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Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
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2nd May 2023

Dear Home Secretary

HMICFRS Report: An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence.

Under Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, as Police and Crime Commissioner I am pleased to provide my formal response to the report by HMICFRS entitled 'An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence.'

Both the Chief Constable and I welcome the publication of this report, which followed an inspection by HMICFRS into serious youth violence. The inspection, published on 8th March 2023, examined how well the police are working to address serious youth violence and reduce violent crime involving young people. A total of 12 police force areas were inspected – 10 with a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and two non-VRU areas for comparison.

The Chief Constable's response to the recommendations is shown at Appendix 1.

I welcome the Chief Constable's response to the four recommendations identified by HMICFRS that have been developed to improve how the police address serious youth violence.

In this inspection, HMICFRS examined how well the police work with VRUs and partner organisations to reduce serious youth violence. It also explored how well police powers are used, with there being reference to the need for policing to have an awareness and understanding of racial disproportionality. The inspection later considered how well the police work in collaboration with partners to implement a public health approach.

The early evidence suggesting that VRUs help to reduce violent crime was promising to see and provides a learning opportunity for non-VRU areas such as Cambridgeshire. Colleagues from the Essex VRU were invited to attend and present at a Cambridgeshire Partnership Workshop, convened by my office in early March as part of the Serious Violence Duty. The workshop, attended by more than 50 partners from across all the specified and relevant authorities, presented an input on Essex VRU's approach to serious violence and provided insights into lessons to be learned.

The HMICFRS inspection also placed emphasis on the need for a consistent approach to allocating resources to reduce serious violence, developing information sharing agreements, and establishing robust evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of interventions. I can provide reassurance that through my convening role as PCC, I am monitoring the progress of the Constabulary and partner organisations against the delivery of Serious Violence Duty through the Countywide High Harms Board.

As stated in my Police and Crime Plan, I am committed to working in partnership to understand and tackle the root cause of serious violence through early intervention and rehabilitating people who have offended. I, along with the Constabulary, recognise the importance of adopting a public health approach to serious youth violence and encourage all agencies to share information, work collaboratively and focus on preventing and reducing serious violence through early intervention, wherever possible.

An initial needs assessment, developed by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, presents a baseline assessment of serious violence across the county. While this assessment provides a good understanding of the local drivers of knife crime from a policing perspective, the intention is that a more comprehensive, multi-agency informed needs assessment, which incorporates additional partner data, will be developed.

I hope this response, and that of the Chief Constable, provides reassurance regarding the commitment of both myself and Cambridgeshire Constabulary to tackling serious youth violence in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Darryl Preston', with a stylized, cursive script.

Darryl Preston

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Enc - Appendix 1 – Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to HMICFRS report 'An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence'.

Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to the recommendations made within the HMICFRS report 'An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence.'

HMICFRS recommendations:

1. By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should define processes for violence reduction units to use when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce serious youth violence.

Force response: This recommendation is addressed to the Home Office.

2. By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should further develop existing joint evaluation and learning for violence reduction units to share learning with each other.

Force response: This recommendation is addressed to the Home Office.

3. By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.

Force response: Oversight of this work is in governance through the forces Crime Standards Delivery Group (CSDG) and comes under the Constabulary's Project Sherlock workstream to improve investigations. This will ensure direct messaging and guidance through the Standards and Assurance Detective Chief Inspectors and Detective Inspectors, oversight and tracking at Superintendent and Chief Superintendent level and understanding of requirements by Area and Protecting Vulnerable People officers. Most importantly, through the Sherlock model our Victims Code of Practice and training 'pillars' can ensure there is a clear, agreed approach to the delivery of bespoke inputs to all front-line officers and investigative units; this can be coordinated by Organisational Improvement Centre /Learning & Development and CSDG.

4. 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.

Force response: This will be monitored both through the Head of Crime and Vulnerability (HOC&V) strand of the Race and Inclusion Board and the Crime Data Integrity element of the CSDG meeting held monthly. Messaging to the frontline and to volume and specialist crime investigators has already commenced in order to improve our recording in this area. This will continue with discussions and messaging between HOC&V and the Head of Corporate Performance. Procedurally and systemically, we are already employing different software options (tuServ) to capture more demographic and personal data from victims and suspects through mandated input fields; this will continue and expand in the coming 12 months. Commissioned analysis has started to more formally understand racial disproportionality following another recent recommendation and we are now building on that requirement to look at serious youth violence. The outcomes will then enable the Constabulary to develop the findings into our delivery plans for our Corporate Plan 2023/24.

5. “By March 2022, all police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of victims is accurately and consistently recorded.”

Force response: As above, procedurally and systemically we are already employing different software options (tuServ) to capture more demographic and personal data from victims and suspects through mandated input fields; this will continue and expand in the coming 12 months. This is regularly assessed and tracked through our CSDG each month and through our Race and Inclusion Panel. This will be further enhanced as we redesign our Key Offender and Victim Dashboard and introduce our Child Exploitation Hub in April to ensure the closest possible scrutiny of vulnerable cohorts, their demographic characteristics and devise ways to target their protection and support accordingly.