

Secretary of State for the Home Department  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

September 2022

Dear Home Secretary,

**SUBJECT: HMICFRS Inspection – the police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime.**

I write in response to the above inspection on the police response to Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC).

I agree with the premise of the report that tackling SAC must be a whole system approach that requires integration of a range of policing functions. I think the improvements underway in Greater Manchester Police (GMP) outlined in their 'Plan on a Page' correlate directly to where improvements need to be made to improve SAC. For example, the investment and improvements in call handling, investigation, response, and supervision are essential to improve outcomes and charge rates but they need to work in tandem with planned improvements in prevention and the strengthening of neighbourhood policing and problem solving to prevent a cycle of SAC and offending/reoffending.

As the report points out, Greater Manchester along with London and the West Midlands have higher SAC rates. As you will be aware GMP are part of the Home Office burglary pilot and this should help GMP get better at responding to SAC more generally. Levels of SAC correlate with wider societal factors and deprivation and require more than a policing response. I am pleased that Greater Manchester were successful in three recent Safer Streets Fund bids (in Manchester, Wigan, and Stockport). These will help us test effective problem-solving techniques with partners to tackle SAC including associated neighbourhood crime types, retail crime and ASB.

The findings within the report were helpfully broken down into two sections: the investigation of SAC and the prevention and deterrence of SAC.

It was encouraging to read the examples of effective practice that were highlighted, in particular, the grading and attendance of police officers to SAC offences within target times and the use of out-of-court disposals to tackle the root causes of SAC.

However, it is evident that more work needs to be undertaken by the police service in the management of these crimes and the support provided to victims. The report makes it clear of the need to place a focus on this area of crime. The financial cost of SAC reoffending is high and makes up a substantial proportion of overall crime.

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The report makes two recommendations for policing that I will address below:

**Recommendation 1 - By March 2023, forces should make sure their crime scene management practices adhere to the authorised professional practice on managing investigations for SAC or provide a rationale for deviating from it. They should also include:**

- **giving victims timely and appropriate advice during their initial call; and**
- **applying a risk assessment process such as THRIVE, clearly recording it, and flagging those re-victimised for further support.**

I understand that crime scene management practices within GMP adhere to the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on investigations by ensuring early contact with victims to make an assessment of forensic opportunity, offer preservation advice, make arrangements for a visit and conduct a health and safety assessment.

Local crime scene investigators (CSI) assess 100% of residential burglaries and maintain close working relationships with the district to ensure all forensic opportunities are maximised and intelligence opportunities progressed.

The GMP Crime Scene Investigation Unit (CSIU), has been one of the lead forces for progressing and achieving accreditation in line with the requirements of the Forensic Science Regulator's (FSR) Code of Conduct and Practice.

In respect of the advice given to victims during their initial call, additional work is underway to strengthen the advice offered by staff within the Force Contact Centre (FCC). Crime prevention advice and toolkits for burglary, robbery and vehicle crime will provide meaningful advice and direction as to what is a good investigation, and what good scene management and practices look like. These are being used to provide additional information for FCC staff to better support victims in respect to forensic preservation and crime prevention.

In Greater Manchester Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigative Opportunities, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE) is applied to all incidents under the Graded Response Policy. CSIs assess all incidents on the basis of THRIVE, to ensure appropriate prioritisation and risk management. CSIs will also assist victims with crime prevention advice and signpost to additional support agencies if required. Any further opportunities for example, CCTV, or concerns raised whilst conducting a scene visit will be escalated by the CSI to district officers.

**Recommendation 2 - By March 2023, all forces should ensure SAC investigations are subject to effective supervision and direction. This should focus on:**

- **making sure supervisors have the capability and capacity to meaningfully supervise investigations;**
- **making sure investigations meet the necessary standard and achieve suitable outcomes that consider the voice or opinion of victims;**
- **applying investigative outcome codes appropriately; and**
- **complying with the Victims' Code and recording evidence of compliance.**

Each district has a designated detective sergeant to review all new neighbourhood crimes to ensure they are appropriately allocated for investigation. Supervisors are looking at the links between crimes and offenders, and ensuring investigations are progressed as far as possible. The new robbery pack includes a supervisory check sheet and sign-off for the initial first hour of the investigation. In addition, a vehicle crime pack is currently in development to standardise the service that is given and supervisors are reviewing 'closed' vehicle crime offences to ensure appropriate oversight.

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I understand that activities including awareness raising, training and enhanced supervision continue to support the expected standards for investigation. Furthermore, the importance of improving overall investigation file quality for the Crown Prosecution Service is a priority and remains under continuous review through dip sampling processes and monitoring outcomes at court.

The robbery, burglary and vehicle crime packs have been designed to ensure that the victim is given the correct advice and support to make an informed decision on their desired outcome. It also includes the advice for officers to ensure all necessary information is collated at the earliest opportunity.

In respect of outcomes, I am aware that these are reviewed weekly in relation to neighbourhood crimes through performance products and meetings to review crime and vulnerability with actions to increase the number of positive outcomes - something we are now seeing.

Awareness of conditional cautions and community resolutions has increased and each district has an out of court disposal (OOC) officer, who is the gatekeeper for this type of outcome. These outcomes are analysed with oversight from my office on a monthly basis to ensure the best and appropriate use. There are also regular meetings with the Youth Justice Service (YJS) to ensure suitable outcomes in relation to diversionary activity.

When considering compliance against the Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) and National Crime Recording Standards, I am aware of plans in place to monitor performance continuously. With specific reference to VCOP, compliance can be evidenced through dedicated auditing processes in place across GMP.

The successful development of all of these stands of work is critical to improving performance and building trust with our communities. I can confirm that neighbourhood crime features as a key theme as part of GMPs monthly performance meeting, which officials from my office attend.

Yours sincerely



Rt Hon Baroness Beverley Hughes  
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester  
Police, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire

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