

**RESPONSE TO HMIC REPORT –
HMIC PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) Inspection**

In response to the specific findings relating to South Yorkshire Police arising from the HMIC PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability), following their visit in March 2015.

South Yorkshire Police – Response from the Chief Constable, David Crompton

South Yorkshire Police welcomes Her Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary (HMIC) report 'Vulnerability Inspection - South Yorkshire Police Post Inspection review, which was generated following their visit in March 2015.

Whilst acknowledging the comment from HMIC, 'There is still important work for South Yorkshire Police to do to improve the recording of safeguarding, investigation and supervisory activity in relation to domestic abuse'. I note that the Inspectorate acknowledged signs of progress. This progress is recognised in the fact that the Chief Officer Team has made the protection of vulnerable people a clear priority for the force and police officers and staff understand and share this commitment. To translate this priority into practice, the force has invested in the parts of the organisation that support vulnerable people.

HMIC noted that the force has a 'very good understanding' of child sexual exploitation and that 'prospects are good' due to new ways of working and dedicated policing teams being established to tackle the issue in the county.

Each policing area has its own dedicated child sexual exploitation team made up of police and partners. This is enhanced in Rotherham, where a dedicated team, 'Evolve', was established to provide better partnership working.

HMIC said these measures mean SYP is leading in the national policing response to child sexual exploitation.

Some of the points made within the report include:

- The force effectively identifies vulnerable people and this is a clear force priority
- SYP works well with partners to investigate serious and complex crime and keep people safe
- More resources have been invested to keep vulnerable victims safe
- Specially-trained and experienced officers who deal with serious sexual offences and are more attuned to victims' needs
- There is a clear focus on missing and absent children
- There is a strong commitment within SYP to improve services to vulnerable people
- There is clear evidence victims and children are being safeguarded through information sharing

It was commented on that the force requires a more thorough and consistent process in order to improve its response to victims of domestic abuse. The implementation of new structures across Public Protection has ensured that this issue of consistency is already being addressed. Indeed one of the positive comments from HMIC stated, 'the force works well with Criminal Justice partners to support victims.' This work continues to develop with the introduction of Safeguarding Adult Teams which are now in place and fully functional across the districts.

The main area of feedback from the Inspectors highlighted that although the standard of investigation files was good, there was a need for the force to fully document plans, activity and rationale, to ensure the information is readily available to officers, improving the ability to identify linked offences. The introduction, in early 2016, of an improved version of the Crime Management System will ensure that officers are signposted to complete a mandatory Investigation Plan ensuring that recording practices improve.

Additionally, HMIC identified that in some areas, South Yorkshire Police needs to improve its understanding of the nature of domestic abuse and highlighted the need to properly protect and support the victim. Domestic incident guidance training is delivered to all Contact Resolution Officers and Dispatchers, highlighting the definition of domestic abuse and the key considerations and actions to be taken to identify domestic related incidents as quickly as possible, improving the initial response to incidents and minimising the risk to the victim.

My Senior Command Team and I acknowledge that we have further to go before we can confidently assure you and the public of South Yorkshire that we have addressed all of the issues raised by HMIC. We recognise that this will not be a quick journey but I can assure you that the good work that has already taken place will continue. In relation to the original inspection and action plan generated from that visit, we will continue to implement the changes necessary to improve our services to vulnerable people.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight one final comment by HMIC, which reported, 'To provide the most appropriate support to vulnerable victims, the force has improved its governance and invested more resource in the parts of its organisation which work to keep vulnerable victims safe. This has enabled South Yorkshire Police to take the very positive step of identifying strategic leadership, clear governance and new teams.'

South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Response

The inspectors have concentrated on two areas of vulnerability – children at risk of sexual exploitation, where the force is making good progress, and domestic abuse, where there is room for improvement.

In January I committed an additional £2.3m to create further posts within the Public Protection unit to tackle these issues, in part because, as the Report points out, the number of crimes with vulnerable victims is far higher in south Yorkshire than many other places. So I am pleased that the inspectors found that South Yorkshire Police have effective systems in place to identify vulnerable people.

As far as child exploitation is concerned, I am especially pleased that the Report recognises the difference these extra resources have made. The force is now well prepared to identify children at risk; they have good procedures for dealing with children who go missing; and they work well with

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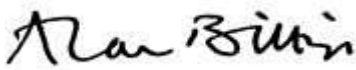
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partner agencies in each local authority area - Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield and Barnsley. As a result, the inspectors believe that due to 'strong leadership' the force is well prepared to respond to child sexual exploitation locally and is leading the police response to this nationally.

However, I am disappointed that the response to victims of domestic abuse is not as good as it might be. I have, therefore, spoken to the Chief Constable and his senior leadership group about how the force needs to be more aware of the nature and scale of domestic abuse and more sensitive in their approach to victims, especially in their initial contact.



Dr Alan Billings
Police and Crime Commissioner