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HM Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service
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29 September 2025

Dear Roy

HMICFRS – How effectively do the police record crime?

I write in respect of the recently published findings from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) spotlight report into how effectively the police record crime and have carefully studied the three areas and the constructive recommendations contained within.

HMICFRS found that there have been "*marked improvements*" in the way police forces in England and Wales are recording crime, with the percentage of overall crime the police have recorded acknowledged to have risen from 80.5% in 2014 to 94.8% in 2025 [excluding fraud]. It is fundamentally important that the police service continues to "*focus on maintaining standards*" to accurately and promptly record crime to "*safeguard victims and give them the service they need; carry out effective investigations; help to build public confidence in the police; and use public money effectively*", as highlighted in the report.

Sussex Police received an 'adequate' grading from HMICFRS for 'Recording data about crime' in the recent PEEL inspection report 2023/25 [published in July 2025]. This represented a significant improvement from the 'inadequate' grading received by the Force for its crime data integrity previously, with 92.0% of all reported crime [excluding fraud] estimated to have been accurately recorded by Sussex Police against the national crime reporting standards [with a confidence interval of +/- 2.6 percentage points], in comparison to 85.6% of all reported crime accurately recorded in the 2021/22 inspection [+/- 2.9 percentage points].

I am also pleased to confirm that performance in this area increased further still around the recording of sexual offences, with 98.1% of these crimes estimated to have been recorded accurately by Sussex Police [+/- 2.5 percentage points], compared to 91.5% in the previous inspection report [+/- 3.7 percentage points]. This included recording each of the 41 rape offences identified during the inspection audit undertaken by HMICFRS [100%] and means that a better service is now provided to the victims of these abhorrent crimes who are able to access any support they require without undue delay, recognising that some of these individuals are the most vulnerable in the criminal justice system.



I shared the concerns raised by HMICFRS that "*too often, forces don't record reports of crime at the earliest opportunity*", with specific improvements identified around the timeliness of recording decisions for incidents of rape [and unconfirmed reports of rape] on police systems. Having discussed this area with Deputy Chief Constable McLaren directly, I am reassured to note that Sussex Police recognise that it is more important to look after the victims of these offences at the first point of contact and ensure that they have access to appropriate support services, rather than recording the crime within 24-hours, to understand better exactly what offences are being reported to ensure that these are accurately captured.

I also recognise the comments made in the report that "*forces that get crime recording right have leaders who make sure officers and staff recognise and understand the need to correctly record crime.*" The significant improvements demonstrated by Sussex Police in this area are testament to the leadership and ongoing commitment of Chief Constable Shiner and Deputy Chief Constable McLaren to ensure that all officers and staff understand the importance of accurately recording crime and the effective oversight and scrutiny arrangements that now exist around crime recording decisions and accuracy Forcewide. I am confident that Sussex Police can improve its performance in this area further still when crime recording practices are inspected again as part of the 2025/27 PEEL inspection programme.

HMICFRS highlighted that "*forces haven't sufficiently improved the way they record crime that involves anti-social behaviour*". I acknowledge that it can be difficult to accurately identify anti-social behaviour [personal] when it is initially reported to the police as part of a broader incident(s). This position is exacerbated by an inexperienced workforce and a high turnover of call handlers within the Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) in Sussex. The ongoing challenge for the Force is to recognise and record crime relating to anti-social behaviour better when a person targets a specific individual or group to reduce the number of victims who remain at risk of harm.

To support the call handlers with recording data about crime more accurately, Sussex Police has provided 'in person' training for all staff in the FCCCD and has created guidance and flow charts for these individuals to refer to during initial telephone and webform contact. This activity is being further supported through the greater use of supervisory reviews and dip checks to ensure that all offences are recorded accurately and prioritised accordingly.

I am reassured to note that similar training has also been provided to the neighbourhood policing teams to raise their awareness and understanding of the importance of making improvements in the way the Force record crimes, alongside highlighting the tools and powers available to these officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) to tackle this offending behaviour, respond effectively and provide the right service and support to victims.

The recording of equality data for victims of crime is recognised to be a challenge for all police forces in England and Wales, with a reluctance of the workforce to record data about ethnicity and other protected characteristics acknowledged to be the contributing factor behind this replica position in Sussex.

Sussex Police has sought to address the area for improvement identified within the PEEL inspection report 2023/25 by reminding police officers and staff of the importance of asking victims of crime for this information and amending internal technological solutions to mandate the completion of certain fields before it enables users to move onto the next stage of the statement taking process. The Force has also created the provision for victims of crime to update their own details and equality data for any offences reported to the police through the Sussex Police Portal – a new platform where individuals can receive online updates about the investigations into their crimes.

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**Sussex
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I will ask the Chief Constable to provide me with an update regarding the assessment of and progress made against each of the three recommendations identified for police forces in the spotlight report which seek to improve the accuracy, timeliness and scrutiny of crime recording processes. This will include discussions about how Sussex Police has sought to implement the recommendations and address the areas for improvement made by HMICFRS in previous inspection reports to improve crime recording standards.

I am confident that the successful implementation of these latest recommendations will contribute towards further improvements in crime recording practices in Sussex and means that cases will be allocated faster, investigations will begin sooner, and important lines of enquiry will be maximised. This enhanced approach should also contribute towards the provision of a better service for victims of crime and access to any support services they may need in a timelier manner, given that many of these individuals are recognised to be some of the most vulnerable.

In my role as Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Sussex Police in this important area to support further improvements around crime data integrity and ensure that members of the public have trust and confidence in the ability of the Force to record crime accurately and without delay.

*Yours sincerely
Katy*

Katy Bourne OBE
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner