



Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

CC: HMICFRS

4th October 2022

Dear Home Secretary

The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime

I am writing to you in response to the above HMICFRS spotlight report published in August 2022.

The national report focused on the police response to serious acquisitive Crime (SAC); bringing together findings from recent police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) and thematic inspections in England and Wales. The report identified good practice, improvements in the way police forces tackle SAC and included 2 formal recommendations.

The recommendations outlined in the report are national and I am pleased that on a local level, West Mercia Police are in a good position to respond to the recommendations. There are robust governance arrangements in place locally to monitor the force's progress in delivering recommendations identified by HMICFRS, with Chief Officers and PCC oversight. Below I set out a number of activities already in train in West Mercia to address the recommendations identified in relation to SAC.

The force has established a project team (Op Reset) to focus on improving the quality of investigations to ensure a better service to victims and communities. The objectives of this project have been informed by recommendations from the latest HMICFRS PEEL inspection. Overseen by the Chief Superintendent lead for Crime & Vulnerability, the project includes a focus on crime prevention and scene preservation, supervision of investigations, outcomes for victims and training for the workforce.

I am reassured that training is underway for West Mercia Polices public contact staff to ensure victims are receiving timely and appropriate advice during initial calls for service. This includes refresher training on forensic preservation and a new training package focused on 'digital' preservation. System changes have been implemented to ensure that the advice being provided is up-to-date and relevant to the crime being reported, with a focus on mitigating immediate threats and risks

Departmental audits of burglary calls for service have been introduced within the Operational Communications Centre (OCC) to ensure the training outlined above is having a meaningful impact on service provision for victims. Feedback from the audits is circulated to staff and managers to address any gaps or identify best practice in the provision of crime scene preservation advice during the initial call

West Mercia Police has introduced mandatory standards of investigation to ensure effective supervision and direction. These standards have been designed to ensure the victims' voice and wishes are considered as part of the investigative plan, as well as identifying clear touch points for supervisory checks. The mandatory standards are being embedded via repeated training inputs scheduled throughout the remainder of the year. The training inputs focus on the processes underpinning the mandatory standards, as well as the victims' code and victims' needs assessments

The force's current performance in respect of investigations (inc SAC) has been subject to robust scrutiny through my formal holding to account meetings with the Chief Constable. My March 2022 holding to account meeting focused on investigations including the timeliness of investigations, investigative resources, training and implementation of the Op Reset project. My May 2022 holding to account meeting focused on the force's response to recommendations made within the most recent HMICFRS PEEL report

I will continue, as Commissioner, to hold the force to account around its approach to tackling serious acquisitive crime and ensuring that victims are appropriately supported throughout the process.

Yours sincerely,

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

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia