

**Inspection of the
police and Crown
Prosecution Service
response to crimes
against older people
Inspection methodology**

2018/19

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1. Introduction

The population of England and Wales is ageing. While research shows that those in this age group are less at risk of crime overall than other groups, some crime types – such as those linked to physical, mental, or financial abuse – disproportionately affect older people.

[Research shows startling differences in the experiences of domestic abuse for people aged 60 and older](#). For example, in 44 percent of victims of domestic abuse aged 60 or more, the perpetrator will be an adult family member. This figure drops to 6 percent in victims younger than 60.

Older people are also overrepresented as victims of frauds, including pension and investment scams, postal scams, doorstep scams and telephone scams. For example, [research puts the average age of victims of scam mail at 74 years](#).

Some older people are especially at risk, either because perpetrators target them or because their circumstances make them vulnerable, for example if they are bereaved or living with dementia. The financial and health impacts can be devastating. In addition, older people are often socially isolated and without established support mechanisms to help them recover if they become victims.

There are also obvious links between crimes against vulnerable older people and crimes deemed to be disability hate crimes. This inspection continues the programme of inspection work related to the police and CPS response to hate crime.

For the purposes of this inspection, we will use the College of Policing (CoP) definition of vulnerability:

“A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.”

When considering safeguarding issues, we will also use the definition of a vulnerable adult in [CoP guidance](#). When considering the needs of vulnerable victims in the criminal justice system, we will use the definition contained in the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#).

For these important reasons, we included this inspection in our [consultation](#) on the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Programme for 2018/19.

The inspection will be led by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and supported by HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPISI). It will assess, for the first time, the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) response to crimes affecting older people (CAOP). For the purposes of this inspection, older people are aged 60 or more.¹

¹ This is in line with CPS policy that such cases should be flagged on the case management system when certain additional factors are present. However, on 10 September 2018 the CPS launched a public consultation on its CAOP policy. The consultation document indicates the CPS is minded to raise the age for CAOP cases to the same as the statutory minimum pension age of 68.

2. Inspection scope

The question that this inspection seeks to answer is:

How effective are police forces at investigating, and the Crown Prosecution Service at prosecuting, crimes committed against older people?

The inspection will focus on the:

- identification and management of the vulnerability and risk associated with older people who are victims of crime;
- effectiveness of police adult safeguarding arrangements for older victims;
- effectiveness of the police and the CPS in ensuring that vulnerable older people are effectively supported through the criminal justice system; and
- identification of good practice.

3. Force selection process

To ensure a consistent approach, which allows for a range of victim experiences to be represented, we will carry out fieldwork in six forces (and the corresponding CPS areas) using a combination of the following criteria:

- one larger metropolitan force;
- one Welsh force;
- a mix of smaller and medium-sized forces; and
- one rural force.

In addition, we have considered information from stakeholders that indicates promising practice.

The proposed schedule for inspection fieldwork (see annex A) is in the same period as HMICFRS's integrated peel assessment (IPA) inspection programme. To reduce the potential inspection impact on those forces, for the fieldwork for this inspection, we have also taken this into account when selecting forces.

Using a combination of all the above factors, the forces and CPS areas that have been selected for inspection are shown in the table below.

Force	CPS area
Greater Manchester Police	North West
North Wales Police	Wales
Dorset Police	Wessex
Humberside Police	Yorkshire and Humberside
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	East of England
Gloucestershire Constabulary	South West

4. Inspection process

We will carry out the inspection in three phases.

Phase one

The first phase will consist of assessments of cases the CPS has prosecuted. Sixteen cases from each CPS area and respective force area (therefore 96 cases in total) will be selected and reviewed by inspectors from both HMICFRS and HMCPSI. Therefore, this assessment process will examine cases from both a policing and a CPS perspective. Inspectors will form one joint judgment about the effectiveness of the police and CPS response to the case.

HMCPSI will select cases from those recently finalised on the CPS case management system and involving a crime against an older person. They may include cases that, contrary to CPS guidance, have not been flagged on the CPS system as involving an older person.

Phase one will be completed in quarter three of 2018/19.

Phase two

The second phase will comprise pre-inspection activity, and three days' fieldwork in each of the six identified force areas carried out by HMICFRS inspectors. It will take place in quarter four of 2018/19.

In one force (Dorset Police) HMICFRS will pilot fieldwork taking place at the same time as PEEL fieldwork. This will establish if there are benefits in 'deep-dive' inspection activity taking place while the PEEL team conducts inspection fieldwork. This approach reduces the impact on the force by combining fieldwork into one period.

The fieldwork will be in two phases: pre-inspection activity and in-force inspection activity.

Pre-inspection activity consists of document and information reviews. For example, an examination of the force's policies on its approach to dealing with crimes against older people. We will use documents from PEEL document submissions and force management statements where practicable, to reduce the impact on forces and potential for duplicate information being sought.

As part of their in-force inspection activity, inspectors will spend three days in force and undertake the following interviews:

- force strategic lead;
- force operational lead;
- chair of adult safeguarding board;²
- multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) (or relevant information-sharing function) lead;³
- force crime registrar; and
- independent domestic abuse advocates.⁴

Inspectors will also carry out focus groups with these people:

- frontline officers;
- frontline supervisors;
- third sector agencies and partners; and
- public protection officers and investigators, including those working within a MASH or information-sharing function.

In addition, HMICFRS inspectors will also conduct assessments of 16 cases of crimes against older people in each force (therefore 96 cases in total). These cases will have been finalised by the force and will not have resulted in a charge. We will select the cases on the following basis:

- four cases flagged as involving domestic abuse;
- four cases involving crimes of violence;
- four cases involving crimes of fraud; and
- four cases not in these three categories but where the force has flagged that the victim is vulnerable.

² by telephone if appropriate.

³ by telephone if appropriate.

⁴ by telephone if appropriate.

To examine the effectiveness of the police response to referrals of potential crimes against older people made by local authorities, HMICFRS inspectors will consider mechanisms by which referrals are made. They will also examine a small number of cases in each force to establish if the referral mechanisms are effective.

We will ask forces to make available one person with knowledge of the IT systems to assist for the fieldwork period.

Phase three

The third phase of inspection activity will comprise of strategic and national interviews in quarter one of 2019/20. We will, where possible, conduct interviews jointly.

For the police, joint national activity will consist of interviews with:

- NPCC lead;
- College of Policing lead; and
- appropriate representative from the Home Office and/or Ministry of Justice.

For the CPS, national activity will consist of interviews with:

- chief crown prosecutor national lead;
- CPS policy lead; and
- relevant CPS area leads

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
6th Floor, Globe House,
89 Eccleston square,
London SW1V 1PN

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
4th Floor, One Kemble Street,
London WC2B 4TS

HM Inspectorate of Probation
9th Floor, The Tower,
102 Petty France,
London SW1H 9AJ

HM Inspectorate of Prisons
Victory House, 6th Floor,
30-34 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6EX

Website:
www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk

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