
BEV HUGHES

**DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER**

Rt Hon Priti Patel,
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

November 2021

Dear Home Secretary

SUBJECT: HMICFRS review of the Police response to violence against women and girls

I write in response to the recent HMICFRS report that examined the police response to violence against women and girls.

I would like to start by saying that this is an extremely important issue for victims, and the police service, and I appreciate the detail and scope of review that was included within the inspection.

It is encouraging that Inspectors found that the police have made vast improvements in response to violence against women and girls over the last ten years. This includes improved techniques to collect evidence, better identification of repeat victims and improved safeguarding measures. The review also evidenced the work of dedicated police officers and staff and highlighted the innovative approaches being undertaken to tackle violence against women and girls.

However, the principal finding is that the police cannot tackle this issue alone. There are, therefore, calls for a whole system approach to ensure the criminal justice system, local authorities, health, and education work seamlessly to prevent and tackle these offences. This includes improved governance, sustained multi-year funding and a new legislative framework and statutory duty for all partner agencies to work together to protect women and girls, similar to the existing framework for child protection.

In September the Mayor and I launched a new Gender Based Violence Strategy, the first of its kind in Greater Manchester. The strategy aims to provide a comprehensive response to improve the safety of mainly women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence. It also aims to prevent abuse by challenging the attitudes and inequalities that promote it and provides a platform to work with those who perpetrate these crimes to change behaviours to prevent them from inflicting harm onto others. I have included a link to the strategy for your information: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/police-and-fire/gender-based-violence-strategy/>

It is intended that this Strategy, along with a new Gender-Based Violence Board, will help drive the required work to make meaningful change for those who suffer such abuse. GMP's Deputy Chief Constable will sit on this Board, which will be chaired by myself and include other senior colleagues from public and other agencies. It is our ambition to include the voices and lived experience of victims and survivors to shape the delivery of our strategy. This will be the case at all levels of governance and

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activity. At Board level this will include senior staff members of the VCSE sector who provide services to victims and survivors, as well as independent community members who have lived experience of gender-based violence. I will ensure board members are made aware of the HMICFRS report and that it is given appropriate time for discussion.

The report makes a number of recommendations for improvement. I support these recommendations as a plan to increase consistency and improve the process from initial crime recording, investigation handling and in ensuring effective and meaningful support for the victim.

In respect of the specific recommendations for policing, I can provide an update as follows:

HMICFRS Recommendation 3.2 - By March 2022, all police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of victims is accurately and consistently recorded.

I have spoken to Senior Leaders at Greater Manchester Police regarding the current capabilities of data capture within the Integrated Operating Policing System (iOPS). I understand that whilst there is an ability to record protected characteristics, further work is required to explore the analytical capabilities. I will monitor the development of this work over the coming months in line with the Chief Constable's overall review of the system.

HMICFRS Recommendation 4.1 - By March 2022, Chief Constables should establish and publish an action plan that specifies in detail what steps the force will take to improve and standardise its approach to responding to violence against women and girls offences, with the aim of ensuring policies, processes, and practices are effective, actively monitored and managed, and meeting national standards.

As the HMICFRS report highlights, this recommendation requires further direction from the Home Office and the newly appointed National Police Chief's Council's (NPCC) Violence against Women and Girls National Delivery Lead to develop a new national policing strategy for violence against women and girls. The early development and dissemination of this will assist the police service in providing a level of standards and consistency in approach.

However, I am keen that progress and improvements be made in the meantime and will be discussing the matter further with Chief Officers at GMP in the coming weeks. I understand that an Assistant Chief Constable has strategic lead for this work and has nominated a Chief Superintendent as tactical lead. Both will be working to respond to this recommendation and implement effective action over the coming weeks and months.

Finally, I note from the report that there is an intention for HMICFRS to request updates from national organisations on progress made against the recommendations in April 2022. I would request that consideration be given to providing an update back to Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables at that point as to progress made.

Yours sincerely



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

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