the communities of Lincolnshire. When speaking with 3rd Sector workers, it became clear that this was not the case and in fact the report, the media attention and interviews had not only impacted heavily on vulnerable victims in particular, but it had increased demand and pushed it away from Policing, on to the 3rd Sector organisations. Whilst Police received minimal contact, Rape Crisis for instance, reported their phones constantly ringing for a number of days, due to the distress caused by what people were hearing and reading in the media. This is not a one off event and similarly negative press pieces impact on 3rd Sector colleagues and the services they offer. It is important to understand how actions and events impact communities. There is opportunity here for the OPCC to support the Force with relationships with 3rd Sector organisations.

Recommendation 6

The Force and the OPCC should continue to ensure they develop and maintain strong links with victim support and third sector charities with particular emphasis on vulnerability.

The Inspection report was published on 17th July 2018 and by 18th July news items⁸ were emerging both online and in traditional news outlets. The headlines were all similar - victims were being let down. This is a quote lifted directly from the HMICFRS report⁹. The article does not directly refer to the headline again but goes on to say HMIC Zoe Billingham noted that *'while safeguarding measures were in place for many victims of unrecorded crimes, there was little evidence of investigations being undertaken where the crime had not made it on to the books'*. This and other similar quotes are reliant on understanding the detail behind crime recording and the processes involved when an Officer seeks to do the right thing with any potential victim.

On the surface, for a member of the public reading this and similar reports, the impression is that the Police are doing nothing to help people who have told them they have been sexually assaulted or raped, amongst other crimes. The reality is that there were some allegations which did not make it to the registrar's desk, there were others which were recorded in different ways, contrary to Home Office guidelines and still others which should have been termed as modern slavery and therefore the method of recording and counting would be different. Both the Inspector and the Force were at pains to explain that these victims still had appropriate safeguarding and care, meaning they were not 'let down' by having the administration of their cases filed in a way contrary to the agreed norm. This is technical detail which the Panel were obliged to look in to but which the Public and even 3rd Parties would not be expected to know or understand.

Former Deputy Chief Constable Craig Naylor was quoted as saying *"We have made mistakes and we will not shirk from accepting and correcting them,"* but also *"Our focus and commitment is to ensure victims are at the centre of all that we do and I am confident that, despite issues in how we have recorded some crimes, that service has not slipped from the high standards we set ourselves"* and *"There are no 'missed' victims or offenders - what we have missed is the correct procedure for recording them."* This was reiterated in a local radio interview the same day. The Force received little to no direct negative feedback from the Public but Rape Crisis likened the response they received to the increase in demand they experience after TV soap covers a rape story. Rape Crisis, Victim Support and other agencies were unprepared for this upsurge in demand as they were not consulted before the press releases and news interviews were made. A closer working relationship and early consultation with related 3rd Sector organisations would be a positive step for the benefit of victims in our communities. It is clear many victims, particularly of

⁸ https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lincolnshire-police-recording-crimes_uk_5b4cb7c4e4b0e7c958fdb9b5?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmluZy5jb20vc2VhcmNoP3E9aH VmZitwb3N0K3pvZStiaWxsaW5naGFtK3ZpY3RpbXMmc3JpPUIFLVNIYXJjaEJveCZGT1JNPUIFU1I0QQ&guce_refer rer_sig=AQAAAL19Vmf2nu6lSqmQXdzt05uWWQwiJrTGw7L4dmylnCQFPaumQw1MK047kFpDumpKJyite-EalF-JGdn6xEWg6PzLXxww3QOk_8OHzcwxlbP1qIAS1SdxcYwB3JxeZ6i1KcFogt7myjH9yQoZ3RfSIB3KnWrpBS_weiEui o9_eSOY&guccounter=2

⁹ See p3 HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Inspection 2018

Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Rape do not come forward to the Police but do rely on the 3rd Sector for help and support. A proportion of those people may be content with that 3rd Sector support and do not want to be involved with the Criminal Justice System. If one of the points of accurate crime recording is to give a clearer picture of crime, it should be imperative that the Force seeks to encourage those people to engage with Officers. Currently, actions from both the Force and HMICFRS have not taken this into account.

Recommendation 7

All parties, including HMICFRS should be aware that communications can cause an adverse effect on public confidence in Police and victims must not be discouraged from seeking assistance and support.

