



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

CC: HMICFRS

10 June 2022

Dear Home Secretary,

Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in West Mercia Police

I am writing to you in response to the above Joint HMICFRS & HMIP inspection report published in April this year. The report identifies a number of shortcomings in West Mercia Police's custody function. Whilst the report recognises that the force responded quickly to the findings during the inspection, taking action in several areas, West Mercia Police have a duty to those in their care, and the findings of this report are not good enough.

On publication of the report I called an Extraordinary Holding to Account meeting with the Chief Constable. This required her to submit a briefing document in advance setting out how the force is responding to the findings in the report. This was used to facilitate the meeting and enabled me to challenge and scrutinise the force on behalf of West Mercia's communities.

It is clear from the meeting that there is more work to be done, however, I am reassured by the steps being taken to address the shortcomings and by the proactive approach taken thus far. A summary of the briefing document outlining the force response along with the notes from the Holding to Account meeting have been submitted to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel for their next meeting. A copy of the Panel report and notes are enclosed with this letter.

As Commissioner, my Independent Custody Visitors Scheme provides important scrutiny of detainee welfare and I am undertaking a wholesale review of the scheme to ensure it is effective as possible in ensuring that people are detained safely and respectfully while in custody. In addition my Estates function are working closely with the force to carry out remedial works which will make custody buildings safer.

I will continue, to formally hold the force to account to ensure those being detained can trust that they will be safe and cared for appropriately

Yours sincerely

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 and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia