



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

26 April 2023

*Dear Home Secretary*

### **An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence**

I am writing to you in response to the above HMICFRS report published on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The inspection of 12 forces and the subsequent national report examined the police response to serious youth violence, including how the service works with Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) and partner organisations to take a public health approach and reduce serious youth violence; use of powers; and understanding of racial disproportionality.

HMICFRS made 4 recommendations following the inspection; 2 of which were for Chief Constables of local police forces. Below I set out how the Chief Constable in West Mercia will address these recommendations, and detail how as Commissioner I am supporting delivery of the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy and implementation of the Serious Violence Duty.

*Recommendation: By 31 March 2024, Chief Constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of outcome 22.*

West Mercia Police welcome the use and principle of outcome 22 where appropriate. A policy on the use of outcome 22 is being developed in force, and once finalised this policy will be embedding into crime reporting training. The force intend to assess the efficacy of use of outcome 22 on the reoffending rate for looked after children and other young people as part of a broader multi-agency safeguarding approach. I am able to monitor the use of all outcomes via a monthly outcome performance dashboard that is available to my office, all officers and staff. This management information allows senior leaders to maintain oversight of how crimes are resolved in West Mercia. Any concerns about use of outcome 22 can be escalated through my Assurance & Accountability meetings, and wider partnership working through my Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB).

*Recommendation: By 31 March 2024, Chief Constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.*

West Mercia Police accept this recommendation alongside existing recommendations that look to assess disproportionality in policing and the criminal justice system. An update to existing ICT software later this year should allow this data capture alongside other areas used to assess disproportionality (e.g. stop search data) and protected characteristics. This will assist in meeting a number of HMICFRS and NPCC recommendations, including this specific recommendation in relation to serious youth violence.

Alongside existing force data, in Autumn 2022 I commissioned the force to produce a serious violence needs assessment to contribute to my decision making around future service design and provision in respect of serious violence. This needs assessment will provide a comprehensive overview of research, data and engagement with a wide variety of partners, perpetrators, victims, children and young people. As part of the data analysis, the force has been asked to include victim and offender profiling and assess over and under-representation in respect of all protected characteristics including race. The needs assessment will be completed in May 2023 and will assist in the delivery of the Serious Violence duty by informing funding decisions.

My Safer West Mercia Plan includes a specific commitment to collaborate with police and partners to prevent and reduce serious violence in West Mercia. Central to this is supporting the local delivery of the Serious Violence Duty (the Duty). Over the last 6 months I have utilised my convening powers to bring specified authorities together across the force area to prepare for the implementation of the Duty, including leading on the funding application to the Home Office. I continue to work closely with Crest (appointed by the Home Office to provide the national support offer) to assess readiness of partners to implement the Duty and I am currently reviewing local governance arrangements to ensure I remain well placed to monitor specified authorities' exercise of functions under the Duty.

I will continue, as Commissioner, to use the findings from the national HMICFRS report to inform the ongoing activity of my office in overseeing and scrutinising how the police work with partners to prevent and reduce serious youth violence.

*Best Wishes*  


John Campion  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
**West Mercia**

cc West Mercia Police Chief Constable  
HMICFRS