Crime Recording is a complex area which requires continual monitoring to ensure compliance to NCRS but there are technical and ethical issues which may crop up quite frequently where Officers may wish to divert from NCRS guidelines, in what they believe to be the best interests of the Public. The Panel learned of times when adhering to NCRS guidelines had led to no better outcomes but sometimes long term distress for people who had contacted Police for help and support. Keeping in mind at all times that the aim for the PCC is to ensure the best service is offered to the Public of Lincolnshire, members also found there were instances where poor recording had let some people down. However, as with all complex sets of rules there are occasions where there can be multiple interpretations of the same rules. There are instances, like the N100 classification already explained, where Lincolnshire Police have chosen to take a particular approach in the belief that it is in the best interests of the public they serve. HMICFRS stated that if a Force was to decide on a local approach in the belief that it was the right choice for the victim, then they must be certain that their approach is robust so that nothing escapes some kind of record and all safeguarding opportunities are utilised.

Recommendation 8

Lincolnshire Police and the OPCC should continue to ensure that public safety is the primary objective of Crime Recording policies and procedures.

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National Standard for Incident Recording Counting Rules, 11 April 2011

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-national-standard-for-incident-recording-nsir-counting-rules>

Glossary of Terms

3rd Sector	Includes voluntary and community organisations (both registered charities and other organisations such as associations, self-help groups and community groups), social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives. Third sector organisations are generally independent of government.
CPD	Continuous Professional Development.
Crime Registrar	Each force has a Crime Registrar who is responsible for overseeing compliance with the crime recording process. He or she is the final arbiter for the force when deciding whether or not to record a crime or make a decision cancel a crime. The registrar's responsibilities include training staff in the crime recording process and conducting audits to check compliance with the rules.
FCR	Force Control Room.
Police Funding Formula	The Police Funding Formula divides up how much money each police force receives from the overall central government funds. It takes into account a number of factors to assess demand in each area.
G4S	G4S plc (formerly Group 4 Securicor) is a British multinational security services company headquartered in London, England.
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspector Constabulary.
ICRCP	Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel.
NCALT	National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies.
NCRS	National Crime Recording Standard
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Services
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
Qualitative	Relating to, measuring, or measured by the quality of something rather than its quantity.
Quantitative	Relating to, measuring, or measured by the quantity of something rather than its quality.



Lincolnshire
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
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Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel

Terms of Reference

Aims

1. To reassure the public that crime recording is being addressed and appropriately handled in Lincolnshire Police.
2. To provide robust scrutiny of the Force's crime recording system.
3. To increase understanding of the very complex National Crime Recording Standards and thereby increase transparency and confidence in Lincolnshire Police's ability to correctly record crimes.
4. To assist the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in holding the Chief Constable to account by scrutinising his action plan to address the issues around crime recording.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Independent Crime Recording Confidence Panel (the Panel) will scrutinise and oversee the Chief Constable's action plan to address failings in crime recording.
2. The Panel will work to understand the issues identified in the July 2018 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of crime data integrity.
3. The Panel will dip sample from work books audited by HMICFRS as part of the crime data integrity inspection.
4. Report regularly to the PCC on issues relating to crime recording.
5. Publish minutes, data and/or reports on their findings in relation to crime recording, on the PCC's website.

Frequency of Meetings

The Panel will meet at least six times a year, normally on a bi-monthly basis.

Notice of meeting

At least 5 clear working days before a scheduled meeting of the Panel a summons to attend the meeting, specifying the date, time and place of the meeting and the business proposed to be considered, shall be sent to every member of the Panel.

Quorum

The quorum for the Panel will be three members.

If during any meeting of the Panel the number of members present falls below 3 then the meeting will stand adjourned. The consideration of any business not transacted shall be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair at the time the meeting is adjourned.

Chairing meetings

At any meeting the Chair shall preside, if present. In her absence, the Deputy Chair shall preside. In his absence, members present shall appoint one of their number to act as Chair for that meeting.

Minutes

Minutes of meetings will summarise the proceedings and accurately record any resolution(s) passed.

Minutes will be submitted to the next following ordinary meeting for approval. When the minutes have been confirmed as a correct record, they will be published.

Approval

These Terms of Reference were approved by the members of the Panel on 21 September 2018.

Lincolnshire Police: Crime Data Integrity inspection 2018

Overall judgment

● ○ ○ ○ Inadequate

Lincolnshire Police has made efforts to increase crime-recording accuracy which have led to some improvements since our [2014 Crime Data Integrity inspection report](#).

We found that:

- many officers and staff have made progress in placing the victim at the forefront of their crime-recording decisions;
- a good level of recording accuracy for reported sexual offences is being achieved; and
- officers and staff work hard to identify any safeguarding needs of the victim and seek to ensure these are provided.

Much work remains to be done, however. The force has completed both local recommendations for improvement made in our 2014 report, but only two out of the five national recommendations. This is adversely influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of its crime-recording arrangements.

Based on the findings of our examination of crime reports for the period 1 June 2017 to 30 November 2017, [we estimate that the force fails to record over 9,400 reported crimes each year](#). This represents a recording rate of 81.2 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.93 percent). The 18.8 percent of reported crimes that went unrecorded included a large proportion of common assaults and malicious communication offences, and a small number of more serious crimes including sexual offences, grievous bodily harm and rape. Some of these crimes involved domestic abuse. The recording rate for violent crime is a particular cause of concern at only 72.7 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.30 percent). This means that on too many occasions, the force is failing victims of crime.

Improvements must be made in many areas. We believe there are too many failures to make the correct crime-recording decision at the first opportunity and these failures are caused by the force's reliance on the recording decisions of officers attending incidents. In particular, incorrect recording decisions are evident in cases of harassment, common assault and malicious communications. There is also limited supervision to correct these decisions at the earliest opportunity.

Summary of inspection findings

The force has made some improvements in its crime-recording arrangements since our 2014 report. These include progress in:

- implementing the action plan developed by the national policing lead on crime statistics following the 2014 report, which all forces have been asked to implement. This includes improvements to the force's use of [out-of-court disposals](#);
- the accuracy of crime-recording decisions for reported sexual offences (excluding rape); and
- developing an understanding of modern slavery offences among officers and staff.

Despite these advances, the force's compliance with the [national crime recording standards \(PDF document\)](#) (NCRS) is unacceptable in the following areas:

- The force is currently under-recording too many reports of crime, including:
 - violent crimes;
 - rape; and
 - crimes involving vulnerable victims, including victims of domestic abuse.

The force must act promptly to improve the recording accuracy of these reports and to provide all victims with the service which they are entitled to and deserve.

- Crimes reported during incidents involving domestic abuse are often not recorded.
- Incidents which have been disclosed directly to public protection units as part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and which amount to a crime in law, are not always recorded as such.
- Delays in recording a reported crime are leading to delays in referrals to [Victim Support](#), letting down those victims who need the early support this team can provide.
- The force must improve the extent to which it collects information regarding the effect of criminality on identifiable groups within communities, in particular, groups with identifiable protected characteristics (e.g. gender, sexuality or ethnicity).

Some of these failings are a consequence of insufficient progress since our 2014 report. Some officers and staff do not understand their crime-recording responsibilities, and there is only limited supervision of the crime-recording decisions taken by officers and staff.

We also conclude that the audits carried out by the force were not conducted correctly and the results suggested a better compliance with the recording rules than was the case.

We note that the deputy chief constable, responsible for crime recording, has taken positive action since his arrival. The force has been actively attempting to progress improvements in crime recording, and had the true degree of crime recording accuracy been known, those improvements would have been carried out with greater urgency.

We acknowledge that since our findings have been disclosed to the force, many positive steps have been taken. These steps include the creation of an interim action plan to address our findings, increased scrutiny around crime-recording decisions, and training for specialist staff dealing with reports of crime made by professionals acting on behalf of victims.

Cause of concern

Lincolnshire Police officers and staff too often fail to make correct crime-recording decisions at the first opportunity. This is due to deficiencies in the force's crime-recording processes, insufficient understanding of crime-recording requirements and limited supervision to correct the decisions of officers and staff and improve standards from the outset. This means the force is letting down many victims of crime.

The force is failing to ensure it properly records all crimes of rape and all crimes of violence, including domestic abuse crimes and crimes reported directly to its public protection department.

Recommendations

The force should immediately:

- take steps to identify and address gaps in its systems and processes for identifying and recording all reports of crime;
- ensure that on all occasions when a domestic abuse crime is reported, the incident is categorised as a crime from the outset rather than as a domestic incident; and
- ensure that all crimes reported within public protection units are recorded at the point where sufficient information exists to create the crime.

Within three months the force should:

- develop and implement procedures for the effective supervision of crime-recording decisions throughout the whole force;
- put in place arrangements to ensure that where more than one crime is disclosed within an incident record, or is identified as part of other recorded crime investigations, these are recorded; and

- ensure sufficient audit capacity and capability is available to the force crime and incident registrar (FCIR) to provide reassurance that the force is identifying and managing any gaps in its crime-recording accuracy. This is particularly important for reports of crime involving vulnerable victims and those crimes where the risk to the victim is greatest, such as rape and violence.

Within six months, the force should:

- design and provide training for all staff and officers who make crime-recording decisions. This should include:
 - the extent of the information required for a crime-recording decision to be made;
 - the expectation that reported crime is recorded at the first point that sufficient information exists to record a crime, which in most cases will be at the point of first report; and
 - offences involving malicious communications, harassment and common assault.

Areas for improvement

The force should immediately:

- improve how it collects diversity information from victims of crime and how it uses this to inform its compliance with its equality duty;
- put in place arrangements to improve the process for informing victims when their recorded crime has been cancelled; and
- improve the recording of modern slavery crimes disclosed during investigations or via the national referral mechanism.

How effective is the force at recording reported crime?

● ○ ○ ○ Inadequate

Overall crime-recording rate

81.2% of reported crimes were recorded

Over **9,400** reports of crime a year are not recorded

The force has considerable work to do in order to ensure it records all reports of crime in accordance with the [Home Office Counting Rules \(PDF document\)](#) (HOCR). We examined reports of crime which the force received, and for which an [auditable](#)

[record was created](#). The force informed us that 94.1 percent of crime that is recorded (excluding fraud) came through an auditable crime-reporting route. This does not mean that 94.1 percent of crimes reported to Lincolnshire Police come through these routes but that 94.1 percent of crime is recorded this way.

We found that the force recorded 81.2 percent of these crimes (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.93 percent). [We estimate that this means the force is not recording over 9,400 reports of crime each year](#). Those failings are depriving many victims of the services to which they are entitled, and are a cause of concern.

Of a total of 1,556 reports of crime that we audited, we found 394 that we assessed to be crimes related to [domestic abuse](#). Of these 394 crimes, the force had recorded 259. The 135 offences not recorded included offences of rape, violence and crimes involving harassment and malicious communication.

We found that many of these failures involved crimes being reported at the first point of contact with the force, but not being recorded. This was often because the attending officer responsible for the crime-recording decision either failed to recognise that a crime had been committed, or failed to provide enough information to identify that a crime had not been committed. When a domestic abuse incident is reported, it is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that it has been dealt with correctly, including whether a crime should be recorded. On too many occasions this supervision failed to correct the decisions made by the attending officer.

We also found that on too many occasions, domestic abuse cases were deemed suitable for diary appointments where an officer would attend at an agreed time. The force operates a process whereby all crime-related incidents deemed suitable for diary appointments will have the crime recorded before the officer attends, to ensure that crimes are recorded within 24 hours. We found that this was not routinely happening and that many appointments were either attended many days after the incident occurred or were cancelled by victims. This fails to comply with NCRS and provides a poor service to victims. The force has recognised this and taken steps to improve the timeliness of diary appointments. We welcome this development.

We did find that in these domestic abuse cases, safeguarding had been conducted on nearly every occasion and it was clear that officers and staff fully understand their responsibilities.

The under-recording of domestic abuse crimes and the consequent absence of understanding of the full extent of domestic abuse across the force are serious concerns.

Factors contributing to the force's under-recording of crime reports are its crime-recording processes, the crime-recording knowledge of its workforce and the limited oversight of crime-recording decisions by supervisors.

Deficiencies in the force's crime-recording processes are a concern. We found that:

- when further offences come to light after the initial attendance by an officer, or during subsequent investigation, the force does not always record these crimes; and
- incident records that contain multiple reports of crime often result incorrectly in only one crime report being recorded.

We found that frontline officers and staff are not always sure of crime-recording requirements. Particularly, they:

- do not always understand basic crime-recording principles and requirements relating to common assault, malicious communications and harassment; and
- on too many occasions give insufficient emphasis to the initial account of the victim, **at the point of report**, when assessing whether on the balance of probability an offence has been committed.

