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**Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner:**  
**Chief of Staff:**

**Ron Hogg**  
**Alan Reiss**

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17 May 2018

Dear Nick,

#### **HMICFRS 2017 Effectiveness inspection**

Thank you for your letter of 18 April, relating to the recent HMICFRS 2017 Effectiveness Inspection of Durham Constabulary. I am writing to update you on progress since the inspection. This letter also constitutes my reply to HMICFRS and I will be publishing it on my website in order to fulfil my responsibilities with regard to Section 55 of the Police Act 1996.

I am grateful for your warm words about Durham's performance, and of course I am delighted that the Force has received an 'outstanding' rating for effectiveness for the third year running. I think there are three key reasons for Durham's continued high performance:

- Durham Constabulary has a culture in which officers and staff are encouraged to take responsibility, come up with new ideas, and to see them through to delivery. The Chief Constable has real confidence in the ability and judgement of his people, and this shines through in their day-to-day activities;
- The force uses very sophisticated analytical processes and systems to understand the demands placed on it. It analyses where crimes and anti-social behaviour are taking place, what types of crime they are, and what this means for the future – and it deploys its resources to meet these needs, as accurately as possible;
- This means that the force is at the forefront of innovation in policing. Durham Constabulary uses the most modern software to enable Officers to be out there in the community, rather than sitting behind desks. Initiatives such as the CheckPoint diversion scheme are cutting the demand on policing by making in-roads into the level of re-offending.

#### **Addressing the area for improvement**

Whilst HMICFRS's recognition of the Constabulary's performance is very satisfying, I am conscious of the importance of maintaining and building on these standards, and I am holding the force to account to achieve this. There was one area for improvement in the inspection report, published in March:

- *The constabulary should improve its ability to analyse and understand its domestic abuse data, including arrest rates and the use of the outcome category 'evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action'. The constabulary should use this data to monitor and continually improve its response to domestic abuse and ensure that domestic abuse victims receive the best possible service.*

I have spoken to the Chief Constable about this, and I am satisfied that the force is taking adequate steps to address the matters raised. The initial identified actions to address the gaps as defined in the Constabulary's Force Management Statement, which will be undertaken over the longer term, include:

- monitoring the capacity of staff to deal with increased case load and identify heightened risk elements within referrals
- undertaking a lean thinking review of processes
- mapping the victim and offender journey and pathways of each
- monitoring and understanding key performance indicators such as arrest rates and outcomes, use of restorative approaches, checkpoint, outcomes 15 / 16 and charge
- understanding the CPS referral rate for DA cases and monitoring and managing via existing force structures such as Prosecution Team Performance Management (PTPM) and crime practitioners working group
- implementing the whole system approach to domestic abuse programme; identifying
- offences and vulnerable victims in harder to reach groups (for example the over 65's)
- working closely with partners such as sheltered housing organisations to review the internal DA policy – to establish how confident staff are to disclose information
- dip sampling of standard referrals
- reviewing the thresholds to enhance intervention – for example where there are multiple medium risk referrals with repeat victimisation consider referral into MARAC.

### **Sharing good practice**

With regard to sharing good practice, in the 12 months prior to the 2017 inspection the Force received visits from 41 other forces. 26 of these forces visited on multiple occasions. The topics covered in those meetings included:

- Control Room/THRIVE process
- Crime and intelligence systems
- Combatting Organised Crime Gangs
- Human Resources
- Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MORILE)
- Research & Analysis
- Victim satisfaction
- Problem solving
- Managing demand
- Estates

In the period since the inspection in June 2017, a further nine forces visited Durham and covered similar topics, and in addition covered safeguarding. Durham Constabulary also undertook peer review with the Metropolitan Police, looking at Safeguarding and analytical products.

In November 2017 Durham Constabulary also held an awareness event for all Chief Officers within the Fire & Rescue Service to share our knowledge to assist in the preparation of their future inspections.

Durham is also grateful for the opportunity to visit other forces to learn from good practice. In that regard, the force has benefited in the following ways:

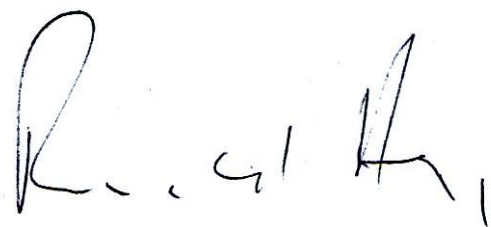
- visit to Thames Valley to review understanding and analysing demand
- visit to Merseyside to review tackling serious and organised crime
- peer review visit from Lancashire Police to look at Professional Standards and Legal Services

We have also hosted visits from a range of parliamentary representatives and other Police and Crime Commissioners.

I hope this letter provides you with a clear outline of the work that Durham has done to meet the area for improvement identified by HMICFRS, and also gives a sense that the Constabulary is keen to share good practice and learn from others.

I am copying this letter to Sir Tom Winsor, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

Yours sincerely,



**Ron Hogg**

Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner