

Rt Hon Priti Patel,
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
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9th September 2019

Dear Home Secretary

SUBJECT: HMICFRS Report – The poor relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people

I write regarding the recent HMICFRS inspection on the police and CPS response to crimes against older people.

In 2018, Greater Manchester became the UK's first age-friendly city region, recognition by the World Health Organization of the plans we've put in place to improve the lives of older people. Our vision is for older residents to be able to contribute to, and benefit from sustained prosperity and enjoy a good quality of life. We have a particular focus on co-designing with older people and acknowledging the diversity within our older population, with significant inequalities experienced by specific populations (such as Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and the LGBT community).

Ageing is a core element of our local policy and strategy. Twenty years from now 1.1 million people in Greater Manchester will be over 50 – that's 37% of our city region population. We've set up the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub to coordinate a strategic response to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population, a partnership which involves Greater Manchester Police. We have a partnership with the Centre for Ageing Better to drive improvements in Greater Manchester by applying evidence around what works to ensure a good later life.

A fundamental part of this is ensuring that older people are included, supported and feel safe whilst living and travelling around Greater Manchester.

I was pleased that the inspection made reference to the Scambusters initiative that we have setup in Greater Manchester. I attended the launch of the scheme and spoke with the volunteers directly ahead of the programme of work to engage with victims over 65 years of age. We have seen some very positive results with this with the majority of people taking on board the advice given and we are currently scoping options to potentially expand the use of these volunteers.

Whilst the report praises the work of police officers in the initial handling of crimes involving older people, I note the findings in relation to the ability to meet the ongoing, often complex needs of older victims of crime. Based on the identified concerns, the report makes a series of recommendations and identifies a number of areas for improvement. The Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Deputy Chief Constable, in his role as the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Lead for Vulnerable Adults is currently working closely with stakeholders in order to address the inspection findings and recommendations.

There are four recommendations and one area for improvement that are of direct relevance to Chief Constables. I can respond to those as follows:

HMICFRS Cause of concern - The police don't consistently assess the needs of victims as set out in the relevant codes of practice and so the needs of victims aren't always met.

Recommendation - Within six months, chief constables should make sure that victim needs assessments are always completed.

It is recognised that there is no College of Policing Approved Professional Practice for the area of work which encompasses crimes against the elderly. It is understood that work is ongoing to develop a national toolkit for use by frontline officers that will contain standard operating procedures, links to relevant legislation and guidance, and will include a section on victim care and links to safeguarding partners (both statutory and voluntary). The development and progress of this work is strongly supported as officers are in need of a consistent, approved toolkit to help them to effectively respond to the needs of older victims.

In the interim period, GMP have designed a local toolkit and accompanying policy that will be launched later this year.

HMICFRS Cause of concern - Chief constables don't understand well enough the current demand for adult safeguarding arrangements, and haven't considered the likely future demand and the implications for forces.

Recommendation - Within three months, chief constables should conduct analysis of the current and future demand for adult safeguarding, including the gap in knowledge that may exist from those cases where referrals aren't made because of errors or omissions. This analysis should be incorporated into force management statements (FMSs).

This is something that will be incorporated within the next Force Management Statement produced by GMP. In addition to this, GMP is designing a Safeguarding Governance Unit that will coordinate Greater Manchester wide dip sampling to identify the gaps in knowledge, ahead of any action being taken. This is fundamental practice that will enhance opportunities to learn and improve the overall response to victims.

HMICFRS Cause of concern - Some victims may not be receiving support services, and some support services don't work as well as they could. This is because the police don't always refer victims when they should, support services don't have ready access to police information, and witness care arrangements are sometimes provided separately.

Recommendation - Within six months, chief constables should work with police and crime commissioners and their mayoral equivalents, and other relevant organisations, to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way.

GMP's Deputy Chief Constable is working to address this recommendation at a national level, with the NPCC Lead Officer for Criminal Justice, within which the portfolio of victim care lies.

As part of the current Victim Services structure in Greater Manchester, I have invested in an integrated referral and assessment service for all victims of crime. The benefit of an integrated model is that the needs of victims will be assessed based on vulnerability and risk and a holistic support package will be

provided. In addition to this, I provide funding for eleven GMP Victim Services Co-ordinators to act as an advocate for victims, one of whom has the thematic responsibility for older people.

We are in the process of carrying out a strategic review of victim services. As part of this a victim needs assessment has been undertaken which identified support for older people as a key thematic area, particularly in relation to domestic violence. Meaningful engagement with our service providers, partners and individuals with lived experiences is paramount to this review and we are now planning a range of focus groups to be conducted with victims. Older people will be one of the thematic areas featured as part of this Victim Voice engagement exercise. The findings of this work will help shape and influence future commissioning conversations.

HMICFRS Cause of concern - Some adults who need safeguarding are being put at risk because the police aren't always referring cases to partner organisations, and there are no effective measures to ensure that referrals have been made.

Recommendation - Within three months, chief constables should ensure that adult safeguarding referrals are always made when appropriate, with effective processes in place to make sure this happens. The NPCC lead for adults at risk should advise chief constables as to how this is best achieved.

As outlined above, the development and introduction of a frontline toolkit would help define referral pathways and contain clear process maps and supporting guidance. It is recognised that policing areas are aligned to different local authority processes, which has the potential for inconsistent practices in the absence of a single Adult Referral Form. In Greater Manchester, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs will hold responsibility for delivering an improved product, and the safeguarding leads (Vulnerability Superintendents) will oversee this process.

HMICFRS Area for Improvement - Within six months, chief constables should find good ways to assess the current demands on the police made by older people. These assessments should include a prediction of future changes in demand, account for the work of other organisations, and be incorporated into FMSs.

The introduction of GMP's new IT system (iOPS) provides GMP with an excellent opportunity to understand demand across Greater Manchester and extract relevant data for analysis. Once iOPS is embedded within GMP, the assessment of demand will be incorporated within future Force Management Statements.

Yours sincerely



**Baroness Beverley Hughes
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester
Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice**