



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
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Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

20 April 2020

Evidence led domestic abuse prosecutions


I am writing to you in response to the above joint HMICFRS / HMCPSI inspection report and must apologise for my delay in doing so.

The report contains a number of recommendations that are applicable to all police forces. In particular the report recommends that the police should review training plans in order to ensure that all appropriate staff, both frontline officers and investigators, are trained how to handle domestic abuse cases. In support of this, *DA matters* training is being rolled out to all frontline staff across West Mercia. Importantly this training focuses on evidence led investigations and highlights the need to change culture and language around Victims not supporting a prosecution. The training teaches officers to use other evidence and investigative tools.

West Mercia has also invested in Domestic Abuse (DA) Champions. DA Champions are a voluntary role, nominations/requests to be champions are managed by a central vulnerability team. DA Champions are given additional skills via the training to sustain the change in skills, behaviour and attitudes of their peers, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, checking service delivery, giving constructive feedback and congratulating good practice.

Other steps the force has taken in support of evidence led prosecutions include mandating officers attending DA offences to have their body worn video turned on, supported by a DA policy which emphasises officers should focus efforts on gathering evidence from every available source and not being totally reliant upon victims of abuse

Overall I am satisfied that the approach the force is taking will go some way towards improving the outcome for domestic abuse victims, but there is undoubtedly a long way to go and 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 outcome to all victims of domestic abuse.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia