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**BEV HUGHES**

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**DEPUTY MAYOR  
OF GREATER  
MANCHESTER**

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Sir Thomas Winsor WS  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary  
By email

14<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**SUBJECT: HMICFRS Safe to share? Report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint on policing and immigration status.**

Dear Chief Inspector

I write further to the HMICFRS Safe to share report which reviewed the super-complaint on policing and immigration status. The report highlighted some important issues for consideration in respect of access to policing and support services and the need to build trust and confidence in those processes.

The report made a number of recommendations for policing and one for Police and Crime Commissioners. I can provide an update on this recommendation as follows:

***Recommendation: Chief constables and police and crime commissioners should take steps, through the appropriate channels, to promote migrant victims' and witnesses' confidence in reporting crimes to the police through safe reporting pathways, without fear of prioritised immigration control AND That Police and crime commissioners (or equivalents) conduct an assessment of local access to specialist victim support organisations or networks and take any necessary steps to build up such networks.***

As Deputy Mayor, I continue to provide funding for a team of eleven Victim Service Coordinators based across the ten districts of Greater Manchester. The coordinators continue to have a strong influence on the police approach to victim care and the referrals to victim support services. In September 2020 the team received a detailed briefing in relation to victims and witnesses of modern slavery and human trafficking, and the issues faced by those who have insecure immigration status.

There are specific Thematic Leads for Modern Slavery, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence (HBV), asylum and migration, ethnic minorities and domestic abuse. These leads work with commissioned and third sector service providers to enhance the internal understanding of service provision and develop pathways between service providers. The thematic leads for ethnic minorities have been conducting outreach work with organisations offering services to specific communities across Greater Manchester, providing updates to their colleagues and information regarding awareness campaigns.

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In addition, I provide annual funding to support initiatives around hate crime including a Greater Manchester wide awareness campaign and funding for local community events aimed at raising understanding about hate and how this and other crimes can be reported to the police. A variety of media and communication channels are used to ensure a wide reach with the messaging and I am aware of a number community events run each year to share this information with ethnic minority and migrant communities.

I am cognisant of the difficulties that migrant women in particular face in respect of accessing policing and support services, particularly those with insecure immigration status and have ensured that this is referenced within a new draft Gender Based Violence strategy.

Over the next five years, there is a commitment to look closely at whether existing services are accessible to all. We know that some services in the city-region are not reaching all communities as well as they should. We know also that fear of criminalisation deters a range of women from seeking support, including women whose immigration status is insecure or secure but still hard to reach. Through this strategy we are committed to redressing this.

In 2021, we will undertake a comprehensive scoping exercise to assess the extent to which our services are meeting the needs of victims and survivors from our communities, including ethnic minorities and foreign nationals and in doing so, Greater Manchester will seek to learn from good practice examples. Through this work we will look to endorse the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's call for 'firewall' services to protect migrant women who are victims of gender based abuse from criminalisation and deportation. I am hopeful that this new ten-year strategy can be published within the next few months.

Additionally, as part of Greater Manchester's approach to "Everyone In" during the pandemic we stood up a women's only accommodation and support offer. Through that provision we learnt of the particular demand from women fleeing domestic violence with no recourse to public funds as a result. As part of the current phase of A Bed Every Night we have a total of 60 no recourse to public funds beds, with one female only unit.

The fear of information sharing between local public services and immigration enforcement is a key concern for many migrants and agencies supporting them across Greater Manchester. We know that trust is the foundation on which everything else follows and that is why myself, the Mayor and all ten Greater Manchester leaders issued a public statement on the government's no recourse to public funds policy in December 2020 to make clear that we would not be complicit in Home Office policies that seek to deport vulnerable victims and individuals who find themselves homeless and destitute in our city-region.

In alignment to this work, I am leading a review of victims' services across Greater Manchester to ensure that the referral process is accessible and that the outcomes are meaningful to those who need them. As part of this work, we are looking at access to sexual assault and rape support services and also domestic violence support services and will be developing a set of proposals for funding. The initial proposals include looking at how we support organisations that provide specialist services to our diverse communities within Greater Manchester, developing cultural champion networks, focusing on sexual violence and domestic abuse harm prevention, developing capacity and capability across the victims' sector and cross agency training on entitlements and risk factors, in respect of vulnerable people and marginalised communities.

Through the provision of Ministry of Justice Covid-19 support funding in 2020/21, I also provided £18,500 to Safety4Sisters, an organisation which supports women with no recourse to public funds, to help support improved digital capabilities, to provide group and specialist online sessions for migrant womens groups and vulnerable individuals and for the production of mental health resource packs.

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I hope this update has been useful. I would be happy to provide a further update once the victims services model has been developed following the ongoing redevelopment work.

Yours sincerely



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

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