



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Date: 2nd October 2014

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC INSPECTION: CORE BUSINESS INSPECTION REPORT

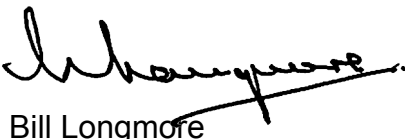
The HMIC report into West Mercia Police's approach to crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time makes some clear recommendations which we have considered in detail.

I am pleased that the report has found there is effective work taking place within West Mercia Police and I am assured by the Chief Constable that any areas that require development have been identified and are now subject to a detailed action plan.

As I have previously mentioned to HMIC, crime prevention is at the heart of successful policing and I had already asked the Chief Constable to consider how best to improve crime prevention across the Force and he has already commenced that work as part of the Strengthening and Deepening the Alliance programme.

I am assured that the alliance with Warwickshire Police and the associated ongoing work will provide opportunities to develop a consistent effective approach to crime prevention, attendance and effective use of police time.

Yours Sincerely,



Bill Longmore



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Date: 30 March 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC INSPECTION: CRIME INSPECTION 2014

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

I welcome the report and the findings which looked at how effective West Mercia Police is at cutting crime. The report focuses on three specific areas: reducing crime and preventing offending; investigating offending; and tackling anti social behaviour. West Mercia Police achieved 'Good' ratings in each of these three categories.

The report highlights some really important successes such as the fact that West Mercia still has a good satisfaction rate, officers are being used in the areas they are needed most and that crime rates have dropped 17% over the last four years.

The report found that the force has a victim focused approach and a strong focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable victims receive a service that is bespoke to the individual's needs and, where appropriate, they receive a joined-up service from other agencies.

The report does make three recommendations which form the basis of an action plan and are subject to review by myself and chief officers.

One concern highlighted in the report was the lack of access to specialist skills to investigate child protection cases over the weekend. I understand that at present many specialist officers working hours are aligned to partner agencies work and availability, which is primarily 9-5 Monday to Friday. To train more specialist officers, alter shift patterns or provide some form of 'on call' service are all possible solutions, but a more measured and longer term solution will be to ensure that the demand work being undertaken for the alliance change programme, captures these issues and that moving forward the policing

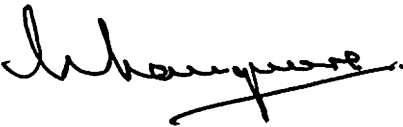
model designed provides adequate resilience in this area. I will be ensuring this happens as part of the bigger programme.

The second area of concern is the force policy on not taking photographs at certain crime scenes may lead to evidence being lost. This specifically relates to common assault and actual bodily harm crimes. The use of body worn video equipment is under review and when implemented would overcome this concern as it will provide the facility for the capture of images around low level assaults along with corporate data storage structure around it. In the interim I am satisfied that the force has taken steps to communicate to all personnel the Alliance policy in relation to evidence gathering for lower level assault allegations.

Organisational learning was identified as an area that could be improved. The force has set up a Strategic Organisational Learning Group and I shall be monitoring the outcomes of this group.

Overall the I am very pleased with the finding of this report. The recommendations made have been discussed with the Chief Constable to ensure that action is being taken to address the small number of concerns raised by HMIC.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Date: 24 February 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

CRIME RECORDING: MAKING THE VICTIMS COUNT (November 2014)

CRIME DATA INTEGRITY: INSPECTION OF WEST MERCIA POLICE (November 2014)

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above reports.

I welcome the Inspectorate's final report of an inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales. This thorough report provides 13 national recommendations of which 5 specially relate to police forces. I shall be ensuring that my force has considered and implemented these national recommendations as part of its response to the force specific, Crime Data Integrity Report.

On reading the Crime Data Integrity Report for West Mercia I was reassured that the inspection found a clear expectation that crimes are recorded correctly, investigated and concluded against NCRS, HOOCR and national guidelines, and that there is a strong victim focus. The inspection also found that as part of the alliance with Warwickshire Police there is a strong desire to continuously improve through an active review of structures, processes and behaviours.

The report does contain a number of recommendations and areas for improvement and a detailed action plan has been developed to address all of the issues and recommendations. I shall continue to monitor the progress of the force in its implementation of activity outlined in the action plan.

A serious concern highlighted in the report was that of the 100 crime that should have been recorded only 74 were in fact recorded in the sample they reviewed, which may indicate that victims are not receiving the service they deserve. As a consequence all officers and staff have been made aware of the requirement to record all reported

crimes as crimes and given clear guidelines as to the use of 'no crimes'. Moving forward I have requested that the force provide me with updates on the this so that I can address the use of 'no crime' with chief officers.

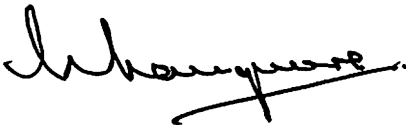
Another area of concern was that the force had failed to effectively deal with referrals from partners. This approach is subject to review.

The report does recognise that the implementation of the crime bureau is providing an effective approach to crime recording and it is pleasing to note that the sample of incidents reviewed within the crime bureau had been accurately assessed in all case.

The West Mercia and Warwickshire Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee, which is comprised of five independent members has been asked to review the reports for both forces. In addition with specialist support the Committee has agreed to undertake an independent review of 'no crime' reports for rape. This is in addition to the one currently in progress across the alliance.

In summary, there is a lot of work in progress to address the issues raised during the inspection. I intend to ensure that the action plan referred to is successfully delivered to ensure a more accurate recording of crime leading to better outcomes for victims.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Date: 24 February 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC INSPECTION: POLICE INTEGRITY AND CORRUPTION

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

The report identifies a number of issues and six specific recommendations arising from the four areas of focus forming the inspection. Activity to address these recommendations is ongoing and my Deputy sits on a working group that has been set up to implement the necessary improvements to comply with the specific recommendations.

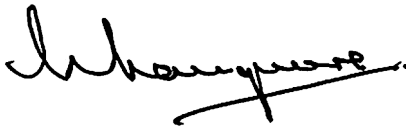
Following concerns shared with my counterpart in Warwickshire of the performance of the Standards Department (PSD) and the Anti Corruption Unit (ACU) a fundamental review of the department which included leadership and effective governance has been undertaken. A new head of PSD with no other responsibilities, as was the case previously, has been appointed and newly agreed levels of resources have been set, along with some business process changes.

I am confident that the actions arising from this internal review will address a number of concerns outlined within HMIC's report relating capacity capability and timeliness.

I am pleased that HMIC recognises that the force has clear plans, in alliance with Warwickshire Police, to embed the new Code of Ethics; that there is good understanding of the new code and that staff appear confident about challenging wrong doing.

Overall I found the inspection report to be very useful in terms of focusing on issues to be addressed to improve police integrity with in West Mercia and I shall ensure the action plan put in place to address the recommendations and concerns raised in fully implemented.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
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SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

24 February 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

AN INSPECTION OF UNDERCOVER POLICING IN ENGLAND AND WALES (2014)

I refer to the report *An inspection of undercover policing in England and Wales* published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in October 2014. The report recognises the vital role that undercover officers play in protecting communities and the legal and ethical environment in which they operate.

Overall the inspection report identifies 49 recommendations across the range of organisations operating in this field, a number of which specifically relate to police forces. I have discussed these recommendations with the ACC for Protective Services and the lead officer for this area and am reassured that either the recommendations identified for West Mercia have already been implemented or that the force is working with the College of Policing and national police leads to complete the remainder.

I shall continue to monitor progress in this area through my regular programme of briefings with lead officers.

Yours Sincerely,

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

29th August 2014

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC INSPECTION: “POLICING IN AUSTERITY: MEETING THE CHALLENGE”

I refer to the report published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary on 22 July 2014 as part of the Valuing the Police programme of inspections.

I welcome the report and in particular the recognition given for the collaboration with Warwickshire Police which is “unequaled by any other force in the country”. The report also states that: “As a result of the alliance the force(s) will overachieve on savings during the spending review and as a result will also balance their budget for 2015/16”. As a consequence the force is deemed to be outstanding when judged in relation to taking the necessary steps to ensuring a secure financial position.

Across West Mercia recorded crime has continued to fall over the spending review period at a faster rate than in the rest of England and Wales. To a great extent this has been achieved through delivering services once across the alliance instead of twice.

These remain challenging times but I will continue to work with West Mercia’s Chief Constable and across the alliance with our counterparts in Warwickshire to ensure that despite reduced funding, both forces maintain and improve standards in policing and people are protected from harm.

Yours sincerely

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'PEEL: Police legitimacy 2015 - An inspection of West Mercia Police'

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

As always, I welcome HMIC's findings, and will ensure that the areas identified for improvement are acted upon by the force.

The field inspection for this report took some time ago, and the force has moved on significantly since then, making improvements in a number of areas. I am confident that when inspectors next assess these areas, they will see some clear progress. For example, the report suggests the force needs to make improvements to the way it provides wellbeing and welfare support to staff. This is an area that the force had recognised as needing further attention and it has made Health and Wellbeing a top priority for 2016. A Wellbeing Board has been established and led by Chief Officers which meets bi-monthly and prioritises the support that officers and staff need to carry out their roles and ensure they are healthy and happy in the workplace.

