

Received:
8 May 2015



Mike Cunningham QPM
HM Inspector of Custody
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
6th Floor – Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN

Please ask for: Clive Grunshaw
Telephone: 01772.533587
Email: commissioner@lancashire-pcc.gov.uk
Our Ref: CG/JW
Date: 29 April 2015

Dear Mike

I welcome the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary – Welfare of vulnerable people in Custody Inspection report as it highlights the issues related to some of the most vulnerable people in society that the police come into contact with.

I have considered this report and have discussed it with the Chief Constable.

This is an incredibly important issue and I am pleased that the report identifies that often police custody is used as a substitute for social and health care. I have long held the belief that whilst custody is no place for those in crisis or for the vulnerable it is essential that Police Forces develop custody services which are better equipped to meet the needs of vulnerable people. Therefore, I was pleased to learn that Lancashire Constabulary has taken full cognisance of the report and has already incorporated the additional vulnerability criteria that the HMIC will be inspecting the Constabulary against into their custody development plan.

As you may be aware, Lancashire Constabulary has for a number of years been concentrating on alternatives to arrest, especially for children and young people. This focus has seen a 71% reduction in the number of children arrested from 2008 to 2013. Further, the Constabulary has been working closely with Child Action North West to provide a Triage service which diverts young people from the Criminal Justice System, but still allows for reparation to be made for low level offending or anti-social behaviour.

Over the last two years the force has also worked hard with health partners to ensure that people detained under the mental health act are taken to a health based place of safety and not a police station. In 2014 only 12 people, who were detained solely under the Mental Health Act, were brought to a police cell and none of those were children.

In Lancashire, there is now a strong multi-agency focus on and robust governance around mental health issues, which is being further enhanced by the Forces "Early Action" approach of intervening with troubled individuals and families prior to reaching the point of crisis and

Clive Grunshaw Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire
PO Box 653, PRESTON, PR2 2WB
www.lancashire-pcc.gov.uk

Cont'./...



addressing the underlying issues which bring them to the attention of the police and other public services, such as the NHS.

In order to further reduce the inappropriate detention of mentally unwell people, Lancashire is about to start a force wide Street Triage service. In addition mental health staff will be based in the Contact Management Centre to further enhance the service they provide at first point of contact for those people who turn to the police in crisis. This should allow staff in the Contact Centre or at the scene to access both police and Mental Health service information to make the best decisions as to how a person should be dealt with and provide alternatives to arrest, including Mental Health support services.

You will recall from the recent PEEL hot de-brief the force will be replacing its custody and CJS system within the next 12 months. The issues highlighted in the HMIC report will also be factored into configuring the system so that it provides much more accurate and comprehensive data related to issues of vulnerability, age, gender, ethnic background, and mental illness. This will ensure the force is able to be more responsive to these issues and comply with their obligations under the Equality Act

I am committed to safeguarding vulnerable people in our community and through my discussions with the Chief Constable I am assured that when those people who turn to the police in crisis, they are receiving the help and support they need. I will continue to closely monitor the progress of Lancashire Constabulary in this area.

Yours Sincerely

Clive Grunshaw