



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

1<sup>st</sup> October 2019

*Dear Home Secretary*

**The Poor relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people**

I am writing to you in response to the above joint HMICFRS / HMCPSI inspection report published in July 2019. I welcome this report which highlights improvements are needed across the criminal justice system to support not just older people but victims of crime in general.

The report contains a number of generic recommendations and areas for improvement that are applicable to all chief constables. In particular the report recommends that within six months the NPCC lead for adults at risk and the CPS should agree a simple definition of what constitutes an older victim. I welcome the introduction of this definition. It will bring clarity to officers when carrying out needs assessments of victims, ensuring victims receive appropriate support and it will also help the force in making an accurate assessment of the demands on the police made by older people.

One of the recommendations was for chief constables to work with PCCs and other relevant organisations to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way. This work has already taken place in West Mercia resulting in the launch of the West Mercia Victim Advice Line (VAL) in April this year.

This new service, whilst independent from the police, is based in the police control room alongside call takers. It is there to provide free and confidential advice to anyone affected by crime, be it a victim, witness or family member. It offers a multi-disciplinary needs and risk assessment of a victim, provides them with emotional and practical support (regardless of whether the crime was reported to the police or not) and provides a triaging point for onward referral to appropriate longer support services.

Since its launch I have continued to work with the force to ensure that VAL is successfully embedded within the force and to challenge the force to ensure that all opportunities are used to promote the use of VAL and increase referral rates from officers.

I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure all the issues identified within the inspection report are addressed to provide a better service to all victims of crime, and particularly older victims with the service they deserve.

Best Wishes  
JC

John Campion  
**Police & Crime Commissioner**  
**West Mercia**