A number of the issues raised by HMIC relate directly to what was a complicated bedding in period for the alliance arrangement between the West Mercia and Warwickshire police forces. When you add in the strain of significant spending cuts from government, it was clearly a period of major upheaval and transformation all round. However, we have worked to address a lot of the issues raised, and I am confident those measures have been a success. For example, I raised concerns with the Chief Constable about how complaints were being handled, and we are now seeing very good performance in that area. Similarly with staffing issues, with alliance changes now harmonised and bedded in, we are seeing much improved resourcing and service around things like occupational health.

The report identifies four areas for improvement relating to how the force uses stop and search. In addition, whilst the report states that the force is almost fully complying with the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme it is one of 13 forces failing to comply with three or more requirements of the scheme and as a consequence the force has been suspended from the scheme.

The force has begun a focused programme of activity to ensure that the immediate actions required to address the areas for improvement are given the priority required. This includes a peer review which has been commissioned to help inform the training requirements of both staff and supervisors in compliance with the use and recording of stop and search and a review of processes in the OCC. I am fully sighted on the planned improvements and I will continue to pay close scrutiny to progress made.

As requested, I have set out below the three areas where the force is not compliant with the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme and the steps being put in place to achieve compliance.

1. Recording and publishing the outcomes following a stop and search

Findings - HMIC identified that the force's data was available on the police.uk website, however there was no link on the force's website directing a member of the public to it.

Response - This was rectified the day after it was identified during the onsite inspection. The force is now compliant.

2. Providing opportunities for the public to observe officers using the power.

Findings - HMIC identified that as part of the alliance with Warwickshire Police the force had published a lay observer scheme policy but they could find no evidence that this scheme had been made known to the public on the website or anywhere else.

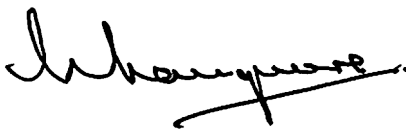
Response - Since the inspection a single point of contact (SPOC) at Inspector or Chief Inspector level has been identified in each local policing area (LPA) to provide information to local community groups and Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) around stop and search. Monthly performance information on stop and search is provided to Superintendents in each LPA and to my office. Although the force's Lay Observer policy is published on the force internet it is currently on the 'publications' page and not linked to the stop and search section. I have been assured that by the end of April 2016 further work will have been done to ensuring the correct messaging is developed for the website around the likelihood of actually observing a stop and search and the scheme will have more prominence on the stop and search section.

3. Explaining to communities how the powers are being used following a "community complaint"

Findings – HMIC found the process for determining a community trigger had been documented, but there was no evidence that this had been communicated to operational staff or to the public.

Response – The Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme states that in forces where complaints are particularly low, forces should consider treating every complaint as a ‘trigger’ – each requiring explanation and scrutiny by community groups. West Mercia treats every complaint as a ‘trigger’. Since April 2015 a SPOC in the Professional Standards Department monitors stop and search complaints, which are discussed by IAGs and community groups. A Strategic Stop and Search Board retains oversight of complaints and details are also provided in the monthly performance report mentioned earlier. Further work has been done to enhance the information provided on the force website, to better explain the force’s approach and the ‘trigger’ process to the public. The force is now compliant.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



**Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia**

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'National Child Protection Inspection Post Inspection Review'

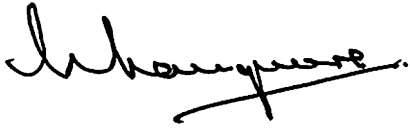
As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

It is pleasing to see that in their post inspection review HMIC acknowledge that West Mercia Police have implemented many improvements since the initial 2014 inspection and that the force has a clear commitment to protecting children. The report does however highlight a number of areas where improvements still need to be made.

Ensuring vulnerable children receive the support they need is critically important and I believe the Pathfinder recently launched in Worcestershire will go some way towards addressing this need. The new Pathfinder will include many changes to the way the Force works and how it manage crimes involving the most vulnerable victims, This includes extending hours and weekend working covered by specialist officers, and increasing capacity to manage some of the most serious investigations including those that relate to child protection to provide a consistent approach.

The report identifies continuing delays in the analysis of computers as an issue and I would agree that this is not acceptable, however I am confident that the significant investment into ICT resources currently underway will result in a much improved turn around time for digital analysis.

Overall I would agree that the Force needs to continue to remain focused on addressing all the areas highlighted in the post inspection report if it is to provide the service that the public deserve and I shall continue to liaise closely with the Chief Constable to ensure progress continues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'Real lives, real crimes – a study of digital crime and policing'

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

This study was undertaken to help HMIC better understand the effect that digital technology is having on crime and policing and the current preparedness of the police service to address digital crime.

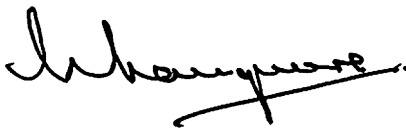
Whilst the report contains no specific recommendations there are a number of conclusions within the report which all forces need to consider. West Mercia Police and its alliance partner, Warwickshire Police have been working for some time towards the development of a 'Cyber Crime Strategy' which will help to address some of the findings identified in HMIC's study of digital crime.

Recognising the growing threat from cyber crime I have committed specific funding towards tackling this problem. One example of how the funds have been used to raise awareness is the use of a dedicated cyber van which is able to visit communities across the force area and provide accessible support to people in how to stay safe online.

You may recall that I and my Warwickshire counterpart wrote to you in July 2015 expressing our concerns regarding cyber fraud and in particular the approach taken by Action Fraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) to deal with crimes reported to them and the subsequent support given to victims of cyber crime. The National Police Coordinator for Economic Crime recently wrote to me outlining forthcoming service improvements to Action Fraud and the NFIB. It is critical that these

changes are implemented to both improve the victim experience and improve the police services' overall approach to addressing digital crime.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Longmore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: Building the picture: An inspection of police information management

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

The report highlights a number of recommendations for all chief constables in relation to information management and the force are still developing an action plan to address those recommendations.

I shall be holding the chief constable to account to ensure that the recommendations have been reviewed and implemented as appropriate within West Mercia.

Yours Sincerely,

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: National Child Protection Inspection – West Mercia Police 4-14 November 2014

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

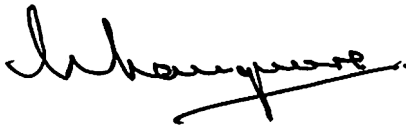
I am encouraged independently that the report found West Mercia Police had a clear commitment to improving services for children, with allegations about child abuse responded to promptly and the force is also recognised for its efforts in improving its work with vulnerable people as well as its rigorous supervision of sex offenders.

There are also areas for improvement highlighted within the report and I am aware that since the initial inspection findings and the reports publication earlier this year there has been a focus of activity to address the issues raised. The force has reviewed its structures, systems and processes and has been able to invest significant extra resources into safeguarding and child protection, including the release of additional funds by myself and the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner. This has enabled dedicated Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) teams to be established, with CSE coordinators in place across the force area. These teams are able to manage higher risk CSE investigations and provide support for lower risk investigations allocated to non specialist teams.

Overall I am reassured that the force has taken steps to address all of the recommendations set out in the report, however there is still work to be done to fully implement all the improvements required to protect children from harm. In particular, the establishment of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs across the force area has yet to be completed and I shall be pressing the police and partners to ensure all the hubs are up and running as soon as possible.

I will continue to monitor the forces actions and plans to ensure that I, the force and our partners are working towards ensuring everything possible is being done to keep children safe.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse'

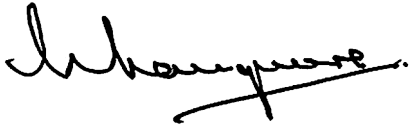
As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

I am pleased to see that there have been improvements in the overall police response to victims of domestic abuse since the publication of 'Everyone's business' in March 2014. In West Mercia the force has been implementing a detailed action plan based upon the recommendations made within the original report and the majority of these have been completed. One recommendation which is outstanding relates to body worn video (BWV) which is closely linked to the roll out of the Athena IT system and the establishment of a digital repository in the force. Athena is due to go live later this year and following that the deployment of BWV is planned.

Turning to the follow up report I was concerned to see stated that West Mercia was one of only seven forces unable to provide data on the number of domestic abuse arrests and I will be seeking assurances that such performance data gaps are addressed.

The follow up report contains six recommendations, two of which, updating force domestic abuse action plans and force progress reviews, are requirements for all chief constables and I shall be closely monitoring the force to ensure these recommendations are met within the timescales set out. I am also supportive of the other recommendations within the report as they will aid the development of safeguarding for domestic abuse victims.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

12 May 2014

Cc: HMI D Sharpling

Dear Home Secretary,

Response to HMIC Inspection Report: 'West Mercia Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse'

I welcome the HMIC's report into West Mercia Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse published on the 27 March 2014.

The HMIC report makes some clear recommendations which are designed to tackle any risks identified in the service to victims of domestic violence.

I am pleased that the report acknowledges that there is some effective work taking place within West Mercia to tackle domestic abuse and that force treats domestic abuse as a priority however this report does highlight that more needs to be done, especially around training and communication.

I am assured that the alliance with Warwickshire Police and the associated ongoing work will provide opportunities to develop a consistent effective approach to domestic abuse across both forces and this is recognised within the HMIC report.

I intend to ensure that the delivery plan developed by the Force to address the recommendations is developed and expanded as further engagement and consultation takes place with partners and other key stakeholders to ensure an effective and consistent multi agency response to domestic abuse is in place across West Mercia.

Within the Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia is my commitment to protect people from domestic abuse and to provide support to those people who unfortunately becomes victims of it. During 2013/14 I committed over £200k from my Grant scheme towards services and projects supporting domestic violence schemes, including over £100k towards maintaining IDVA services in Shropshire and Worcestershire. The HMIC report identifies a need for the force to review the IDVA service provision across West Mercia and to address capacity issues with partners. I intend to work closely with the force and partners to ensure that this review is as thorough as possible and will help inform future commissioning of victims' services.

I have discussed the recommendations with the Chief Constable and shall continue to keep under review the delivery plan which has been developed to address the recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Longmore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Longmore



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: Targeting the risk: An inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing in police forces in England and Wales

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

Although a national report, West Mercia Police along with its alliance partner force, Warwickshire Police, were subject to an 'on site' inspection and the report makes specific reference to both forces throughout. The report commends many aspects of the work of the combined Warwickshire and West Mercia Police Firearms and Explosives Licensing Unit but also highlights a number of areas where the forces can do better.

Of the nine recommendations within the report for action by all chief constables I am reassured that there has been a thorough consideration of all the recommendations by the lead officers within the unit and a detailed action plan is in place to address issues where required. In addition an earlier action plan developed following feedback from the onsite inspection has been successfully completed.

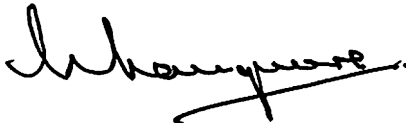
The vast majority of licence holders are law abiding and responsible and the oversight around their licensing is appropriate. However the report makes clear that there needs to be greater monitoring and audit of processes and work is now under way to give internal audit a much greater role in providing independent oversight.

The time taken to process applications and renewals is currently longer than I or licence holders should reasonably expect. While the changes to a single unit serving both forces may have caused some initial delays, and there is the cyclical nature of renewals resulting in extreme peaks of demand, this is an area where performance could and should be better. I will discuss this with the Chief Constable in greater detail.

There are also measures that need to be put in place at a national level to enable forces to better protect people from harm and I am pleased that the report highlights the need to review the sharing of medical information to ensure a system is in place to effectively discharge their duty.

The report also recognises the need to update firearms legislation. The current requirement for a 'wet signature' is out of date, and reinforces a paper based system that is not fit for purpose in the 21st Century. Changes to the legislation would significantly improve the service the force are able to licence holders and provide wider public reassurance.

Yours Sincerely,

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Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: The depths of dishonour: Hidden voices and shameful crimes

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report.

The report provides a valuable insight into the complexities of honour-based violence (HBV), forced marriage (FM) and female genital mutilation (FGM) and highlights a number of issues all forces should consider in order to ensure they effectively deal with those issues and encourage victims to come forward.

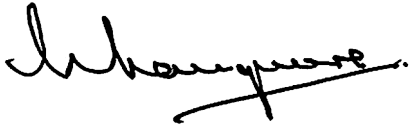
West Mercia Police in alliance with Warwickshire Police has taken a number of positive steps in tackling these issues. This has included appointing a lead officer for HBV, FM and FGM and having single point of contact officers (SPOCs) for each local policing area who have received enhanced training. In turn the SPOCs have assisted with face to face training for all operational staff, including Harm Assessment Units and call handlers.

Alongside training there has been an emphasis on raising awareness across the whole the workforce on how to identify, support and protect potential victims of HBV, FM and FGM. Changes have also been made to force system to improve recording of potential HBV, FM and FGM crimes and intelligence.

A public facing internet page dedicated specifically to raising awareness of HBV, FM and FGM and directing victims to where they can receive help is available and the Force continues to work closely with partners agencies and other specialist organisations to raise awareness of these crime and to ensure a joined up approach

Nonetheless the Force does recognise that there is more work to do in the areas of protection, enforcement and the overall approach to tackling HBV, FM and FGM and in particular I shall expect the Chief Constable to have regard to the recommendations set out in the report.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection reports: 'In harm's way: The role of the police in keeping children safe' and 'Online and on the edge: Real risks in a virtual world'

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above reports.

The 'In harms way' report summarises 21 HMIC inspections conducted between January 2014 and June 2015 on the police response to child protection issues, including the child protection inspection of West Mercia police, which took place in November 2014.

Overall I am satisfied with the progress the force has made in respect of child protection. The force has reviewed its child protection procedures and process, leading to greater governance and oversight. The force has acted on the recommendations set out in its own child protection report and has reviewed its activity following the publication of the national report and a recent revisit by HMIC. There are still areas to be improved and developed further such as the full implementation of multi agency safeguarding hubs across the force area and I shall be closely monitoring progress of those areas of activity with the chief constable.

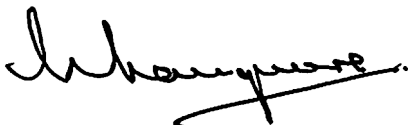
Earlier this year West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police asked the College of Policing to undertake a peer review of the Alliance in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE). The aim of the review was to assess the Alliance's capability and capacity to deal with the threat of CSE, including online CSE. The review report set out a number of suggested recommendations which have been shared with partners and used to improve and enhance the force approach to CSE. The national HMIC 'online and on the edge' report also provides a number recommendation for action. These along with the peer review recommendations have been incorporated into the forces' CSE development plan which is closely monitored.

I have released significant additional funding to the police in order to increase their resources and capability, particularly around child sexual exploitation. In addition the capabilities of the High Tech Crime Unit are also being enhanced. This will increase their capacity and also improve timeliness.

Raising awareness amongst children and young people of the dangers of online CSE is important and through my own office I am currently running a crime awareness competition open to all schools across West Mercia. Some of the key messages in the competition are around cyber crime and online safety.

Online CSE is a relatively new, but growing area of crime and I will continue to apply a high level of scrutiny in this area.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

November 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

PEEL: Police efficiency 2015 An inspection of West Mercia Police

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

I welcome this report from HMIC. I think it paints a justifiably positive picture of the situation here. I feel it shows the future of policing in West Mercia is in a much healthier, more sustainable position than the majority of forces nationwide.

The report backs up the fact that the force and its finances are being run responsibly, with a long-term view. We have good levels of reserves, and we are using them to good effect – part of which includes updating technology, which will make the force even more efficient in the future.

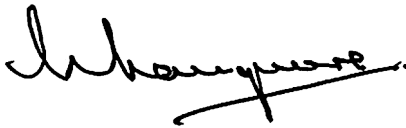
The report also mentions the benefit of the strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police, which continues to provide efficiencies and real benefits not only to the police, but to the public across the two force areas. West Mercia has been through a lot of changes in a short space of time, and it's to the credit of the police that they've made so much positive progress.

The report also touches on the importance we have placed on things like offender management and crime prevention. These are key to improving police efficiency because preventing crime and successfully rehabilitating offenders is a much more cash-effective strategy in the long term.

The report also discusses future challenges and resilience, and a lot of work is happening to make the force even more efficient. The time will inevitably come where we cannot keep using reserves to cushion the blow of government savings.

If further big cuts are imposed then it could mean significant changes in local policing, but finding the most effective, efficient, sustainable model for the future is the clear focus. Working in partnership with others will continue to be vital, but I'm confident that the West Mercia force is in a good position to meet whatever challenges are on the horizon.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability)' – An inspection of West Mercia Police

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

Although this report graded the force as "requires improvement" is also acknowledges that West Mercia Police is generally good at identifying vulnerable victims, responds appropriately with its partners, and the public can be confident that many victims are well supported. However, in some areas, improvement is needed to ensure the force provides a consistent service to victims and vulnerable people, particularly missing children. The report also states that there is an inconsistent approach to responding to vulnerable missing children and assessing the risk of domestic abuse victims.

Protecting vulnerable people has always been a fundamental priority for the police. The definitions, terminology and requirements change over time, and there is certainly a lot more awareness around the subject these days, but it has always been treated with the upmost importance by police officers & staff.

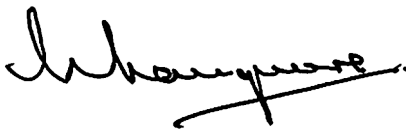
In West Mercia, a lot of work has been done to improve services for vulnerable people. I have made money available to provide extra officers and we have established our first multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) in Herefordshire with more to follow. We have funded countless projects & initiatives around domestic abuse, and the police are working with more partners than ever before including charities, local authorities and emergency services.

This report from HMIC justifiably highlights some of the progress that has been made, and I am confident that, broadly speaking, the force is providing a good service in protecting vulnerable people.

The Inspectors highlight an area around missing children – particularly those going missing from care homes. We have a large number of care homes for children in West Mercia, and I recently asked the force to carry out a review of how they are working with them, and the service being provided. The force has worked with the care homes, and new guidance is now in place for their contact with police. The results so far have been very positive, and the force is in the process of rolling that pilot out more widely. I am satisfied that the force is dealing with these sorts of incidents in a responsible and appropriate way.

A detailed action plan has been drafted by the force to address the areas of concern identified in the report and I will ensure that I hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery against each of the actions listed in the plan.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: Stop and search powers2: are the police using them effectively and fairly?

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report which was a follow up to a 2013 inspection.

The force approach to stop and search is subject to close scrutiny. On a quarterly basis one of the Assistant Chief Constables for the alliance of Warwickshire and West Mercia Police forces chairs a strategic meeting where progress against the forces' stop and search action plan is reviewed.

I am assured that the ongoing scrutiny and oversight given to stop and search activity has meant that West Mercia has robust systems and processes in place to manage its approach to stop and search.

The commitment to be open and transparent can be demonstrated by being one of the first forces to provide locality based data on police.uk, so local residents can easily map where stop and search takes place. In addition, the disproportionality levels across the alliance are to be subject to closer scrutiny by the independent Trust Integrity and Ethics Committee. I along with the Chief Constable look forward to the outcome of their considerations.

Yours Sincerely,

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



**Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia**

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: The welfare of vulnerable people in police custody

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above report. Although a national report, West Mercia Police along with its alliance partner Warwickshire Police, were one of the forces inspected as part of the background to this report.

This is an incredibly important issue and I am pleased that the report identifies that often police custody is used as an inappropriate substitute for social and health care. I have long held the belief that whilst custody is no place for those in crisis or for the vulnerable it is essential that police forces develop custody services which are better equipped to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

Whilst recognising some areas of good practice within West Mercia, there are areas where improvements can be made and the report sets out a series of national recommendations. These recommendations have been considered and an action plan developed which I have asked to be combined with the forces' separate custody inspection action plan.

I will continue to monitor the force's actions and plans to ensure that I, the force and our partners are working towards ensuring vulnerable people are being safeguarded effectively in the most appropriate environment.

Yours Sincerely,

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

December 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection: Witness for the prosecution: Identifying victim and witness vulnerability in criminal case files.

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I am pleased to submit my comments in response to the above force specific report and also the national thematic report of the same name, both of which were published on the same day in November 2015.

In relation to the force specific report it is pleasing to note that HMIC found that in the majority of cases, the summary of key evidence was adequately presented and 100% of the cases sampled showed that West Mercia Police is completing witness care information correctly.

Identifying the needs of victims and witnesses is an area where West Mercia Police traditionally perform well in comparison to other police forces and this inspection confirms that, however there is more that can be done to further improve and develop in the area of identifying vulnerability and I am assured that this is will continue to be addressed through the alliance training programme.

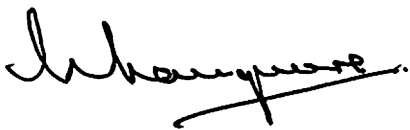
The national report contains ten recommendations, one of which specifically applies to all chief constables:

'Chief constables should review the templates in use in their force to ensure officers and staff are using the authorised versions which have not been amended or adapted'

I can confirm that West Mercia Police does use the standard case file forms without any amendments or adaptations.

I also understand that an action plan containing the national recommendations is to be drafted to which any work or activity being done within force can be mapped to the national recommendations and progress tracked.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

October 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

Report on an inspection visit to police custody suites in Warwickshire and West Mercia

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons published earlier this year and would comment as follows on the recommendations and the progress made by the forces to implement the recommendations within this report

The report looked at strategy, treatment and conditions, individual rights, and health care of detainees. In addition the welfare of vulnerable people in police custody was examined.

The report highlights five main recommendations for both forces, along with a further number of recommendations in relation to each of the report themes. All the recommendations have been developed into an action plan, which is subject to ongoing monitoring and scrutiny. I am satisfied that where ever practicable the recommendations have been implemented, but there are some, for example, that *'every suite should have an exercise yard accessible to detainees held for long periods'* which have been considered but not progressed at this time because financial constraints and a longer term review of the custody estate mean the significant expenditure required is difficult to justify at this time.

In relation to the five main recommendations:

There was a recognition following the inspection that there were some weaknesses in the overall management of custody. In particular, there were no dedicated custody inspectors to line manage custody sergeants, creating a void in accountability and oversight. This has been addressed and there are now four dedicated custody inspectors across the alliance who, in turn report to a dedicated chief inspector, creating a clear management structure.

A new audit process has been designed to improve quality assurance measures and work is ongoing with the Professional Standards Department to ensure all custody complaints are flagged up to custody management. A monthly report is compiled by the Health and Safety Risk Manager on the use of force in the custody suites. Overall oversight is maintained by the chief inspector and review by the inspectors. This has significantly improved the oversight and scrutiny of custody services.

Ensuring that children are not detained unnecessarily in police cells is a particular concern and a gap analysis has been undertaken of local authority accommodation and existing partnership structures are being used to influence partner agencies. In addition, local safeguarding children boards have been informed in a more structured manner to raise the issue more widely.

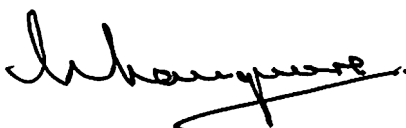
Steps have been put in place to improve risk assessment processes and management, including training monthly audit by the custody inspectors. I am also assured that the new force wide Athena process management system will further enhance custody risk assessment, particularly in relation to pre-release.

Finally, force data incidents are now collated and sent to the head of custody each month, who maintains oversight whilst the custody inspectors review each individual incident. In particular, inspectors now have a new audit process to monitor the use of emergency restrain belts and anti rip clothing. A review of training requirements has also taken place and been incorporated.

The report also identified two areas of good practice, namely the provision of alcohol symptomatic relief for detainees and the appropriate detention of Section 136 Mental Health Act detainees in NHS places of safety in accordance with national policy.

Overall I am assured that the force has taken the appropriate action to implement the recommendations and I shall continue to closely monitor progress in this area.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Longmore', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Cc: HMIC

6 April 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'Missing Children; who cares? The Police response to missing and absent children'

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

This report and the accompanying research document provides a comprehensive overview of the police response to missing and absent children and in doing so draws on findings from reports from the recently published PEEL inspection programme. You will be aware from that programme that West Mercia Police was judged as 'requires improvement' in both its approach and effectiveness towards dealing with missing children.

This new report provides one specific recommendation on information management processes for all chief constables. I shall ensure that this recommendation is incorporated into the existing comprehensive action plan and programme of activity that has been put in place to address the issues raised in the earlier reports and will continue to hold the chief constable to account for improving the force approach in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Longmore". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia



Bill Longmore
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc: HMIC

10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

HMIC Inspection report: 'PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015' – An inspection of West Mercia Police

As required within Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, I have considered the content of the report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and would comment as follows.

HMIC found the West Mercia force to be good at preventing crime and anti social behaviour, keeping people safe, investigating crime and managing offenders. I am also pleased that HMIC has recognised the importance the force attaches to collaboration with other public services and voluntary organisations in crime prevention and ensuring community safety. I value these links very highly because the police must always strive to work as an integral part of the communities they are here to serve.

However, despite being rated as good in two out of the four categories being assessed, the Inspectors gave an overall grading of 'requires improvement', saying it found the force's approach to assessing the risk faced by domestic abuse victims and missing children requires improvement. The report also found that the force needs to make improvements in how it understands and responds to serious and organised crime.

The report states that when a crime has occurred the force acts quickly, carries out good quality investigations and keeps victims informed but that more needs to be done to improve digital investigations. Substantial investment is being made in the high tech crime unit to tackle offending committed on line or through the use of digital devices. The force has recently commissioned an independent review of digital forensics. A plan is in place to enhance the way digital forensics is delivered which will increase training, the use of technology and better protect people from harm.

Turning to the two assessment categories requiring improvement I would comment as follows:

How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims?

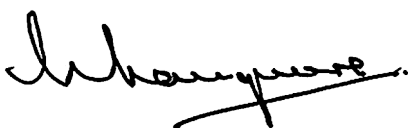
The PEEL Vulnerability report, published in December 2015 identified the approach to vulnerable people, particularly missing children and victims of domestic abuse as an area for improvement. I asked the Chief Constable to take action on this. A comprehensive review was undertaken by the West Mercia force which pinpointed levels of high demand on police time in some parts of our area, especially in Shropshire where there are a relatively high number of care homes for children. The outcome of that review has enabled resources to be allocated more appropriately.

I believe that future HMIC inspections will find that there have been improvements in the way cases of missing children are handled. It is also worth noting that the report says the force has made an encouraging start in ensuring that it is adequately prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation.

How is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

The report highlights that a serious and organised crime profile has only been developed for one of the five policing areas. This approach was a conscious decision of chief officers and is one which I fully support. My office have had full oversight of the pilot since its inception and I am confident that once the lessons learnt from the pilot area have been evaluated, the force will be better placed to effectively roll out the approach across other the policing areas.

I am aware that the other issues raised in the report relating to serious and organised crime have been reviewed and activity is underway to address the issues identified. A detailed action plan has been drafted by the force to address the areas requiring improvement identified in this report and I will ensure that I hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery against each of the actions listed in the plans.



Bill Longmore

Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia