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Office of the
**Police & Crime
Commissioner**
West Yorkshire

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Dear Home Secretary

HMICFRS PEEL Inspection report for West Yorkshire Police

I am writing in response to February's HMICFRS PEEL inspection report for West Yorkshire Police.

On this occasion, I was pleased to see that West Yorkshire Police's commitment to delivering an effective, efficient, and legitimate police service was recognised in a very positive overall report featuring 'good' and 'outstanding' grades.

The award of an 'outstanding grade' for the force's legitimacy (one of just six England and Wales forces receiving this recognition), follows on from the force's outstanding grading for its commitment to crime data integrity, awarded in May 2019. These accolades are a reflection of the hard work and strong leadership seen at West Yorkshire Police (WYP) during a time of significant ongoing demand and organisational change.

Since the last PEEL inspection, WYP have continued to develop their services by developing new processes and innovative working practices to meet my Police and Crime Plan vision of keeping the communities of West Yorkshire safe and feeling safe.

I have ensured that additional funding has been directed towards neighbourhood policing, subsequently seeing investment in early intervention and problem solving for the communities of West Yorkshire. The force has successfully delivered a number of demand reduction projects, and continues to make progress in regard to modern slavery, human trafficking, and cybercrime. The Force Management Statement (FMS) is of high quality (demonstrated through the outstanding grade for efficiency) which also helps direct activity and investment into areas of high demand and those which cause most harm in our communities.

During a continuing period of challenging budget settlements and decisions, I am pleased to see that this inspection does recognise West Yorkshire Police's real progress since the previous PEEL inspection in improving investigations overall, the quality of its support for vulnerable victims, and its very strong track record in planning for the future. However, the report does identify areas of West Yorkshire Police's operations which do need further improvement; in particular in investigating crime, and in ensuring the force operates to the highest ethical and lawful standards.

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I would like to highlight below some of the current work in progress to address these areas identified by HMICFRS for improvement:

Investigating Crime: (Cause for concern)

West Yorkshire Police is committed to improving the quality of investigations, commencing with a detailed whole systems review of the victim's journey from the initial point of contact through to resolution. The impact of austerity and the limited ability to recruit in previous years has had a significant impact on detective capacity and capability throughput for which there is no short term fix for the loss of many experienced detectives and investigators. However, the force has comprehensive plans in place to address this. Progress to date includes:

- Each of the force's five Continuous Improvement District Teams are working to build capability at the point of initial attendance at a crime scene, so that all evidence is retrieved at the first opportunity, and initial statements are completed to a high quality. Central auditing by dip sampling is providing feedback to district teams through WYP's Local Policing Governance Board and the force's Local Accountability Meetings.
- This work is being supported by training seminars which will cover the different stages of the investigation process and support for victims. These sessions will be recorded so that they can be accessed at any time by officers and staff. Statement support groups have also been established at each of the five West Yorkshire districts, and a review of handover packages has also recently been completed.
- Responding to the inspectorate's observations on capacity and capability within WYP's safeguarding unit, the force has commissioned a force-wide Safeguarding Review.
- The Review team has already identified the lack of specialist child abuse investigation training (SCAIDP) completed by officers and staff working within the units, and the limited number of officers currently trained in Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviewing. As a result, WYP's Learning and Organisational Development team are looking to introduce protected training time and dedicated tutors to support the completion of a new training plan.
- The review is also looking at the allocations policy across the five districts to ensure that crimes involving vulnerable people are being investigated by officers and staff with the appropriate safeguarding training.
- Finally, the 'Detective Workforce Tasking Group' will instigate a multi-media campaign to promote the detective career pathway, initially focussing on WYP's safeguarding function.
- On the workloads of supervisors: work is ongoing with the force training school to prepare and support supervisors to ensure that they have the right skills. The implementation of the corporate Mastertask IT system for the allocation, management, and finalisation of all volume crime across West Yorkshire has assisted sergeants in managing their workloads.

Ethical and lawful workforce behaviour: (Cause of concern)

- West Yorkshire Police have recently carried out an uplift in staff numbers within its counter corruption unit (CCU), recognising that it varied from that of other similar sized forces. This uplift has doubled the number of staff within the unit, and augmented its capabilities in intelligence collection, analysis development, and covert investigations such as RIPA applications. Further work is required to bring the capacity of the unit into line with other similar forces, which includes aligning CCU capabilities with the local crime profile, and further developing the proactive capability to ensure officers and staff in WYP are carrying out their roles to high standards of professional integrity.
- On a further point, I am pleased to note that when HMICFRS carried out its PEEL inspection, the force was found to be in an extremely strong position with regard to its vetting processes.
- This year's report also recommends that WYP should do more to assess disproportionality in stop and search 'find rates'. At the December session of my Community Outcomes Meeting (COM) the Chief Constable presented the force's latest report on Stop and Search for my review. WYP have identified the wards with the highest disproportionality rates and tasked districts to respond via local accountability procedures. WYP's Local Policing team is building on this work to further improve stop and search performance monitoring by collating comprehensive data on volumes and find rates, referenced by the individual's ethnicity. I look forward to reviewing further work the force will carry out to ensure complete compliance with BUSS2, particularly on the independent external scrutiny of stop and search (and also use of force), as this is an area of interest for the communities within West Yorkshire.

By way of context, around 2000 West Yorkshire Police jobs were lost following the budget cuts of the last decade - real concerns remain about the longer term pressures on the force given the increasing demand and complexity in policing activity. West Yorkshire Police will strive to deliver the best service to our communities if it is fully provided with the right level of resources to do so.

I will continue to fully support West Yorkshire Police's efforts to meet this challenge in the months ahead, and monitor closely the force's progress in achieving improvements in those operational areas identified by the HMICFRS report, set against the other gradings of 'Good' and 'Outstanding' in providing a balanced picture.

Yours sincerely



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