We also found that supervision of crime-recording decisions requires improvement. This is because:

- in domestic abuse cases, the force expects inspectors (for high-risk cases) and sergeants (for medium and standard-risk cases) to ensure that all crimes reported by victims are recorded. However, this is not happening to the expected standard;
- the force places a duty on inspectors based within the force control room to conduct regular audits of certain incident types, ensuring that all crimes reported have been recorded. However, this is not always happening due to other more pressing concerns that the inspectors must deal with; and
- the FCIR has limited capacity to audit crime recording. This is particularly the case within some of the risk areas such as reports of crime involving vulnerable victims and victims of domestic abuse.

Violence against the person

72.97 of reported violent crimes were recorded

Over **3,200** reports of violent crime a year are not recorded

We found that 72.7 percent of violent crimes reported to the force are recorded (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.30 percent). This is lower than the overall crime-recording rate noted above. [By our estimate, this means the force fails to record over 3,200 violent crimes that are reported to it each year.](#) As violent crime can be particularly distressing for the victim, this is an area in which the need for improvement is particularly acute.

Many of these crimes involve injury, which can cause even further distress for the victim. In addition to offences of common assault and assault occasioning actual bodily harm, we found the force had failed to record and investigate crimes of grievous bodily harm and wounding where victims were badly injured. We therefore find the force's under-recording of reports of violent crime to be a serious cause for concern.

In most cases, where violent crimes were not recorded, we found the principal causes to be:

- the poor processes currently in place for recording a reported crime (described earlier);
- officers and staff not fully understanding the crime-recording rules, particularly for crimes such as harassment, malicious communications and common assault; and
- an absence of adequate supervision of crime-recording decisions.

Victims of violent crime, and particularly victims of more serious violence, often require substantial support. This support should come not only from the reporting and investigating officers, but from other appropriate organisations such as Victim Support. Under those circumstances, crime recording is even more important. Failing to record properly a violent crime can result in Victim Support receiving no notification that a person has become a victim of violent crime. That in turn deprives victims of the support they may need and deserve.

Sexual offences

91.1% of reported sex offences were recorded

Over **140** reports of sex offences a year are not recorded

We found that the force records 91.1 percent of sexual offence crimes that are reported to it (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.54 percent). [We estimate that this means the force fails to record over 140 reported sexual offence crimes each year.](#)

This recording rate is good but the force can do better. The need to record all sexual offences is important given the very serious nature of sexual offences and the harm they cause to their victims. We found that the force failed to record crimes against both adults and children.

The causes of that under-recording are similar to those described earlier, but in addition there is a lack of understanding among officers and staff concerning third party reports of crime. Where a person makes a report of crime on behalf of a victim

– and that person is a parent or other person closely connected to the victim, or is acting in a professional capacity (such as a social worker) – the force must record the crime in the same way that it would if the victim was making the report. Other reasons are:

- deficiencies in the processes that are currently in place for recording a reported crime
- officers and staff not understanding adequately the crime-recording rules; and
- an absence of adequate supervision of crime-recording decisions.

Rape

99 of 123 audited rape reports were accurately recorded

Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience. Therefore, the accurate recording of such reports is especially important; it allows the police to identify the nature and extent of sexual violence in their local area.

In Lincolnshire Police, we found 123 reports of rape that should have been recorded as crimes, but only 99 of these had been correctly recorded. These included reports that originated from the force incident system, reports disclosed during modern slavery investigations and reports received directly by specialist officers from third party professionals.

Eleven of the missed rape crimes involved two victims of modern slavery who had been coerced into prostitution. Six of the missed rape crimes were disclosed during an investigation where one rape crime had been correctly recorded, but the investigating officer had failed to record the further crimes (though a full investigation of all of the rapes had been conducted). Four offences had been recorded as a sexual offence and investigated accordingly, but not classified as rape. One missed rape crime was disclosed following a domestic abuse incident where the officer conducted a risk assessment with the victim. The remaining two rape crimes were disclosed by third party professionals but were not recorded as rape crimes from the outset by the force.

Investigations took place in all but one of these offences. All victims were safeguarded and received support from specialist support services. We note that the force has since recorded every rape crime and contacted each victim.

Introduced in April 2015, the [N100](#) is a record created to explain why reported incidents of rape or attempted rapes, whether from victims, witnesses or third parties, have not been immediately recorded as a confirmed crime. This can include instances where additional information confirms the rape did not occur, or where the rape occurred in another force area and was therefore transferred to the relevant

force to record and investigate, or where there has been no confirmation from the victim that a crime has taken place.

Lincolnshire Police does not use the classification N100. The chief officer team decided that the force will record all reports of rape as a crime at the first point of contact with the victim. The force will then have the crime recorded in a different force area if that is where it occurred, prior to cancelling their own crime. The force will investigate each case and cancel any crime which is not correctly recorded, either because it is a duplicate, or there is credible evidence that the rape did not occur. This approach is supported by a process in the force control room whereby all records of rape should be created at the point of reporting.

There is a requirement that forces should use classification N100 where appropriate, and the force should consider the process they adopt in light of this requirement.

The causes of the under-recording of the 24 rape crimes are the same as were identified above in respect of other sexual offences. These are:

- a lack of understanding of the crime-recording requirements in respect of third party professional reports;
- the deficiency of the processes that are currently in place for recording a reported crime
- officers and staff not understanding adequately the crime-recording rules; and
- an absence of adequate supervision of crime-recording decisions.

How efficiently do the systems and processes in the force support accurate crime recording?

 Inadequate

Crime reports held on other systems

7 of 28 vulnerable victim crimes were recorded

To be confident that vulnerable victims always receive the support they need, the force must improve its recording of crimes reported directly to its public protection teams.

We examined 52 vulnerable victim records and found that the force should have recorded 28 crimes from these records but only recorded 7. The missing 21 crimes included offences against children and adults. The missing nine adult crimes included a rape, several assaults, a sexual assault, harassment and theft.

The missing 12 child crimes included a rape and a sexual assault, with the remainder being assaults. The missing assaults occurred on occasions when third party reports were made by professionals acting on behalf of the victims. The public protection staff determined that there would be no crime recorded until children's social services had confirmed each crime. This does not comply with NCRS. This was further exacerbated as the force failed to ensure these matters were resolved by children's social services, no crimes were recorded and no updates provided concerning what action was taken against the perpetrators.

The extent to which reports of crime received by public protection teams are not being recorded, and the seriousness of the risks associated with the under-recording of these reports of crime, are causes for concern.

Modern slavery

Offences relating to modern slavery are an important and recent addition to the crimes that forces must record and investigate. We therefore reviewed the recording of reports of modern slavery offences. We also examined the force's understanding of the origin of such reports.

Improvements are required in the force's recording of modern slavery crimes. We examined 15 modern slavery crimes; 11 were correctly recorded but 4 should not have been recorded at all. In addition, where the force was required to record other associated crimes, it had correctly recorded 3 but failed to record 14 other crimes including 11 rapes (included above) and 3 assaults.

We examined a further 20 reported incidents of modern slavery and assessed that 23 crimes should have been recorded and 17 had correctly been recorded. The missed crimes were two modern slavery crimes and four assaults.

The force works regionally, nationally and internationally in its efforts to tackle modern slavery. We found that officers and staff have a good, basic knowledge of modern slavery offences, of their respective responsibilities in recording such offences, and of where they can find further information.

Timeliness

Where the information obtained at the first point of contact is sufficient for a crime to be recorded this must be completed without delay, and in any case within 24 hours. We found that, of the reports of crime that had been recorded by Lincolnshire Police, 81 out of 98 reports of rape, 281 out of 468 reports of violent crime and 157 out of 256 sexual offences (excluding rape) had been recorded within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

While some victims may be referred to support organisations by other means, the delay in recording a reported crime can delay the referral of the victim to Lincolnshire Victim Services. As some victims would benefit from the early support this team can provide, these delays are unacceptable.

We acknowledge that since our findings have been disclosed the force has responded positively to this issue. This has resulted in streamlined processes and there are now no backlogs, which in turn has improved timeliness of recording and ensured a quicker referral to Lincolnshire Victim Services.

Cancelled crimes

Where additional verifiable information (AVI) is obtained to show that a recorded crime did not occur, the crime record can be cancelled. We found that the force performed well in respect of rape cancellations but improvements are required in other areas.

We reviewed 21 cancelled recorded rapes, 20 violence crimes, 20 sexual offence crimes (excluding rape) and 6 robbery crimes. Of these, we found that the FCIR had correctly cancelled all 21 crimes of rape. This is outstanding. Other crime cancellation decisions are the responsibility of designated decision makers (DDMs). The DDMs had correctly cancelled 17 out of 20 sexual offences, 15 out of 20 violence offences and 4 out of 6 robbery offences. Other than rape, crime cancellations must improve.

Where a crime has been cancelled or transferred to another force for investigation, a victim should always know the status of his or her reported crime. In the case of a decision to cancel a recorded crime, the very least the victim should expect is an explanation of the reason for this decision. We found that of the 58 victims who should have been informed of the transfer or cancellation, 44 had been. This is an area for improvement.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \(Document\)](#) provides clear guidance to police forces regarding the service that should be provided to all victims of crime. We have concluded that the force is aware of its responsibilities under this code.

All victims whose reports of crime are recorded by Lincolnshire Police are offered the services of Victim Support and can receive the relevant information by text, email or letter. These communications contain information about individual victims' cases and, in addition to directing them to these services, also provide them with details of other relevant organisations that can offer support.

Equality

We found that the force must improve its collection of information regarding crimes affecting identifiable groups within communities.

Protected characteristics, such as gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion and age, do not necessarily increase the vulnerability of an individual to the risk of crime. However, it is important that the force records information regarding the characteristics of victims of crime. This will enable it to identify any patterns which

may exist between different community groups and their vulnerability to (or their relative likelihood to report) different types of crime.

We found the force routinely records age and gender details as well as ethnicity in most cases if a crime is recorded. However, it only records other protected characteristics where these are determined to be relevant to the offence.

Importantly, so long as the force fails to record such information, it will be unable to understand clearly whether its crime-recording decisions are consistent across different community groups. This is, therefore, an area for improvement.

Officer and staff survey

We conducted a survey of officers and staff in Lincolnshire Police of their experience of crime recording. Some 232 respondents completed the survey. The results of this survey were mixed. Most confirmed that messages from chief officers and senior leaders were clear and there was no organisational pressure not to record crimes. Locally there was some pressure on officers not to record crimes due to an inability to effectively investigate and manage crimes.

How well does the force demonstrate the leadership and culture necessary to meet the national standards for crime recording?

 Good

We found that crime-recording expectations had been publicised to officers and staff by senior leaders. Messages to officers and staff were clear and unambiguous as reported during our survey and evidenced during our fieldwork.

We also found that most officers and staff are placing the needs of the victim at the heart of their crime-recording decisions. However, the force should ensure that this approach is applied by all officers and staff. Importantly, the force needs to reinforce among officers and staff that all reports of crime must be recorded, even in cases where the victim chooses not to support an investigation or prosecution.

Progress has been made against the action plan developed by the national policing lead on crime statistics following our 2014 report, and which all forces have been asked to implement. However, the force has only satisfactorily completed and sustained two of the national recommendations, although it has completed both force recommendations we made in 2014. The lack of progress in this regard is negatively affecting efforts to improve crime-recording accuracy.

However, we conclude that under the leadership of the deputy chief constable there is a comprehensive action plan for improvement, crime recording features on the force register of risks, and governance is improving with crime recording featuring in many strategic and performance meetings. Since we informed the force of our audit findings it has responded positively.

We also conclude that audit results provided to senior leaders suggested that the force was recording more crimes than was the case. The reason for this is that the FCIR does not have the capacity to conduct audits to the standard and extent required.

The force has improved its use of out-of-court disposals (such as cautions or community resolutions). We were impressed with the process for monitoring all such disposals, including the use of independent scrutiny panels. Procedural documents are clear and concise; these ensure that considerations as to the suitability of the disposal for both the victim and offender are very good.

Conclusion

We conclude that Lincolnshire Police's overall crime-recording arrangements are inadequate. The force also needs to address shortcomings in its auditing procedures and improve resilience in this area.

The senior leaders are determined to improve the accuracy of the force's crime recording. We welcome the continuing efforts of the force to address the remaining gaps in its crime-recording arrangements identified in our inspection.

What next?

We expect the force urgently to make progress implementing recommendations and areas for improvement we set out in this report.

The serious causes of concern found during our inspection are such that we may revisit the force in 2019 to assess progress.



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