

Dyfed-Powys Police: Crime Data Integrity inspection 2018

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Overall judgment

 Requires improvement

Dyfed-Powys Police has made a concerted effort to record crime more accurately since our [2014 crime data integrity inspection report](#). Most officers and staff have made progress in putting the victim at the centre of their crime-recording decisions. We also found the force has:

- recorded all but one of the modern slavery offences disclosed during investigations;
- recorded nearly every offence of taking or sharing indecent images of a young person;
- implemented all but one of the recommendations in our 2014 report; and
- introduced effective processes in the force communication centre (FCC) so that victims receive a good service from the staff taking their calls.

Despite advances, work remains to be done. We examined crime reports from 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018. Based on this, [we estimate that the force fails to record over 3,300 reported crimes each year](#). This is a recording rate of 87.8 percent (with a confidence interval

of +/- 1.69 percent). The 12.2 percent of reported crimes that go unrecorded include sexual offences, public order and violence offences. It is a cause of concern that the recording rate for violent crime is only 84.4 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.71 percent). The force must improve in these areas.

We consider that officers and staff not understanding the crime-recording rules leads to these failures. This is made worse by limited supervision to correct these decisions as soon as possible.

Summary of inspection findings

The force has improved its crime-recording processes since our 2014 report. We found that it has:

- developed a process where an incident, crime and allocation team (ICAT) deals with more crime reports and records more crimes at the point of reporting;
- an effective process for giving feedback to staff and officers who make poor crime-recording decisions;
- developed specific crime-recording training targeting the areas where officers and staff regularly make the same mistakes;
- made good progress implementing changes recommended in our 2014 report, fully completing all but one of these recommendations; and
- introduced processes to make sure it uses out-of-court disposals, such as cautions, youth cautions and community resolutions, appropriately.

The force crime incident registrar (FCR) and her deputy – responsible for oversight and audit of crime-recording arrangements – have both completed a [national College of Policing course](#) and are fully accredited. The FCR is supported by a small team that undertakes regular audits of reported and recorded crime. The deputy FCR and a small team of auditors and designated decision makers (DDMs) support the FCR's work. We welcome the progress the force has made.

But we found that the force's crime recording needs to improve in the following areas:

- There is not always supervisory oversight of crime-recording decisions arising from domestic abuse incidents.
- There is too often no crime recording bureau oversight of records opened as a crime incident but closed without a crime record being created.
- Where counter allegations are made, officers sometimes don't record the crime or explain why a crime should not be recorded.
- The force must collect more information about the effect of criminality on identifiable groups within communities.

The force is currently under-recording:

- public order crimes;

- violence crimes, especially crimes of harassment, common assault and malicious communications; and
- domestic abuse-related crimes.

Incorrect recording decisions are often caused by officers and staff not understanding the crime-recording rules. Limited supervision of crime-recording decisions makes these errors worse.

These areas require improvement.

We note that the chief officer team is relatively new, and the deputy chief constable is overseeing a programme of improvements. This programme is governed by a comprehensive crime-recording action plan, designed to improve the service provided to crime victims in Dyfed-Powys.

The introduction of the ICAT has been positive. The force now creates more crime records close to the point of reporting and the team is conducting proportionate investigations. This has removed the need for officers to attend these crime incidents. We expect that this will help the force to improve its crime recording.

We found the FCC staff to be professional, courteous and helpful. They accurately recorded the details received during initial calls for service. And they consistently applied the THRIVES (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability, engagement and safeguarding) risk assessment to decide on the response required.

These are welcome developments.

Cause of concern

Dyfed-Powys Police is failing to ensure it records all violent crimes (in particular domestic abuse) reported to it. In most cases where the force fails to record domestic abuse crimes, officers and staff do not complete domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) assessments. There is also limited supervision to correct these recording decisions at the earliest opportunity.

Recommendations

The force should immediately:

- take steps to identify and address gaps in its systems and processes for identifying and recording all reports of violent crimes (in particular those that are domestic abuse-related);
- ensure officers and staff complete DASH assessments in all domestic abuse cases;
- ensure that adequate supervision is applied to **all** crime-recording decisions made by officers and staff; and
- ensure that **all** identified crimes are recorded without delay and in any case within 24 hours.

Areas for improvement

The force should make sure that it:

- records all reports of crime made by a professional third party acting in a professional capacity on behalf of the victim;
- records all counter allegations as crimes or explains why it has not done this;
- develops and operates effective procedures to supervise crime-recording decisions throughout the force;
- takes immediate steps to make sure that it records all reported crimes of rape without delay and that it uses classification N100 correctly; and
- improves how it collects diversity information from crime victims and uses this to inform its compliance with its equality duty.

How effective is the force at recording reported crime?

●●○○ Requires improvement

Overall crime-recording rate

87.8% of reported crimes were recorded

Over **3,300** reports of crime a year are not recorded

The force must do more to make sure it records all crime reports in accordance with the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) (HOCR).

We examined reports of crime the force received, and for which it had created an [auditable record](#). The force told us that 86.2 percent of crime that it records (except fraud) comes through an auditable crime reporting route. This doesn't mean that 86.2 percent of crimes reported to Dyfed-Powys Police come through these routes, but that 86.2 percent of crime is recorded this way.

We found that the force recorded 87.8 percent of these crimes (with a confidence interval of +/- 1.69 percent). [We estimate the force is not recording over 3,300 reports of crime each year](#). These failings are potentially depriving many victims of the services they are entitled to.

Of a total of 1,372 reports of crime we audited, we found 349 crimes related to [domestic abuse](#). Of these, the force had recorded 283. The 66 offences not recorded included violence offences, sexual offences and public disorder. The force had not considered safeguarding requirements in all cases and had completed an investigation in less than ten of these cases.

The force allocates most domestic abuse crimes to an officer to attend and make a crime-recording decision. In addition, officers should complete a DASH assessment in every domestic abuse case. We found that too often this was not happening, meaning that too many victims didn't have proper consideration of their safeguarding needs. But we did find that the FCC call takers were conducting a THRIVES risk assessment every time. We also found that when officers created a crime record in a domestic abuse case, they explained on the crime record what safeguarding measures had been taken.

Because of not conducting DASH assessments in domestic abuse cases, the force doesn't always consider and provide the safeguarding these most vulnerable victims require. This is concerning.

Domestic abuse often involves victims who are particularly vulnerable to further offences being committed against them. So it is vital to record reported crimes of [domestic abuse](#).

The force's crime-recording processes, and its workforce's crime-recording knowledge, are contributing to its under-recording.

The force must improve its crime-recording processes. We found that:

- officers sometimes don't record crimes when attending crime reports, because they don't understand the crime-recording requirements, particularly where offences of harassment, common assault, public order and malicious communications are disclosed;
- officers and staff don't always record a proper explanation for why they haven't recorded a crime; and
- because there isn't enough supervision, officers' and staff's crime-recording decisions aren't challenged enough.

Response officers aren't always sure of crime-recording requirements when dealing with complex crimes.

When third parties acting in a professional capacity make reports of crime to the force, officers and staff often fail to record the crimes.

Violence against the person

84.4% of reported violent crimes were recorded

Over **1,500** reports of violent crime a year are not recorded

We found that the force records 84.4 percent of violent crimes reported to it (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.71 percent). This is lower than the overall crime-recording rate noted above. [By our estimate, this means the force fails to record over 1,500 violent crimes that are reported to it each year.](#) As violent crime can be particularly distressing for the

victim, and many of these crimes involve injury, better recording of reported crime is particularly important.

In most cases where reported violent crimes were not recorded, we found this was because of:

- the processes for recording a reported crime (described earlier);
- officers and staff not properly understanding the crime-recording rules; and
- inadequate supervision of crime-recording decisions.

Victims of violence and serious violence often need a lot of support. This support comes from the police and other appropriate agencies, such as [Victim Support](#). In these circumstances, crime recording is even more important. If the force fails to record a violent crime properly, it can mean victims aren't referred to Victim Support. This deprives victims of the support they need and deserve.

Sexual offences

93% of reported sex offences were recorded

Over **70** reports of sex offences a year are not recorded

The force is good at recording reports of sexual offences. We found it records 93 percent of sexual offences that are reported to it (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.79 percent). [We estimate the force is not recording over 70 reported sexual offences each year.](#)

Despite the good performance the force can do better. We found that it had failed to record reports of sexual offences against both adults and children. These included reports of sexual assaults and of children being incited to engage in sexual activity.

As before, the force is under-recording sexual offences because of:

- poor processes for recording a reported crime;
- officers and staff not understanding crime-recording rules, particularly third-party reporting;
- officers not recording all the crimes disclosed to them by the same victim; and
- inadequate supervision of crime-recording decisions.

Significantly though, the force had recorded nearly every offence of taking or sharing indecent images of a young person. It recently provided training to all officers and staff, leading to this good performance.

Rape

62 of 68 audited rape reports were accurately recorded

Rape is one of the most serious crimes a victim can experience, so it is especially important that reports of rape are recorded accurately. It helps to make sure victims receive the service and support they deserve. And it helps the police identify the nature and extent of sexual violence in their local area.

We found that 62 out of 68 rapes reported to the force had been correctly recorded. These include reports from the force incident system and from investigations, involving vulnerable victims, conducted by specialist officers dealing with adult and child protection. The force had investigated all of these cases and provided safeguarding to every victim.

However, the force needs to improve its understanding and use of the Home Office classification N100. The N100 was introduced in April 2015. Its purpose is to explain why reported incidents of rape or attempted rape, whether they are reported by victims, witnesses or third parties, haven't immediately been recorded as a confirmed crime. This can include instances where new information confirms the rape didn't take place, or where the rape took place in another force area and was transferred to the relevant force to record and investigate.

From our audit, we found 17 N100s that should have been recorded. Of these, the force had recorded only 11. We also examined 20 occasions where the force completed N100 records. Of these, 19 were recorded correctly and one was correctly turned into a rape.

It is important the force improves the understanding of N100 classifications among its officers and staff for it to satisfy itself fully that it always takes the correct crime-recording decisions following a report of rape.

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

●●●○ Good

Crime reports held on other systems

37 of 44 vulnerable victim crimes were recorded

To be confident that vulnerable victims always get the support they need, the force must make sure that it always records crimes reported directly to its public protection teams.

We examined 50 vulnerable victim records: 25 adult records and 25 relating to children. We found 44 crimes that should have been recorded, but the force only recorded 37. The

unrecorded crimes included a theft and a common assault against adults and five sex offences involving children. Four of these offences were committed against one victim.

Our examination of these records showed that safeguarding had been provided to each victim. The force took positive action in every case including, where appropriate, proportionate investigations.

We found that specialist detectives and staff in the central referral unit, who liaise directly with third-party professionals, clearly understood the crime-recording rules for offences reported by these professionals.

Modern slavery

Offences relating to modern slavery are an important and recent addition to the crimes that forces must record and investigate. So, we examined how well the force records reports of modern slavery offences. We also examined the force's understanding of the origin of such reports.

We examined seven modern slavery referrals made to the force. We found that the force should have recorded seven modern slavery crimes and had recorded six of these. The force had also recorded every other crime disclosed during modern slavery investigations. This is a good result.

We also found that the force undertook safeguarding in all cases.

The force's modern slavery lead works at local, regional, and national levels with other forces and interested parties. Officers understand modern slavery at a local level. The force gave us details of effective operations it had conducted. The force is considering the impact that Brexit will have on the border it shares with the Republic of Ireland. It is considering this impact in terms of modern slavery, among other things.

Timeliness

If the information the force gets at the first point of contact satisfies the national crime recording standard, the force should record crimes straight away, and in any case within 24 hours.

We found that, of the reports the force had recorded, it had only recorded the following number within 24 hours of receiving the report:

- 50 out of 62 reports of rape;
- 411 out of 532 reports of violent crime; and
- 151 out of 199 sexual offences (excluding rape).

This must improve.

Although some victims might be referred to support agencies in other ways, recording reported crimes late leads to delays in referring victims to Victim Support. This is unacceptable, as some victims would benefit from the early support this team can give.

Cancelled crimes

If additional verifiable information shows that a recorded crime didn't take place, the crime record can be cancelled. We found that the force's performance in this area needs to improve.

In Dyfed-Powys Police, only the FCR and her staff can cancel recorded crimes. This should be a good and effective process.

We reviewed a sample of cancelled records of rape, other sexual offences, violence and robbery. We found that the FCR had correctly authorised the cancellation of 12 out of 13 rape offences. DDMs working with the FCR had correctly cancelled:

- 18 out of 20 sexual offences;
- 18 out of 20 violence offences; and
- 3 out of 3 robbery offences.

If a crime has been cancelled or transferred to another force for investigation, victims should always know the status of their reported crime. If the force decides to cancel a recorded crime, the very least the victim should expect is an explanation of why the force decided this. We found that the force had informed victims of this decision on only 36 out of 41 occasions when it should have done.

Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) gives police forces clear guidance about the service they should give crime victims. We have concluded that the force is aware of its responsibilities under this code. In particular, after the force records a crime, it sends victims a standard letter with information about the offence which they have been subject to. At this point the force also refers the case to Victim Support, to give the victim further support and advice.

Staff are also aware of their responsibilities under the code. We found many examples of the force giving crime victims a good service, and sometimes an enhanced service.

Equality

We found that the force must improve how it collects information about the effect of criminality on identifiable groups.

Protected characteristics, such as gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion and age, don't necessarily make someone more vulnerable to the risk of crime. However, it is important that the force records information about the victims' characteristics. This helps to identify any patterns between different community groups and how vulnerable they are to (or how likely they are to report) different types of crime.

We found that the force collects equality information when recording hate crimes, but only obtains basic information in all other cases. Importantly, if the force fails to record this information on every occasion, it won't be able to understand clearly whether its crime-recording decisions are consistent across different community groups. Therefore, this is an area for improvement.

Officer and staff survey

We carried out a survey of officers and staff in Dyfed-Powys Police about their experience of crime recording. Over 200 respondents took part. We were pleased that most respondents said the force's approach to crime recording had improved since our 2014 inspection. And officers and staff do not feel any pressure to minimise the number of crimes recorded because of performance targets.

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

 Good

The force's culture and leadership of crime recording is good.

Senior officers demonstrate strong leadership around crime-recording expectations. Messages from the chief constable and the chief officer group are clear and unequivocal. We found that most officers and staff relied on the victim's initial account when making their crime-recording decisions, but the force still has work to do in this area. A small minority of officers and staff do not always rely on that initial account. Too often these officers would say that the victims weren't harassed, alarmed or distressed and didn't consider themselves crime victims. This was often despite the fact that victims had initially phoned the force in a distressed state to report a crime.

We found evidence of strong governance, with crime-recording standards included in the agenda for the deputy chief constable's improvement group. The force has been implementing a crime data integrity action plan designed to serve victims better. This has included developing training products and using feedback to make sure that it improves understanding and compliance.

The force has made good progress with making changes recommended in our [2014 report](#). It has fully completed all but one of these recommendations. The force has also made good progress against the national action plan, introduced by the national policing lead on crime statistics following our 2014 report.

Conclusion

Dyfed-Powys Police has improved its crime-recording processes since 2014. However, it still needs to improve.

We welcome its strong leadership and the positive approach among most officers and staff toward victims. However, the force needs to further improve its crime-recording processes. It

should also make sure that its staff and officers fully understand the crime-recording standards expected of them, and that it supervises these standards effectively.

What next?

We note that after our audit, the force immediately acted to make sure that every missed crime we found was retrospectively recorded and assessed for investigation. The force also began work to find out how it could further improve its crime recording. We welcome this and will continue to monitor progress.

As with all police forces, we may carry out another unannounced crime data integrity inspection of this force at any time.