

Alison Lowe OBE
Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing and Crime
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
40-50 Wellington Street
Leeds LS1 2DE

16th February 2023

Dear Home Secretary,

Can I take this opportunity to acknowledge our receipt of this report, and register my thanks to those staff at HMICFRS involved in the inspection programme for this important topic.

Communities' trust in their local police services is built by those officers who show professionalism and integrity in the way they carry out their duties. There are countless individuals in our police services who embody these values, but tragically, we are all now well aware of cases where people have been able to abuse their position as a police officer to commit the most serious of offences.

We note the report's recommendations, and through our internal scrutiny of West Yorkshire Police's operations, we have received the following update on some of the most important issues raised by the inspectors.

On her election in 2021, the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin, made ten pledges – one of which was to put women and girls at the heart of policing. This pledge was embodied with the publication of the Mayor's first Police and Crime Plan for West Yorkshire in March 2022.

Subsequently, we have published West Yorkshire's first *Safety of Women and Girls Strategy*, which outlines how we will work in partnership with stakeholders at local, regional, and national level.

Co-designed with partners and stakeholders, the strategy has drawn together the perspectives of those with a lived experience of misogyny, and also helped to identify areas of good practice, the challenges ahead, and the lessons we need to learn. The strategy also calls for men and boys to be allies, and sets out how they can help to support the safety of all in West Yorkshire.

This ambition has echoes in HMICFRS's report. Whilst I have been encouraged by West Yorkshire Police's work to improve awareness and detection of misconduct

and enforce professional standards of behaviour, I will continue to monitor our police service's response to this report through my usual bilateral scrutiny arrangements.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Lowe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alison Lowe OBE
Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing and Crime

West Yorkshire Police response to key recommendations in the inspection report.

The recruitment process

The report challenges whether forces are following-up on candidates' references and proof of qualifications.

WYP: A formal review of the process within West Yorkshire Police was undertaken in December 2022 and a decision made by the Chief Officer Team to reinstate the taking of references covering 5 years previous employment from 1st April 2023. WYP had previously checked a 3 year period.

Commencing this new procedure in April will allow WYP's People Systems team to configure their recruitment IT system to support the taking, tracking, and reporting of references in the most efficient way, and which will provide a full audit trail.

Detecting and dealing with misogynistic and predatory behaviour & challenging and reporting prejudicial and improper behaviour

WYP: All cases of misogynistic and improper behaviour which meet the misconduct threshold are dealt with by West Yorkshire Police's Professional Standards Department (PSD). Cases are now identified by a Prejudicial and Improper Behaviour identifier so WYP can understand the scale of this type of misconduct.

There has been a recent case of a police officer being dismissed from the organisation for misogynistic and improper behaviour, and there are other live investigations underway. These cases, combined with an increased level of referrals to PSD, represent positive evidence that WYP are detecting and dealing with this type of misconduct.

WYP: For the past 6 months, 640 patrol officers across the force have been receiving training in 'Active Bystandership' - learning skills on how to call-out unprofessional behaviour.

The curriculum has been developed with the aim of influencing sustainable changes in police officers' behaviour and building a culture where intervention by officers is seen as the norm. It will also address wider workplace misconduct that requires challenge, such as racism and homophobia.

Senior leaders in the force (including the Chief Officer Team) have also received a two-hour training session to raise awareness of the active bystander concept. It is essential that managers support staff when reporting unprofessional behaviour.

This programme is in the process of being evaluated by Buckinghamshire University and early feedback is extremely positive. The final session took place on 9th February 2023 at Elland Road Police Station, and was attended by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Alison Lowe.

Additionally, to encompass the wider workforce, we have devised a mandatory training package which deals with workplace behaviour and culture, with a particular focus on sexual misconduct and abuse of position for a sexual purpose (AoPSP).

In July 2022, West Yorkshire Police started a 'Listening Circle' for Women - a safe place for women to have a voice about their experiences either of unprofessional behaviour in the workplace, or through criminal offences that come under the VAWG definition. To date there are over 100 members of the group with an average of approximately 20 women attending the monthly one-hour on-line meetings. Topics discussed include bullying, sexual harassment, sexism, maternity-related issues, inappropriate conduct and active bystandership. The space is a confidential setting but the Chair reports general feedback to the force's Workplace Behaviours Meeting, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable for People.

Forces should introduce annual integrity reviews

The report recommends that all forces carry out annual integrity reviews where supervisors discuss with members of their teams risks such as: AoPSP, notifiable associations, business interests, gifts and hospitality, and changes in personal circumstances.

Prior to recent changes to West Yorkshire Police's PDR (Performance & Development Review) system, the Annual Integrity Check was dealt with by the Line Manager completing the PDR, and the check was embedded within the PDR itself.

The force's new PDR system does not include an annual integrity health-check, but to ensure this is completed by all staff, a mandatory training package (iLearn) has been developed. This places more onus on the individual to review their circumstances, which aids a better understanding of relevant policies. All line managers who have received the PDR training have been informed that they need to check the iLearn package has been completed prior to their PDR meeting. This will be audited to ensure compliance.