Emergency services sector update

RSM

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to RSM's latest Emergency Services sector briefing which provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector.

We delve into a number of publications across the police sector. These include the Home Affairs Committee's report which looks at the changing demands on policing, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports on policing and mental health and public perceptions of policing.

Also, in this edition, we look at other recent developments within the sector including the Independent Office for Police Conduct's three-year plan to improve public confidence in policing and the Home Office's announcement of increased funding for police. In looking specifically at fire and rescue services, we cover HMICFRS' report on the first independent inspections into FRSs for 12 years and the latest statistics published by the Home Office on fire prevention and protection.

We hope you find this update a useful source of insight. As ever, if you have any queries, or have any suggestions for topics for future editions, please contact either myself, or your usual RSM contact and we will be delighted to help.

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Police

Policing for the future

The Home Affairs Committee (HAC) has published the report 'policing for the future.' The report looks at the changing demands on policing and takes into consideration the extent to which the service is able to meet the challenges that these create.

Key points include:

- neighbourhood policing has been reduced by over 20 per cent since 2010, and some forces have lost over two thirds of their neighbourhood officers;

- recorded crime has increased by 32 per cent between 2015 and 2018;

- policing is facing new challenges and rising demand from traditional crimes, however resources in recent years have been strained, and forces are under considerable stress to keep up with existing pressures;

- the HAC stated that the current police funding formula is 'not fit for purpose' and calls for it to be fundamentally revised;

- without additional funding for policing, the HAC states that there will be 'dire consequences' for public safety, criminal justice, community cohesion and public confidence;

- the HAC stated that the police forces' investment in and adoption of new technology is 'a complete and utter mess'; and

- policing is suffering from a complete failure of leadership from the Home Office, particularly on responding to new and changing crimes.

The HAC sets out a number of recommendations on three growing areas of demand: online fraud, child sexual abuse, and safeguarding vulnerable people. The recommendations also include these areas of demand in the private sector which must do much more to reduce demand on policing from online fraud and child sexual abuse. Forces should be required to provide a minimum two-day training course on mental health to all officers and police community support officers. The HAC also warns that the Home Office cannot continue to stand back while police forces struggle. It is also recommended that the Home Office creates a 'National Policing Council' chaired by the Home Secretary and comprising representatives of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), National Police Chief Council (NPCC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
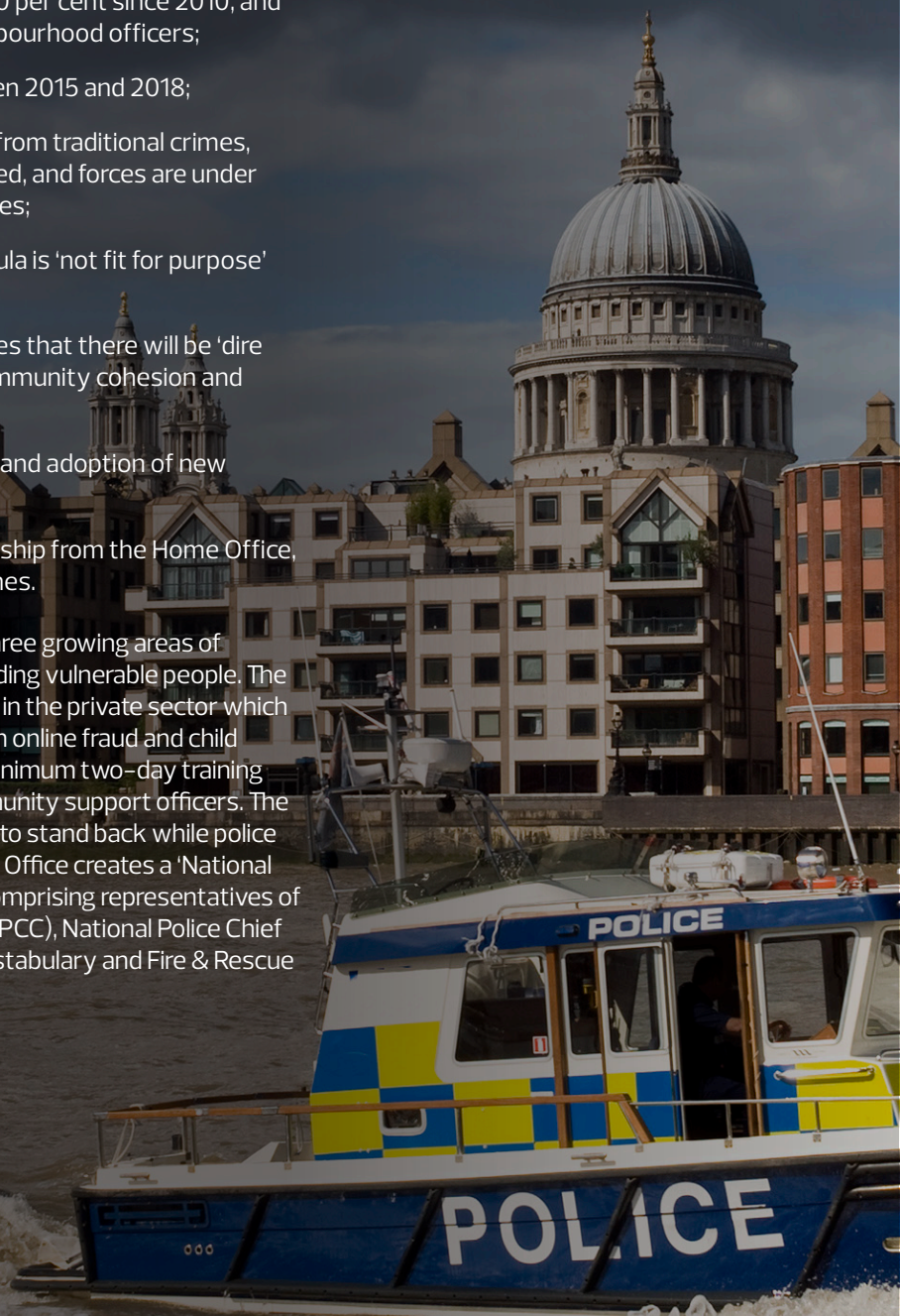
Policing and mental health

HMICFRS has published the report entitled 'policing and mental health: picking up the pieces.' Key points from the report include:

- overall, it was found that there was a 'general lack of understanding' by forces of their mental health demand;

- HMICFRS were pleased to see the police working closely with other organisations to try to improve their joint understanding of mental health;

- majority of forces demonstrated strong leadership and governance on mental health;

- HMICFRS found that forces have a good understanding of how to respond to people with mental health problems and are investing in training to support their staff to identify and respond to people with mental health problems;

- HMICFRS also commissioned a survey to understand better the public's view of the role of the police service in helping people with mental health problems. The findings showed that 2 per cent of people surveyed felt it was the police's responsibility to respond to mental health calls, and that 70 per cent said it should be up to health services. 10 per cent stated that it should be the responsibility of the local authority or council; and

- HMICFRS noted that they are concerned that the police are 'working beyond their duty'.

Questions for committee's consideration

- Do you receive regular independent assurance on online fraud, child sexual abuse and safeguarding vulnerable people?

- Are you assured that the force provides the minimum two-day training course to comply with the mental health training requirement?

Policing to get largest funding increase since 2010

The Home Office has announced police funding of up to £14bn police for 2019 to 2020, an increase of around £970m from the previous financial year and is the largest increase since 2010. The funding will allow police to meet financial pressures, recruit more officers and be better placed to respond to the increasingly complex crimes they face.

The announced funding includes £816m for counter-terrorism policing, an increase of £59m, £175m will go towards the Police Transformation Fund which will include investment for innovative techniques for crime prevention and a new national welfare service for front-line officers, and £7.8bn in general government grants for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The Home Office states that the police need to continue to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and productivity and are challenging police forces to contribute to commercial savings, with the aim of freeing up more resources for front-line crime fighting.

Questions for committee's consideration

- Are you receiving regular assurance on wider partnerships and collaborations, which could contribute to commercial savings?

- Are you sighted on initiatives to improve efficiency and productivity, and do you receive assurances that these initiatives deliver against the business cases?

Three–year plan to improve public confidence of people in policing

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its three year 'strategic plan' with the aim to improve 'public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt.' The IOPC sets out its priorities and the several actions that will be implemented to achieve each of these priorities. The priorities include:

- improving the complaints system by working with others — the IOPC states that they hope to have a complaints system that delivers impartial, fair and evidence–based outcomes in a timely manner. In doing so, it will improve all areas of the complaints system, identify and address factors that impact on the quality of their work and develop knowledge and information assurance strategies so that the IOPC can make better use of their data;

- identifying and sharing learning from their work to improve policing — the IOPC states that they hope their recommendations bring about improvements in policing and prevent harm to the public. By doing this, it will work closely with partners including HMICFRS and PCCs to develop shared priorities, improve the IOPC's approach to learning recommendations and work collaboratively to drive change within policing;

- improving confidence in police accountability — the IOPC hopes that those with low confidence in policing, access and value the complaints system. This will enable the IOPC to use its regional presence to engage regularly with communities and ensure their views are fed into the work of the IOPC and provide opportunities for staff to volunteer within their local communities to allow them to better understand concerns and build awareness of and trust in their work; and

- to be an organisation that is efficient and effective — the IOPC hopes that its workforce delivers a service which is value for money. Thus the IOPC will continue to invest in the development of their leaders and managers to create an 'effective and trusted leadership' team and create a culture in which staff feel highly supported and empowered to suggest innovative ways to improve and deliver value for money.

Questions for committee's consideration

- Are you assured through risk registers, AC reports or via attendance at other governance forums etc that public confidence is being monitored?

Public perceptions of policing

HMICFRS has published its report 'public perception of policing in England and Wales 2018.' The study consisted of 17,043 surveys with members of the public. The majority were conducted via online panels, with a small number conducted–face–to–face. Key findings include:

- 61 per cent of respondents are 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their local police force compared to 53 per cent in 2017;

- 58 per cent of respondents stated that in the past 12 months the services provided by police forces has 'stayed about the same', 8 per cent state that it has 'got better' and 22 per cent state that it has 'got worse';

- 44 per cent of respondents reported to have seen police on foot in their local area at least once every three months compared to 29 per cent in 2017;

- 40 per cent of people felt that crime and anti–social behaviour is an issue in their local area compared to 25 per cent in 2015;

- 81 per cent believe that online crime is a big issue however 34 per cent felt confident in the local police's ability to deal with online crime effectively;

- 74 per cent of respondents were confident in local police being effective in dealing with an emergency and to 52 per cent were confident in police being effective in dealing with a non–emergency; and

- 65 per cent of respondents agree that their local police treat people fairly and with respect.

Value for money profiles

The value for money (VfM) profiles are available to view comparative data on a number of policing activities on the HMICFRS' website. The latest VfM profiles enables you to explore performance and spending of police forces.

Questions for committee's consideration

- Do you receive assurance on any areas where your Force is an outlier on any VfM profiles?

RSM's police risk register analysis

The policing sector continues to face a multitude of challenges and risks. There are risks that have been in existence for some time and those that are emergent; yet both types need to be identified, controlled and managed appropriately.

To gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the sector, RSM have again examined the content of strategic risk registers (27 strategic risk registers, analysing 506 individual risks). The sector continues to face a myriad of challenges, which span across operational and organisational boundaries, and which in combination, pose very real risks for a service we all rely on to keep us safe.

In the policing sector, if risk is not managed, there can be very real and severe ramifications and whilst risk management can never prevent a risk from materialising, it can, and does help. Our latest analysis, drawing comparisons with our work in 2016 and 2014, enables you to compare your organisation's risk profile with that of others. This enables you to consider 'how do our risks compare?' and 'are we missing any significant risks?'. Please visit the RSM website (https://www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/police-risk-register-analysis-december-2018) to access the report.

Questions for committee's consideration

- Are you assured that the Force and PCC risk registers include all relevant strategic risks?

Fire

'Swift and sustained action' needed by fire and rescue services

HMICFRS has published an overview of the first independent inspection into fire and rescue services (FRSs) for 12 years. The report covers 14 fire services which were part of the first tranche of inspections. The remaining services will be covered in a further two tranches. The inspections focused on three key areas: the effectiveness of the FRS in keeping people safe from fire and other risks, how efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe from fire and other risks and how well does the FRS look after its people including how well they train, manage and support their staff. As part of its inspection, HMICFRS gave each FRS a graded judgement on each of these areas. Key findings include:

- in relation to the overall effectiveness judgement, 10 FRSs were graded as 'good' and four FRSs were graded as 'requires improvement';

- 11 FRSs were graded as 'good', two FRSs were graded as 'requires improvement' and one FRS was graded as 'inadequate' at responding effectively to fire and other emergencies;

- HMICFRS have stated their concern regarding eight services graded as 'requires improvement' and one graded as 'inadequate' in the way they protect the public through the regulation of fire safety;

- nine services were graded as 'good' at preventing risks of fires and other emergencies;

- in relation to the overall efficiency judgement, eight FRSs were graded as 'good';

- HMICFRS stated that FRSs would benefit from better access to 'accurate and robust' financial data. To address this, HMICFRS are working together with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the sector in the hope to see better financial data by September 2019;

- with services having had their budgets cut over the last eight years, HMICFRS stated they were 'surprised' to find that several FRSs had very limited financial planning in place beyond 2020 and has expressed that planning work needs to start immediately in order for service leaders to understand the decisions that need to be made in order to reduce costs further;

- HMICFRS notes that six out of the seven services that were inspected are actively exploiting external funding; and

- three FRSs were graded as 'good' at looking after the people who work for them. 10 FRSs were graded as 'requiring improvement' and one FRS as 'inadequate'. HMICFRS states that this is the 'most worrying set of grades' and action needs to be taken to address the issues that are preventing a 'truly inclusive working environment.'

Questions for committee's consideration

- Is the AC sighted on the Governance arrangements for HMICFRS inspections, where the findings are being reported and are recommendations tracked?

Fire prevention and protection statistics

The Home Office has published statistics on fire prevention and protection in England between April 2017 and March 2018. Key statistics include:

- FRSs completed 576,040 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) compared to 590,198 in 2016/17 and 775,019 in 2010/11;

- of the 576,040 HFSCs completed in 2017/18, 54 per cent were targeted towards the elderly and 25 per cent were targeted towards the disabled;

- FRSs carried out 49,423 fire safety audits in 2017/18, which accounted for 3 per cent of premises known to the authorities and was nine per cent less than in 2016/17 (54,247, 4 per cent of premises) and 42 per cent less than in 2010/11 (84,575, 5 per cent of premises);

- fire safety audits on purpose–built flats of four or more storeys increased from 3,097 in 2016/17 to 6,586 in 2017/18;

- 68 per cent of fire safety audits (33,851) were rated satisfactory compared to 37,096 in the previous year. There were 15,572 unsatisfactory fire safety audits;

- 69 per cent of fire safety audits on purpose–built flats of four or more storeys were rated as satisfactory compared to 2,431 in the previous year; and

- although 95 per cent of households say they possess smoke alarms, 90 per cent say their alarms actually work.

Sources of further information

Parliament
'Policing for the future'
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/
cmselect/cmhaff/515/515.pdf

Home Office
'Policing to get largest funding increase since 2010'
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/police-to-get-
largest-funding-increase-since-2010

HMICFRS
'Policing and mental health'
https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/
publications/policing-and-mental-health-picking-up-the-
pieces/

IOPC
**'Three-year plan to improve public confidence of people in
policing'**
https://policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-launches-first-
three-year-plan-improve-public-confidence-policing

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https://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/wp-content/up-
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'Police risk register analysis'
https://www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/po-
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**'Swift and sustained action needed by fire and rescue
services'**
https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/
wp-content/uploads/fire-and-rescue-service-inspec-
tions-2018-19.pdf

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'Fire prevention and protection statistics'
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-preven-
tion-and-protection-statistics-england-april-2017-to-
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