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Office of the
**Police & Crime
Commissioner**
West Yorkshire

My Reference: OPCC/MBW/JAD

Your Reference:

3 October 2014

The Rt. Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DP

Dear Home Secretary

Response to HMIC Data Integrity Report

I am writing to you in response to the HMIC report on Data Integrity released on 29 August 2014.

How, when and why crimes are recorded can deeply affect public confidence – as graphically illustrated by the report of the Public Administration Committee last year (Report of the Public Administration Select Committee 13th session 2013/14 HC 760, The Stationery Office, London). While technical distinctions between different legal definitions of certain crimes and the contextual issues are important for accuracy, it is important that crime is recorded in a way that is intelligible and ethical. It is also important for victims that reports of crime are recognised as such and appropriate action is taken. Data on recorded crime is often used to assess the impact of action and initiatives undertaken not just by the police but by wider community safety and criminal justice partners. I use them to hold the Chief Constable to account. I regard the issue to be of such importance that, in 2014, I added data integrity as a priority within my refreshed Police and Crime Plan.

While the HMIC report recognises some of the continuing work of West Yorkshire Police to improve crime recording practices, some of the findings in the report are clearly a cause for concern. In order to provide assurance to our communities I need to be assured that crimes are being recorded and categorised correctly and that any changes in reported crime statistics are truly a reflection of activity and is not the product of recording practices.

While I have been updated on work to address and standardise crime recording practices within West Yorkshire Police both before and after the inspection, I met with the Deputy Chief Constable at the beginning of September to get an early view on the immediate and longer term action that West Yorkshire Police will take to address the recommendations contained in the report. Since then I, along with experts from the police, have addressed the

Police and Crime Panel to try to provide reassurance to the public that this is being taken seriously and that work has been and will continue to be carried out to address those areas identified by HMIC as in need for improvement.

Yours sincerely



Mark Burns-Williamson
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire

Copy to:

Mike Cunningham, HMIC