



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

Cc: HMICFRS

Our Ref: JC/jpi

7 July 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspections 2019 thematic report

I am writing to you in response to the above report. It has highlighted the progress made by police forces, as well as the dedication of professional services, in effectively recognising signs of vulnerability, with more still to be done. The report contains three specific recommendations for all chief constables and the Force's Vulnerability and Safeguarding Team are working to ensure these are reviewed and addressed.

To reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children Joint Decision Making Panels were established in 2019. The aim of the panel is to provide a consistent panel process, where the ethos of "*Child First , Offender second*" is adopted, to reduce first time entrants to the criminal justice system, reduce reoffending rates, reduce demand on frontline policing and improving life chances for young people.

The Joint Decision Making panels are accountable through the West Mercia Youth Justice Management Board, where performance is scrutinised and partners are held to account. Within the force, audits of crime data and processes are carried out, although these do not directly review outcomes.

West Mercia Police have utilised the recommendations from the recent National Child Protection Inspections from Durham, Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire to inform their 4Ps plan and action plans to ensure good practice and learning is integrated into the force

Children are some of the most vulnerable people in our society and they deserve to be safe. The responsibility of protecting them is a partnership approach, with us all having our part to play. My Safer West Mercia Plan sets out my commitment to protect young people who are at risk of committing crime or being exploited and my commitment to partnership working.

In particular, I support a number of projects that are aimed at diverting vulnerable children from crime as well as protecting them from being exploited.

I will continue, as Commissioner, to hold the force to account around its approach to child protection and I will continue to work with the force and other agencies to ensure children are protected.

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