



# APCC Engage Toolkit

**Authors:** Elliott Fitzsimmons, APCC

**Last Update:** 29/05/2024

This toolkit is designed to walk you through the Engage process, explaining what happens, how you and your office can fulfil your responsibilities, how best to engage with HMICFRS, examples of how your force can exit the process, and details of help available.

# Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
Why this toolkit? .....	3
HMICFRS.....	3
What is Engage?.....	3
Police Performance Oversight Group (PPOG).....	5
Opportunities of going into Engage .....	6
Flowchart of the process .....	7
Role of the PCC in Engage.....	8
APCC Support Offer.....	8
Exiting Engage.....	10
PCC Experiences of Engage .....	13
Post-Engage .....	19
Appendices .....	20
A - Role of each PPOG organisation .....	20
B - Lines of questioning for PCCs with HMICFRS .....	21
B - Lines of questioning for PCCs with their Chief Constable.....	22
Glossary.....	23
Contact us .....	24

# Introduction

Your force has entered the Engage part of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) monitoring process for specific reasons that will be unique to your force. This toolkit is the APCC's offer of support to PCCs/PFCCs/Deputy Mayors - termed 'PCCs' hereafter for brevity.

This toolkit is designed to walk you through the Engage process, explaining what happens in the process, how you and your office can fulfil your responsibilities, how best to engage with HMICFRS, examples of how your force can exit the process, and details of help available.

## Why this toolkit?

When a force enters the Engage process, this may leave a PCC feeling isolated, wondering what their role is, what support is available, and how to access this support. PCCs who have experienced this process stated the overriding feeling was wondering how to get their force out of Engage as soon as possible.

This toolkit intends to support PCCs to:

- better understand the Engage process and be equipped with helpful information.
- Understand the different ways you may be able to support/challenge your Chief Constable, whilst also being mindful of their operational independence, by reading the different experiences of the PCCs who have been in the Engage process.
- become an integral part of the HMICFRS monitoring process, rather than an informed party.

## HMICFRS

PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy) is the regular assessment of police forces' performance in England and Wales by HMICFRS.

HMICFRS continuously assess the performance of each force but publish a PEEL report for each force every two years. The report contains an assessment of how good forces are in several areas of policing. Most of the areas receive a graded judgment, which is either outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement or inadequate. Forces can receive one of five grades ranging from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate' in eight main areas of assessment, which cover operational and organisational activity alongside an assessment of services for victims. Some forces also receive a crime data recording assessment.

## What is Engage?

Part of the way HMICFRS make sure inspection activity is being directed to where it is needed most is by operating a continuous monitoring approach. HM Inspectors (HMIs) routinely monitor the

performance of all police forces in England and Wales and discuss this at the HMI Monitoring Group (HMG).

There are two stages in the monitoring process: Scan and Engage. Scan is the default phase of monitoring, for which HMICFRS use a range of data and information to identify potential areas of concern. All forces are in Scan by default.

HM Chief Inspector (HMCI) may place a force into Engage when there are concerns about either their efficiency, effectiveness or legitimacy that appear to need closer scrutiny. When deciding on whether a force should be moved into Engage, HMCI considers all the circumstances of the case.

HMICFRS may consider the below:

- (a) Does the force recognise the cause of concern and understand the implications?
- (b) What is the prospect that the force will succeed in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern (taking into account capacity and capability)?
- (c) Is the cause of concern likely to be short-lived or enduring?
- (d) The need for public protection to be attained by the force becoming more efficient and effective above the stated cause of concern;
- (e) Public confidence in the force;
- (f) The public law requirement of fairness.

In Engage, HMICFRS asks forces to develop an improvement plan to address the concerns identified, they support forces through additional inspection, and forces receive support from stakeholders across the policing sector including the College of Policing, the NPCC and the Home Office.

Upon being escalated to the Engage phase, His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) will write to the force to set out the causes of concern to be addressed that led to the decision. When HMIs write to the Chief Constable the letter also includes an invitation to attend a meeting of the Policing Performance Oversight Group (PPOG). A short cover letter is also sent to the PCC informing them their force is in Engage and an invitation to PPOG. The decision to place a force into Engage is published. Both the Chief Constable and PCC are told when this announcement is going to be made with as much notice as it reasonably can ahead of publication.

The HMI will meet with the Chief Constable and PCC to set out the causes of concern and identify the actions that need to be taken. Based on these discussions, the Chief Constable will need to undertake a root cause analysis and develop an improvement plan, with timescales agreed with the HMI.

The PCC will oversee implementation of the plan, with the Chief Constable and PCC providing regular updates to the HMI. The APCC suggests that PCCs concentrate scrutiny in areas of concern as part of their usual governance processes, however this is at the discretion of PCCs. The more areas of concern are built into the oversight of a force, the stronger grip PCCs will have to continuously monitor and drive improvements.

# Police Performance Oversight Group (PPOG)

All forces engaged with HMICFRS as part of the quarterly monitoring process are discussed at the PPOG, chaired by His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Andy Cooke. Although HMICFRS will be scrutinising the improvement of the force in the areas of concern, HMCI Cooke makes it clear this is a supportive process rather than a punitive one.

The focus of the meeting is to give advice and help the force in finding ways to improve and resolve the causes of concern. This forum is a monitoring mechanism, which forms an extra layer of scrutiny for HMICFRS to hold forces to account. The PPOG enables HMICFRS to:

- Get more information in a formal setting from the Chief Constable of the force about their plans to improve the force's efficiency and effectiveness.
- Hear any representations or observations the PCC wishes to make.
- Help provide support so the force can improve its efficiency and effectiveness. This help is usually given by the College of Policing, NPCC, other forces (often co-ordinated by the NPCC lead for performance) and the Home Office.
- Make sure the Home Office is kept informed of the inspectorate's concerns about the force's performance and the steps being taken to remedy any performance failures.
- Determine whether, and under what conditions, the HMCI should consider informing the Home Secretary of failures or potential failures in the force. This enables the Home Secretary to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the force and decide whether to exercise powers of intervention.
- Enable HMCI to determine if a force can be removed from Engage

Each force will have 1 hour in PPOG. This will entail:

- The Chief Constable presenting their improvement plan.
- Listening to the views of the PCC to add context to the presentation (on the scrutiny and support they have been giving the Chief Constable).
- Obtaining feedback which includes support/comments/questions from meeting attendees.
- Listening to the HMI update and rationale on why the force is in Engage, and their recommendations on what improvement is necessary.
- The HMCI ending the session with a summary based on the information he has heard and a decision on whether the force will remain in Engage, or be de-escalated back to 'scan'. The HMCI may also indicate the next review points for the force if it is to remain in Engage.

The group consists of:

HMICFRS – Board

National Police Chiefs' Council – Chair and either the NPCC HMICFRS Liaison or NPCC Performance lead

College of Policing – Chief Executive

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners – Chair and Performance lead

Home Office – Policing Director, plus Minister with a standing invitation

On occasions, a PCC may be able to observe PPOG if the APCC request it and HMCI Cooke agrees.

The role of each organisation can be found in the appendices.

On first being escalated to Engage, the Chief Constable and PCC for that force will be invited to PPOG to attend and give an outline of work underway to make necessary improvements in relation to causes of concern and areas for improvement. Before the force's presentation, the relevant HMI will provide a recap for everyone of why the force is in Engage and the related recommendations on how the force can improve.

In respect of ongoing monitoring, the regional HMI will monitor the Chief Constable's management of the improvement plan, advised by PPOG.

If HMICFRS determined that any failure is unlikely to be sufficiently remedied within a reasonable timeframe, HMCI will consider the evidence and may issue a public letter to the PCC. This letter may include a restating of the cause of concern, root causes, the support provided, and the possible leadership failure.

Both the HMI and the Force Liaison Lead (FLL) for the force will continuously engage throughout the process. The FLL is responsible for leading and delivering the continuous assessment model of inspection in their allocated forces. They are the primary point of contact between HMICFRS and forces, PCCs and OPCCs, supporting their HMI and their Chief of Staff to inspect forces, supporting them to drive improvements, support forces to learn from other organisations, and recognise promising or innovative practice.

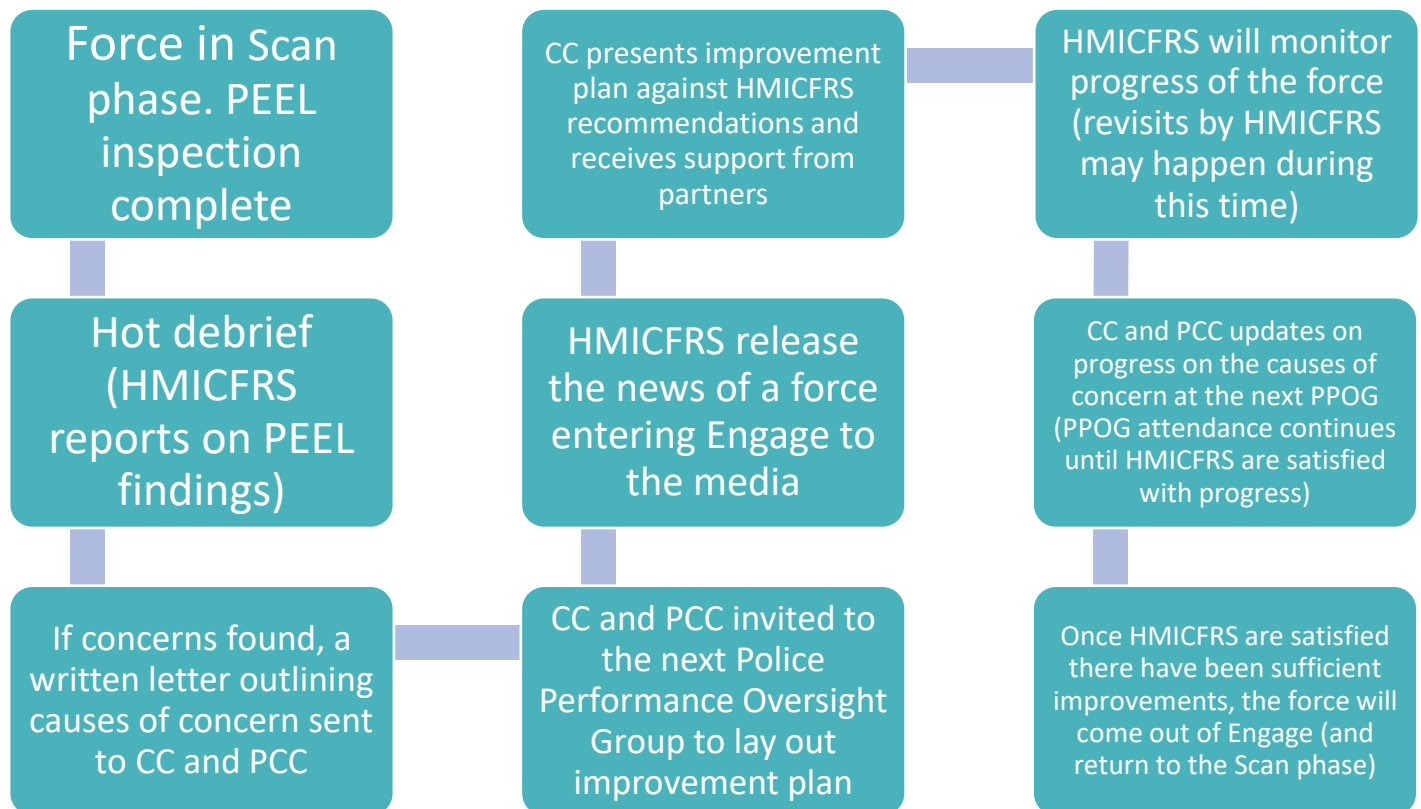
## Opportunities of going into Engage

When forces go into Engage, it is easy to see it as a negative, and we are aware that it can generate negative media interest. However, it presents an opportunity to:

- Concentrate efforts to focus on areas that need improving.
- Review areas where your Chief Constable's force performance needs improving in line with your police and crime plan.
- Review the effectiveness of operating models, the force's culture and communication channels for flagging problems, your own scrutiny and governance frameworks etc.

- Provide your force with extra support from national stakeholders/other PCCs as a springboard to support your local force to become an outstanding force, which other forces may not have access to.

## Flowchart of the process



- The hot debrief may not be relevant to monitoring status. However, if it is, it is for the force to attend, although the Chief Constable may choose to invite the PCC.
- If an area of concern(s) is found, it does not necessarily mean a force goes into Engage.
- Monitoring status is not tied to the PEEL inspection report, while it is often the case that one follows the other there may be some circumstances where there is a different type of inspection report or no new inspection report at all. One example of such a report would be when a PCC requests HMICFRS to carry out an inspection, under section 54(2BA) of the Police Act 1996, on a particular topic that may need further investigation, that is separate to PEEL.

# Role of the PCC in Engage

The PCC plays an important role within the Engage process. Although each PCC will approach the process differently, there are responsibilities that all PCCs should consider discharging. These are to:

- Build a relationship with your FLL and HMI to really understand the areas of concern, and any underlying issues that may not be obviously visible.
- Meet with your Chief Constable to understand what their plan is to make necessary improvements, and whether any early improvements have been made.
- Build in areas of concern into your own assurance and scrutiny activity. This way you are maintaining oversight of improvements in line with the wider performance measured against your Police and Crime Plan.
- Understand if there is financial or personnel support you can offer your Chief Constable in making improvements, and how long this support will be needed.
- Understand what help external organisations could support with in this process.
- Be open to inviting HMI and FLL to oversight meetings or improvement boards, so they can clearly see the journey towards improving areas of concern.

In PPOG meetings, you should:

- Be clear what the Chief Constable will present at PPOG, know what your subsequent input will entail, and how this corresponds with the force's perspective.
- Provide a succinct overview after the Chief Constable has presented to PPOG, of how you feel your Chief Constable is making improvements, and any extra context surrounding police performance in those areas of concern. This gives HMICFRS greater insight into overall force performance. Keep it brief and relevant to areas of concern unless wider issues or improvements do provide useful insight.
- Seek clarity from HMICFRS on any thresholds to achieve 'sufficient improvement'.

## APCC support offer

Once a force has been placed into Engage, the APCC performance portfolio leads will write to you outlining what support is on offer, outlined below. Additionally, an initial meeting will be offered to demystify the Engage process and understand what support would be required. The APCC performance portfolio is on hand throughout the process and the offer will be tailored as the process develops.

- **Workshops**

The APCC will continue facilitating Engage workshops in future, building on from the recent workshop at the APCC General Meeting in February 2024. This workshop allowed two PCCs, whose forces had managed to exit the Engage process, to outline learning points and tips on how your force can exit. Now this workshop is completed, the recordings of each PCC area (Cleveland, and

Gloucestershire) will be shared with other PCCs who are currently in the process, and those who enter in future. Once more forces exit Engage in the future, they will be asked if they would like to share experiences of Engage with other PCCs.

- **Buddy system**

The APCC can provide an informal buddy system to match PCCs whose forces need improving with those PCCs whose forces are showing positive progress or evidencing good practice. The idea is to share learning, making Engage less daunting and more supportive. This is of course optional; however, it will be offered.

- **Peer Review**

The APCC can facilitate a peer review between PCCs to provide a more formal second opinion (an escalation of the buddy system) whereby a force and/or PCC that is high performing in the area of concern visit another force to observe and feedback views and suggestions to improve. PCCs currently in the Engage process have suggested that they would benefit from a peer review and buddy system matching similar outstanding/good areas with those in the Engage process to encourage the sharing of lessons learned and notable practice. The knowledge sharing should provide information on governance structures, effective oversight, policy advice, and best practice from the highest performing OPCCs.

- **Communications guidance**

The APCC will liaise with PCC offices' communications teams whose forces enter Engage to assist with media/comms-related issues. If appropriate for your situation, depending on the position you wish to take, it may be worth considering your communications team is joined up with your force communications team around messaging.

- **Support in engaging with HMICFRS and the force**

Although PCCs will have their own questions they would want to ask, a list of suggested questions to understand the areas of concern and support your force in exiting the Engage process can be found in the appendices.

- **Wider support outside of Engage**

APCC Accountability Framework<sup>1</sup>

PCCs expressed their desire for the APCC to support them not only in Engage but the wider holding to account function. The APCC has developed a guidance document that is designed to support and complement the activity of PCCs and their offices in this critical statutory function. There is no one way that PCCs are required to hold Chief Constables to account. It is their decision around how they hold the Chief Constable to account and what accountability arrangements look like locally. This

---

<sup>1</sup> [APCC Accountability Framework \(apccs.police.uk\)](https://apccs.police.uk)

work is intended to aid PCCs in identifying particularly effective ways in which this function can be fulfilled.

- **PPOG Pre-meet**

The APCC will offer a meeting prior to PPOG meetings if the PCC wishes to raise any issues or run any concerns/ideas past us. This could be the forum to ask the APCC to support or reinforce any messages the PCC wants to get across to HMICFRS.

## Exiting Engage

Once in Engage, HMCI has referenced two considerations in PPOG when considering whether sufficient improvement has been made:

- (a) Based on current performance, would HMICFRS decide to place a force into Engage now?
- (b) Is there evidence of sustained systemic improvement and scope for this to be sustainable?

If the HMI for the force is satisfied the force has sufficiently improved, they will discuss this with HMCI, who may decide to move them back to Scan status.

This final consideration is key because HMICFRS see the process as trying to instil long-lasting change (in operating models and force culture, for example), rather than a tick box exercise or short-term wins. HMICFRS will only release a force from Engage once it is confident that any improvement is sustained and sustainable, as a force re-entering Engage shortly after being released would be even more damaging for the force.

HMCI and the HMIs may set clear expectations on a case-by-case basis with forces placed into Engage.

Forces will have differing reasons for why they are in Engage. However, the APCC has conducted a review into themes that have assisted forces to make improvements and/or exit from Engage altogether. These themes will aid PCCs to hold their Chief Constable to account by asking if the force is having due regard to any of these themes. This is not an exhaustive list and not a one-size-fits-all approach.

- **Having the right outlook in PPOG** – forces should go into Engage with an open mind, amenable to guidance and support, and with an acknowledgement of the improvements being recommended. This should be used as a positive step to become a better force than before escalation. Forming a cohesive team between OPCC and force that supports one another will assist in exiting Engage. This includes both at PPOG and during the day-to-day relationship.

- **Understand underlying reasons behind causes of concern** – working towards causes of concern being discharged is just one part of the puzzle. Engage should be seen as part of the wider change and monitoring process in making necessary improvements. Forces that undertake a systemic improvement programme that is not confined to areas of concern will make improvements whilst maintaining performance in other areas that are currently not concerning HMICFRS.

APCC case studies have shown that building PEEL and areas of improvement into existing scrutiny mechanisms will keep improvements in line with your Police & Crime Plan and drive good performance. Some causes of concern will be present because of connected issues, such as leadership, an IT system that is not fit for purpose, or not enough focus on prevention across crime types, and a need for a change in culture etc. You may want to consider whether staff numbers are appropriate to meet the level of demand, and whether the force focused on the right priorities.

- **Leadership** – Holding the Chief Constable to account for considering whether the current leadership team is the right team to lead the force out of Engage. Or is fresh perspective necessary? Are there gaps across the different ranks that would assist with force performance improvement? Ultimately, having leaders that you have full confidence in is important to help drive the necessary changes to improve. To clarify, your local force going into Engage does not necessarily mean a change in Chief Constable is necessary. It is just one consideration amongst many. Having a section of a meeting to review the leadership model and self-assess performance improvement opportunities has also helped forces exit Engage.
- **Workforce trust and confidence** – with any significant change in policing, it is vital to bring your workforce along the journey with you from the outset. Open communication is paramount and acting on your commitments will build trust and confidence. When you start seeing green shoots of improvements, tell the force it is going in the right direction and remind them this work will help them provide a better service to their communities and victims of crime. As a PCC, it is important to balance informal and formal scrutiny, and knowing when to challenge and when to support.
- **Training** – Holding the Chief Constable to account for considering whether there is a gap in knowledge and skills in particular areas that are leading to areas of concern or standards dropping. In specific circumstances, there is merit to training as many employees in the force as possible on a particular subject. One example could be making more people aware of what Crime Data Integrity (CDI) is, how to improve it, and boosting the confidence of those who work in the CDI remit daily. The more people across the force are aware of a topic, the more confident and resilient the force will become rather than training only the specialist teams that work on it more regularly. Building data quality across the force will enhance overall culture and knowledge. However, it is worth being mindful of cost, resource and abstraction implications and therefore looking at delivery mechanisms is key.
- **Central team to focus on HMICFRS work** - Some forces have a central team that continuously inspects their own force, areas of concern and areas for improvement that

follows the same methodology as HMICFRS inspectors. Kent Police has a Force Inspectorate which conducts inspections throughout the year to identify any areas of policing that may become areas of concern in the future. This may not be in the financial scope of many forces; however, it may prevent forces from entering Engage if you can spot early signs of concerns before they evolve into causes of concern. Investing in audit and assurance that is fully aligned with HMICFRS methodology will provide confidence in the insight a force needs to improve areas of concern, and insight for HMICFRS to track improvements more clearly.

An alternative view is that good governance should be built into all aspects of the Force to the extent that separate HMICFRS governance teams should not be needed. You will need to consider what is right for your Force, in discussion with the Chief Constable and based on the circumstances.

- **Demand management** – knowing clearly what demand looks like in any force is key to understanding strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. Once you have worked with your Chief Constable to understand demand across the whole organisation (internal and external demands), you will be better placed to make decisions and changes that will move you closer to increasing efforts to improve areas of concern and ultimately move out of Engage. Some forces have implemented Right Care, Right Person<sup>2</sup> in their operating models to reduce demand to make resources available in other pressing areas, as one example.

It is important to note that focus should not just be on demand because making sure the service provided meets your communities' needs is as important.

- **Ask for help** – being in Engage is a unique opportunity because every stakeholder around the PPOG table wants to assist in improving policing performance across England and Wales. You should understand what help you need as you begin working on improvements. This could be asking another force to provide a peer review into your Force Control Room to improve your call handling. It could include asking HMICFRS for clarity on how to exit Engage by providing your force with thresholds and metrics on the recommendations to be able to discharge a cause of concern. It could be meeting with another force that has exited to discuss longer term strategic planning to remain out of Engage.
- **Positive relationships** – building a relationship with your Chief Constable and senior officials is paramount to be able to provide effective oversight and understand how your office can support the force (politically and/or financially).

It is also prudent to build a relationship with your Force Liaison Lead (FLL) in HMICFRS and your HMI. Keeping an open-door policy for HMI/FLLs to regularly meet, conduct fieldwork, observe any improvement panels your force sets up in relation to any causes of concern, and keeping them abreast of pertinent information and improvements will help. It is also key to be responsive to feedback from HMICFRS and external stakeholders. Bringing them along your journey from the start will foster positive working relationships.

---

<sup>2</sup> [APCC Right Care, Right Person and National Partnership Approach Guidance \(apccs.police.uk\)](https://apccs.police.uk)

- **Honesty** – If there are any concerns or barriers that will get in the way of evidencing the improvements you need, be open and honest about these. One force was about to have a PEEL inspection in the middle of implementing wide ranging transformation, so asking HMICFRS for some forbearance considering this possible hurdle was mentioned in PPOG. Another force was answering a high percentage of 999 calls using their own local data; however, this was lower than the national statistics HMICFRS use to measure performance. Highlighting this difference in PPOG and explaining why the force used a different measure gave extra context for HMICFRS to understand discrepancies. Another example was a technical issue slowing down 999 calls to the local force control room due to a contract with a supplier having to manually transfer calls. Being upfront about this and explaining what is being done to mitigate, or fix entirely, and when, allowed HMICFRS to have a better insight into the potential improvements once this was dealt with.
- **Getting the basics right** – The Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, which is no longer in Engage, focused on taking the force back to being great at the basics. Reducing the time it takes to answer 999 and 101 calls, solving more serious crimes, and more effective performance management formed part of the recovery. Getting the basics right naturally led to improvements in other areas.

## PCC experience of Engage

The APCC has collated experiences from PCCs whose forces have exited Engage on what they did to support forces out of Engage.

### Humberside's approach

Humberside exited Engage prior to the start of the current format, which began in May 2017.

Their approach was to ensure they personally engaged with the local HMICFRS team for the North East area, as well as the PCC meeting with the HMICFRS inspector for the North East. This clearly showed them how they continued to hold the force to account and that there were no surprises, i.e. HMICFRS should not be telling them anything they didn't already know – they considered that if HMICFRS did, then they had failed in their holding to account.

The approach was to support and challenge through their holding to account framework. Due to progress made on scrutiny arrangements by the OPCC, they received four quotes in the last PEEL inspection around their work and how this added value to the work of the force. HMICFRS had also commented positively that the OPCC were seen at the key meetings that they also attended as part of their fieldwork. The key was to take the same interest in the key areas that HMICFRS were, but in an oversight capacity.

Humberside PCC has an effective and efficient programme of Holding to Account and Scrutiny which has been developed and refined over a number of years. It ultimately supported Humberside Police to get out of Engage. The core approach running through the programme is about getting the balance right between formal vs informal scrutiny and taking a challenge vs support approach.

Assurance arrangements are clearly outlined and understood by the PCC, OPCC and Humberside Police and there are daily, weekly, monthly and bi-monthly assurance mechanisms. This includes through the Bi-Monthly Accountability Board, which ensures proper governance of the Force through open and constructive debate, focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of the force. Humberside's Code of Corporate Governance underpins the holding to account and scrutiny activity and is used to drive business improvement. A review of their Independent Scrutiny arrangements commenced in 2020 and, amongst other changes and improvements, led to the implementation of an Ethics and Scrutiny Board with an Independent Chair. Humberside PCC also implemented a local 'Our Approach to HMICFRS' protocol. This was originally produced for Engage, has been updated several times since, and covers their approach to inspections. This is agreed with the Chief Constable and has 4 stages to it – govern, plan, communicate and influence.

## **Manchester Combined Authority's approach**

### Moved out of Engage

October 2022

### Reasons exited Engage<sup>3</sup>

- responding appropriately to the public and vulnerable people, including answering calls more quickly;
- better understanding its performance and the capability and capacity of its workforce, and providing better support for officers and staff;
- halving the number of open investigations, giving officers more time to focus on bringing offenders to justice; and
- more accurately recording crime.

### Entered Engage

2020

### Reason entered Engage

Greater Manchester Police was failing to respond appropriately to some people who are vulnerable and at risk. This meant that it was missing some opportunities to safeguard victims and secure evidence at the scene. This service failure gave cause for concern about public safety in Greater Manchester.

### What Manchester Combined Authority did about it

The experience in Greater Manchester is somewhat different in that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) going into Engage led to the departure of the then Chief Constable. A significant part of the process was therefore the appointment of the right Chief Constable. Within the selection process, in addition to securing the services of a recruitment agency, they also enrolled the support of a former Chief Executive of the College of Policing, who was also a former HMI and Chief Constable. The Mayor was clear what he wanted from a Chief Constable, not only to improve on the findings

---

<sup>3</sup> [Police forces previously in Engage - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

of HMICFRS, but someone who could rebuild effective neighbourhood policing and ensure the Force was more open and transparent.

In the intervening period the Mayor commissioned PWC to conduct a root cause analysis, which would be available to both himself and the new Chief Constable for when he took post. This included interviews, focus groups and surveys of officers, staff, and key stakeholders. The Deputy Mayor's office also worked closely with the temporary Chief Constable to support them in developing an interim action plan and applied a scrutiny process around that.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor both attended and constructively engaged with each PPOG meeting. The Deputy Mayor met the new HMI early on in her appointment and remained engaged. Similarly, the Deputy Mayor's office forged better relationships with HMICFRS officers.

Prior to the appointment of the Chief Constable the formal scrutiny mechanism was via a 6 weekly Deputy Mayor's Executive, where the Chief Constable and other chief officers would attend. This was supplemented by a weekly informal meeting between the Deputy Mayor and Chief Constable. On the appointment of the Chief Constable, the Deputy Mayor's office was given the opportunity to attend whatever further force meetings that they wished to. This consisted of:

- Force POAP Board (change programme) chaired by DCC. The Deputy Mayor and senior officials attended and this is now delegated to senior officials.
- All programme boards that sat below – attended by staff from Deputy Mayor's office.
- Force Performance Meeting – attended by Deputy Mayor, Director, Assistant Director and Head of Oversight and Performance.
- DEI Board, chaired by Chief Constable – attended by Assistant Director.
- Digital Policing Programme Board – which includes the programme to procure a new records management system – attended by Director.
- Plethora of other meetings led by Tactical Leads, such as a stop and search working group.

The capacity and capability in respect of scrutiny in the Deputy Mayor's office was strengthened including an additional post of Head of Oversight and Performance. Two Assistant Director roles were also created. These were not additional roles, rather an additional layer of leadership in a reformed senior management team, with scrutiny responsibilities in respect of GMP and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service (GMFRS).

Crucially an open and constructive relationship with mutual respect had been built between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chief Constable and his chief officers. The Mayor fully supported the Chief Constable, including investment, in his ambition in the first 2 years to get the Force doing the basics well, before moving on to a relentless focus on quality of service. The PEEL report demonstrated the Force was well into that stage of the journey. HMI when removing the Force from Engage commented on the support provided by the Mayor and stated that such a relationship was a critical hallmark of an outstanding Force.

## **Cleveland's Police & Crime Commissioner's approach**

### Moved out of Engage

September 2023

#### Reasons exited Engage

- improving the co-ordination of prevention activity with the aim of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour;
- making better use of problem-solving techniques to make communities safer and reduce the force's demand;
- better understanding of demand through comprehensive demand analysis; and
- fully coordinating financial and workforce plans to make sure resources are aligned to force priorities.

### Entered Engage

2019

#### Reasons entered Engage

- The force doesn't appropriately prioritise crime prevention. There is a lack of strategic direction, and the force doesn't allocate enough resources to prevention work. Staff who carry out prevention work lack an understanding of the priorities they should be tackling.
- Cleveland Police is failing to respond appropriately to vulnerable people, including children. It is missing opportunities to safeguard them and is exposing them to risk.
- Cleveland Police doesn't adequately understand the demand it faces. A thorough understanding of demand is required to underpin all strategic planning. This failure means it doesn't have coherent workforce and financial plans to meet demand and deliver the necessary outcomes.
- Cleveland Police doesn't adequately engage with local communities. This lack of engagement means that public expectations don't sufficiently influence force priorities and changes to the services it provides. The public also has a limited role in scrutinising the force and helping it to improve.
- Many senior leaders (superintending and chief officer ranks, and senior police staff managers) aren't consistently demonstrating ethical behaviour. The inappropriate behaviour of these leaders within Cleveland Police is so profound that it is affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the force.
- Cleveland Police doesn't consistently treat its workforce with fairness and respect. It doesn't effectively communicate with or engage its workforce, its processes aren't perceived to be fair and it doesn't understand its workforce well enough to support them.

#### What Cleveland Police & Crime Commissioner did about it

The PCC was elected with the force already in Engage for 2 years with various Chief Constables having been and gone in that time, so this was a challenge from the outset. The fact there was no improvement in areas of concern in the 2 years was frustrating for the PCC. HMICFRS gave an honest review on what needed to improve in the first PPOG post-PCC election, so this helped give a clearer indication.

The PCC analysed issues and concerns and worked on coming up with solutions with the force. One way forward was to increase resilience in the force. This led to the PCC's ambition to increase numbers of police officers. The PCC then asked for funding from the Home Office to do just that.

The PCC recruited a new Chief Constable and formed an effective relationship to get out of Engage, which the PCC stated was possibly the most important aspect of exiting Engage.

Another area that assisted the force out of Engage was scrutiny and accountability of the force outside of PPOG. This helped performance but it was imperative for the PCC to work together with the Chief Constable to improve the force. The PCC stated it was despite Engage rather than because of Engage as the reason why Cleveland exited Engage.

The PCC shared thoughts on there being room for improvement in the process, what stakeholders in Engage can do more to support, and a necessity for an agreed roadmap with partners, including timescales and financial support.

Cleveland is now pushing on with performance across different areas, evidencing sustained improvements in violence, robbery, theft, criminal damage, and public order. Crimes that have a detrimental effect on communities combined with the external factors and high demand for policing that impact on the level of service provided to the public.

Throughout the process, the PCC stated it was important to remember the end user of the service provided by the force is the public. It can be easy to lose sight of this when focusing on the PEEL process.

The positive of the Engage process is that it allows the force and OPCC to keep up the focus and pressure (self-assessment) in those areas of concern. However, the PCC noted that the process can demoralise officers and give partners a reason to not have confidence in their local police force. Now officers can hold their heads high.

Changes have come about partly because of strong leadership and direction of the chief officer team, and partly due to the effective scrutiny from the PCC.

## **Gloucestershire's Police & Crime Commissioner's approach**

Moved out of Engage<sup>4</sup>  
September 2023

### Reasons exited Engage

- significantly improving the identification and risk assessment of vulnerability;
- improving the quality of investigations and consistently updating victims;
- improving the planning and processes around finance and the management of resources;
- and

---

<sup>4</sup> [Police forces previously in Engage - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmip/)

- more accurately recording crime.

### Entered Engage

December 2021

### Reasons entered Engage

The need to review and monitor its call-taking capacity, capability and processes to help it better manage demand.

The inconsistent application of an effective THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) risk assessment by call handlers, accompanied by the absence of victim needs assessments and the limited extent to which repeat victims are identified and recorded, potentially leaves victims at risk.

Gloucestershire Constabulary is failing to record domestic abuse, behavioural crimes, and crimes linked to anti-social behaviour.

The force needs to make sure that crimes are investigated effectively.

### What Gloucestershire Police & Crime Commissioner did about it

PCC Chris Nelson shared his experience of Gloucestershire Constabulary going into Engage. He decided to focus internally to improve the force, to understand the issues, and how his office could support to get out of Engage within one PEEL cycle. With this knowledge, he wanted to work out what was in the public interest rather than his public image. Working closely with the Constabulary was pivotal in turning this performance around.

His approach was to not to make a quick decision for the sake of making a decision. It was integral to take time to understand what the history was, what the issues were, and what went wrong.

Another consideration was how the OPCC could support the force through: holding to account, governance, collaboration, and setting clear objectives. The PCC stated it was key to understand that there was strength in being flexible.

Previous PEEL inspections highlighted Crime Data Integrity as an issue, but performance here impacted (under that inspection regime) many other areas of the inspection.

However, Gloucestershire was a “curate’s egg” as it wasn’t all bad news.

Some concerns may not be isolated. In Gloucestershire, a lack of investment in ICT had a major impact in overall performance of the Constabulary. The Constabulary needed investment in personnel and infrastructure – not necessarily warranted officers. “A hospital wouldn’t function if it only employed Consultants.”

The PCC understood early that his aim to add another 300 officers to the Constabulary needed revisiting because there was balance to be struck between political challenge vs. what was right for the Force.

What was required ‘behind the scenes’ would benefit frontline policing – something that may not be appreciated / understood by all members of the public. This work behind the scenes involved investment in ICT, fundamental changes in FCR infrastructure needed to improve performance (helped by an excellent peer review by Humberside Police), a need to support innovation, to focus on financial support via other means to get the job done, and an acceptance that he needed to be internally focused.

The external funding that assisted included Safer Streets, STAR, and additional uplift opportunities.

This was complemented by refocusing original plans for officer recruitment to ensure the Constabulary recruited people they needed for improvement. This included having the right blend of police staff and officers, including some ex-HMICFRS colleagues who understood terminology and internal processes to help demystify work.

What the PCC also did was support activity via collaboration with his own team on the Neighbourhood Policing review, performance management cross referencing HMICFRS areas of focus, a Value for Money analysis tool, and secondment into the Continuous Improvement Team to support demand analysis.

He funded the operational model change and work to inform this, supported and funded senior management developments within the Constabulary e.g. recruitment of Assistant Chief Officer, initiated the development of a performance management culture, facilitated the strengthening of governance and leadership within the force, established short, medium, and long term plans. The plan oversaw the development of the CDI Team, investment in Niche, tightly focused governance to hold the Chief to account for progress, and monthly reports on FCR recovery.

There was a real focus on his own and his DPCC’s visibility too.

Importantly, there was strong engagement with the PPOG process, which led to Gloucestershire exiting Engage within 21 months. Other outcomes included a better understanding of the force, excellent working relationship between the OPCC and the Constabulary. Further collaboration was developed meaning they both shared the goal of being an excellent force. Having an improved relationship with HMICFRS was also a factor in getting out of Engage. Andy Cooke sent a letter in response to exiting Engage which showed the high regard he had with Gloucestershire in its positive engagement and determination to improve safety of Gloucestershire’s communities.

## Post-Engage

Once your force exits the Engage phase, the APCC would like to understand learning from your experience, so this can be fed back to other PCCs who are in or may fall into Engage. This can be in the form of a debrief meeting with performance leads and/or asking them to speak at a masterclass workshop to share experiences.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Role of each PPOG organisation

HMICFRS – inspect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the force in the public interest. PPOG is used as an open, transparent and honest forum for Chief Constables and PCCs to outline improvement plans. To ask questions in response to presentations and offer feedback on progress of improvement. Its role can also include answering questions from around the table in relation to the process, clarifying how the force can exit the process, and considering all information and evidence before deciding to release the force from Engage. This decision to release is never committed to in the PPOG meeting because HMCI will want to discuss with HMIs and digest the information received in the meeting prior to making any judgement.

APCC – to support the PCC whose force is in Engage and to offer support from our menu of options if the PCC feels the need for such help. This can be sharing learning via a workshop, lines of questioning to ask HMICFRS and Chief Constables, and providing opportunity for PCCs to have open dialogue with performance leads throughout the process.

Home Office – to observe and monitor the progress of forces in ‘Engage’, and like other sector partners will engage with forces and offer support when appropriate. Each force’s needs are different, but this support can include:

- Linking forces up with specialist teams in the Home Office for individual support on issues, for example on Serious Organised Crime or on Offender Management; and
- Linking forces up with other Government departments, for example the Department of Levelling Up, who can assist on socio-economic issues which may influence crime.

Currently, the Home Office funds the College of Policing’s Evidence-based Performance Improvement Programme (EPIP), through which the College coordinates most of the support it provides to forces in Engage. The Home Office also has levers to convene support from other partners listed here, should the need arise.

NPCC – assists forces in Engage through the HMICFRS Liaison and the Performance Management Coordination Committee (PMCC) Chair roles. Both liaise with the Chief Constable of the force in Engage and offers any support they can give. They will explain the process, how the PPOG meetings are run, and offer support if the Chief feels there is anything specific needed.

College of Policing – contact is made with the force after support has been offered at the PPOG. It would then meet to find out what specifically it might be able to help with. Sometimes this would result in signposting to other parts of the College or other forces who have solutions or are worth visiting. Sometimes it would generate further meetings or workshops to help the force diagnose the problems further or it could result in one of the team or the wider college specialists reviewing

plans or conducting a peer review or the improvement activities that have been put in place. The College generally aims to provide whatever support the force requires as far as possible.

Previously, the College of Policing has:

- Run a diagnosis workshop about what a force's underlying issues were and how it could assist.
- Run a reality testing day to see if improvements were happening on the ground.
- Provided a few forces with support visits around contact management where it reviewed their contact management processes in relation to their HMICFRS AFIs and causes of concern and provided a report for them and some additional ideas.
- Provided outside analytical support to help understand crime problems in a number of forces
- Provided critical friend feedback on improvement plans.
- Set up peer sharing events with forces that can help each other on several issues including contact management and problem solving.

## Appendix B

- **Support in engaging with HMICFRS**

### Questions for PCCs to ask HMICFRS outside of PPOG

- Have you identified specific barriers that will make this force exiting Engage more challenging?
- Are these challenges in the Chief Constable's control? Or is it another partner agency?
- Have you shared good practice by other forces with this force that will provide tangible examples to work towards?
- Have you given the force a clear list of recommendations and thresholds to meet that allow them to understand progress towards your recommendations? Is there any indication as to the progress the force is being tracked against towards your goals? (How far along the journey are they to be good enough to come out of Engage?)
- What data is being used to measure performance improvement? Has this been shared with PCCs? Will this data change to another set of data?
- How are you managing the risk of adding more areas of concern onto the current areas you are focusing Engage on?
- Have you considered the wider context the force is operating in? (Level of funding they receive compared to other forces or views of PCC). Although HMICFRS does consider the force context, it may still be worth asking the question or mention anything you feel would assist them seeing the whole picture.
- Is there any more the force can do to meet your requirements at this stage?
- Which areas of concern need to be prioritised, so you know they are tackling the most important areas first?

- **Support in Engaging with the force**

Although PCCs will have their own questions they will ask when holding their chief to account, below is a list of suggested questions you could ask to understand whether the force understands the causes of concern, what progress they are making on the improvement plan, and to understand how you and your office can support.

Questions for PCCs to ask Chief Constables

- Has HMICFRS given an indication of any areas that may evolve into an area of concern in the PEEL inspection?
- What has the engagement with HMI and FLL been like during PEEL/Engage?
- Have you established what support is needed? Will the force liaise with NPCC/HO/HMICFRS/CoP to identify what support is available? If so, what, and when? Tangible and clear actions and monitor these.
- What resources does the force need from the PCC to assist tackling the area(s) of concern? How long will this support be needed for?
- Have you considered doing what Kent Police has done by creating your own Force Inspectorate that is trained in HMICFRS methodology? Having this may help free up resources, so you are better prepared for PEEL/thematic inspections. Caveating this with the fact that it is advisable to build good governance into all aspects of the Force to the extent that separate HMICFRS governance teams should not be needed.
- Have you considered a peer review or a different perspective from another force that has performed well or is showing good practice in your specific areas that need improving?
- Are you aware of any concerns that may make improvements difficult?
- Is there anything, as the PCC, I can do to make this process smoother for you?
- Have you got a clear roadmap to improve specific areas of concerns or areas that require improvement?
- (Dependent on what needs improving) have you liaised with partner agencies that these improvements may impact on? Can they make changes to complement your improvement plan?

# Glossary

## **Accelerated cause of concern**

In HMICFRS inspections, if they identify a serious, critical, or systemic shortcoming in a force or service's practice, policy or performance, they will report it as a cause of concern. A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations. When they identify a cause of concern during inspections, they normally provide details in the published force report.

When they discover significant service failures or risks to public safety, they report their concerns and recommendations earlier. This is called an accelerated cause of concern.

## **Areas for Improvement**

In HMICFRS inspections, if they consider that an aspect of a force's practice, policy or performance falls short of the expected standard, they will report this as an area for improvement.

## **Cause of concern**

In PEEL inspections, if they identify a serious, critical, or systemic shortcoming in a force or service's practice, policy or performance, HMICFRS will report it as a cause of concern. A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations. A cause of concern may be identified through the PEEL assessment, other inspection activity, or routine engagement between HMICFRS and forces.

## **Hot debriefs**

A lessons-learned review completed immediately after a PEEL inspection has finished, and when all the main people are still present and can remember details.

# Contact us

**Association of Police and Crime Commissioners:**

Lower Ground, 5-8 The Sanctuary, Westminster, London SW1P 3JS

**Telephone:** 020 7222 4296

**Website:** [www.apccs.police.uk](http://www.apccs.police.uk)

The APCC provides support to all Police and Crime Commissioners and policing governance bodies in England and Wales.

