



An Inspection of
**COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND LOCAL POLICING
ARRANGEMENTS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Including a Follow-Up Review
of 'Working Together for Safer
Communities - A Review of Policing
and Community Safety Partnerships
in Northern Ireland'

KEY FACTS

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LOCAL POLICING ARRANGEMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Including a Follow-Up Review of 'Working Together for Safer Communities – A Review of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships in Northern Ireland.'

MARCH 2024



WHAT WAS THIS INSPECTION AND FOLLOW-UP REVIEW ABOUT?

- This inspection looked at the community safety strategy in Northern Ireland and partnership working. It considered the performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland's (Police Service) Neighbourhood Policing function against their eight Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing, with a focus on Hallmark 2: Engaging Neighbourhoods.
- Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) play a key community safety role in Northern Ireland so we included a Follow-Up Review of the 2019 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) report on 'Working Together for Safer Communities – A Review of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships' as part of this inspection.
- Follow-Up Reviews assess how well accepted recommendations have been implemented by organisations. This allows organisations to demonstrate the improvements they have made and fulfills CJI's commitment to assess progress and improvements by providing a published, independent assessment.

HALLMARKS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

**Embedding the
Right Culture**



**Building Analytical
Capability**



**Targeting
Activity**



**Developing
Officers and Staff**



**Engaging
Neighbourhoods**



**Solving
Problems**



Accountability



**Developing and
Sharing Learning**





WHAT DID INSPECTORS FIND?

- A Community Safety Framework was available, but it did not contain any up-to-date information or objectives to direct the delivery of community safety in Northern Ireland. Most of the criminal justice partners Inspectors spoke with didn't know about it.
- The Community Safety Board, recently renamed the Community Safety Network (CSN), was a joint meeting of senior leaders from both justice and non-justice organisations. Some members didn't understand the CSN's strategic role but partnership working on local issues was good.
- The Police Service's Hallmarks provided a clear vision and delivery structure for neighbourhood policing, with a focus on key areas for development.
- The Hallmarks had led to more focus on the use of analytics, problem solving and developing and sharing learning within neighbourhood policing. Investment in neighbourhood officer development was clear, a new neighbourhood training faculty and dedicated neighbourhood policing training programmes had been created.
- Inspectors were impressed by the dedicated, hardworking and passionate neighbourhood officers they met. All the community groups and representatives Inspectors met spoke highly of their neighbourhood officers and their work locally.
- The visibility, accessibility, responsiveness and community focused nature of neighbourhood policing was good, however there was evidence of reduction in local neighbourhoods.
- Abstraction (when Police Officers are taken away from their usual duties to another role) from core neighbourhood duties was a significant issue, however the Police Service could not tell Inspectors about the scale of it and inconsistencies in understanding and applying the Abstraction Policy were evident.
- Neighbourhood policing resources had reduced; however, no neighbourhood officers had been permanently redeployed to other policing functions. A fresh demand analysis of neighbourhood policing was underway. Inspectors assessed that this should include a re-evaluation of the 16-hour a day neighbourhood policing cover commitment, consideration of the types of calls Neighbourhood Policing Teams respond to and clearer use of Police Officers Part Time.
- Defining and evidencing 'success' in neighbourhood policing was a challenge. There still wasn't a dedicated framework for assessing neighbourhood policing performance and reliance on 'easy to track' quantitative measures continued.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE BETTER?

Inspectors have made nine recommendations for improvement including:

At a strategic (leadership) level...

- The Department of Justice (DoJ) needs to lead the creation of a new community safety vision, strategy and action plan for delivery. This should include up-to-date information and analysis on key priority areas, clear objectives and reflect public feedback.

At an operational (on the ground) level...

- The DoJ should continue with the identified and agreed programme of improvements for the CSN and review it bi-annually to ensure it is operating effectively.
- The DoJ should work with its CSN partners to map community safety structures operating across Northern Ireland and create an overview of purpose, membership, funding arrangements, governance and outcomes.
- The Police Service should review their Abstraction Policy and reconsider their consultation on 'change of duty'.
- The Police Service needs to ensure that Neighbourhood Policing Teams are consulted in all appropriate Community Impact Assessments and that there is effective monitoring of this consultation.
- The Police Service should review the 16-hour a day neighbourhood policing coverage commitment.
- The Police Service need to complete and publish the new Police Officer Part Time Service Procedure to provide clarity on their role, powers and working hours.
- The Police Service should improve their problem solving guidance for all Neighbourhood Policing Teams including what a problem solving folder is and how to open and close it as well as the identity and role of problem solving champions.
- The Police Service need to develop a better performance management framework for neighbourhood policing, with specific performance data and a focus on quality and outcomes.



WHAT WERE THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE 2019 PCSP INSPECTION?

Our 2019 inspection found that:

- To reduce duplication, the Belfast PCSP structures should incorporate the Principal PCSP into the four District PCSPs;
- PCSPs needed to improve communication with the public in a single, easy to use way;
- The Police Service reports to PCSPs should be improved to include updates on local Policing Plan achievements and reporting on key initiatives such as dealing with Sexual and Domestic Violence and other local policing priorities;
- There should be clearer links between PCSP meeting agenda items and delivery of the local Policing Plan, the PCSP Action Plan and PCSP activities; and
- Designated member organisations (like the Police Service, Probation Board for Northern Ireland, Youth Justice Agency, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Education Authority and Health and Social Care Trusts) should increase awareness about the role of PCSPs and their collaborative efforts in shared positive outcomes, as well as ensuring achievements gained through PCSP membership was well reported in their organisation.





WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE?

- Two recommendations were assessed as achieved, four partially achieved and one was not achieved.
- The PCSP structures in Belfast had not changed, however some duplication had reduced and more work was required to progress this further.
- Police Service reports to PCSPs had improved with a new reporting template. Key initiatives were now regularly reported on.
- There were positive efforts to improve awareness raising through changes to PCSPs strategic priority 1; but more work was still needed to better unify and align information provision and communication.
- Positive work had been undertaken with designated organisations to improve the recognition of their role within PCSPs and to explore mutual benefits of membership.
- The linkages between the local Policing Plan, the PCSP Action Plan and PCSP activities remained unclear and further work was required.



Achieved

1 strategic recommendation

1 operational recommendation



Partially achieved

3 strategic recommendations

1 operational recommendation



Not achieved

1 strategic recommendation

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