

## **Response from the Police & Crime Commissioner of Devon and Cornwall to [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024-25](#)**

I welcome the publication of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Constabulary Andy Cooke's third annual assessment of policing in England and Wales. HMICFRS reports are one of the tools that a Police and Crime Commissioner have to help hold the Chief Constable to account for an efficient and effective force.

HMCI Cooke's report highlights the work police forces and the Government are doing to rebuild public confidence and notes that nationally the decline in public confidence has begun to level out. I continue to monitor public confidence levels closely for my own force area and am pleased to report that confidence levels remain stable, with the most recent data indicating that 77% of the public agree that they have confidence in the police in Devon and Cornwall.

I reflect HMCI Cooke's view that the effective investigation of crime is integral to public confidence, to ensure that communities feel safe and to prevent future offending. Investigation standards were found to be inadequate in Devon and Cornwall's last PEEL inspection. These findings were reflected by my office's own [scrutiny inquiry into the quality and timeliness of files](#) prepared by investigating officers for the Crown Prosecution Service, where several weaknesses were identified, including communication with and service to victims. Investigation has been a considerable area of focus for the Chief Constable since his appointment in December last year, and whilst there is more work still to be done, HMCI Cooke identified enough overall improvement to give him the confidence to discharge the force from the enhanced level of monitoring (known as Engage) in July this year.

HMCI Cooke also highlights the impact of the public disorder on policing and communities, following the tragic deaths of three young girls in Southport in July 2024. I remain proud of how Devon and Cornwall Police responded to the civil unrest (subsequently classified as rioting) in Plymouth in August 2024 and the outstanding teamwork across the criminal justice system which led to the swift prosecution of offenders and an end to the disorder.

HMCI Cooke's report also highlights some wider challenges facing policing forces including the lack of highly qualified and capable candidates to fill Chief Constable positions nationally, the changing nature of criminality, and the adequacy of police funding, including the absence of a capital grant from the Government. I agree that these pressures continue to put police forces under significant strain, and that the Government will need to give considerable focus to these issues as they consider police reform.



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