



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

19th December 2022

Dear Home Secretary

An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service

I am writing to you in response to the above HMICFRS report published on 2nd November 2022.

The national report was commissioned by the then Home Secretary following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer. The inspection and subsequent report focused on the police's vetting and counter-corruption arrangements, and assessed forces' abilities to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour by police officers and staff.

The report outlines 5 areas for improvement (AFIs) and makes 43 recommendations for Chief Constables and national bodies including the NPCC and the College of Policing. Whilst the number of recommendations for the service as a whole is stark, it is right that further steps are taken to strengthen the policies, professional practice and systems that exist to safeguard our communities, police officers and staff.

Whilst the recommendations outlined in the report are national, there is significant overlap with the small number of local AFIs issued by HMICFRS in the subsequent report into the effectiveness of vetting and counter-corruption arrangements in West Mercia Police (published 17th November 2022). I welcome the focus on vetting and counter-corruption arrangements provided across both reports and I am pleased that West Mercia Police is in a good position to respond to the AFIs and recommendations made by the inspectorate.

The force has long established processes in place to ensure appropriate governance of national and local HMICFRS AFIs and recommendations, with clear Chief Officers and PCC oversight. Following the publication of the 2 vetting and counter-corruption reports, the force developed an action tracker to record and monitor the activity underway to address the reports' findings. I am pleased to inform you that for over a third of the national recommendations, West Mercia Police has either successfully delivered or has made significant progress in delivering the required activity. Below I set out a number of examples of activities already in train.

The force is already compliant with a number of the key recommendations contained within the report including.

- Supporting all vetting decisions with detailed rationale that follows the National Decision Making Model;
- Compliance with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) in relation to reviewing vetting status following a written warning or final warning;
- Having a current counter-corruption strategic threat assessment in place.

Work is ongoing to dip sample and quality assure such processes to ensure they are as robust and effective as they can be.

Messaging is ongoing internally and externally to raise awareness of counter corruption threats and reporting requirements in respect of vetting and conduct. In support of this, the force is building relationships with local partners and service providers, including those I commission, to ensure that the organisations who support vulnerable people are able to spot warning signs and understand routes to report any concerns.

The HMICFRS findings have also been used to inform the budget setting process for 2023/24, ensuring that West Mercia Police is equipped with the right resources and ICT systems to enhance its investigative and proactive intelligence gathering capabilities.

My Safer West Mercia Plan includes specific commitments to ensure the code of ethics is embedded within West Mercia Police. To that end, I meet with the Deputy Chief Constable and the Head of the Professional Standards Department (PSD) on a quarterly basis to review the force's performance in respect of standards and ethics, including vetting and conduct. Any concerns I have are escalated through my formal holding to account (HTA) meetings with the Chief Constable. Recent examples include a focus on conduct at the February 2022 Performance HTA meeting, and a review of conduct, fairness and standards at the May 2022 Workforce HTA meeting.

I will continue, as Commissioner, to use the findings from the national HMICFRS report to hold the force to account around its approach to tackling vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the service

Bea Wiles

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

cc West Mercia Police Chief Constable
HMICFRS