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

My Reference: OPCC/MBW/JAD

Your Reference:

30 March 2016

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

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC Response – West Yorkshire Police PEEL Inspection

I am writing to you in response to the HMIC PEEL assessment for West Yorkshire, which reported in February 2016. This response also covers the Annual State of Policing and Leadership reports issued during the same period and which tied into the overall PEEL assessments.

Firstly, I would like to welcome the way that the assessment provided a balanced view of policing in West Yorkshire, pulling out positives as well as other findings, and using a narrative which reflected this. The challenge that the police and partners face here in helping to make communities safer and feel safer cannot be underestimated and hopefully the assessment provides this picture to those who view the results.

I am pleased that West Yorkshire Police was graded GOOD in each of the PEEL elements and feel that this will help to reassure our communities and go some way to making them feel safer. HMIC noted two areas which required improvement in relation to protecting the vulnerable and investigating crime, and one area that was graded outstanding around sustainability and affordability of the workforce model. After reading each inspection report I feel that these are fair judgements but would like to assure HMIC that my office has been working closely with West Yorkshire Police to ensure that issues are addressed and a great deal of progress has already been made around protecting vulnerable people from harm and improving investigative processes. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the wider work that has taken place in West Yorkshire Police for you below:

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- Protecting vulnerable victims and supporting witnesses – I was pleased that HMIC recognised that West Yorkshire Police has committed significant effort to the area of protecting vulnerable victims and supporting witnesses. This is a key area within my Police and Crime Plan and is a topic that is regularly at the forefront of conversations between myself and the Chief Constable. My office has worked closely with the Force and NHS England to procure both an adult sexual assault referral centre (SARC) and a child sexual abuse and advisory service to provide a forensic medical facility and also to ensure that victim support services can be accessed to meet the needs of victims. My ISVA service (Independent Sexual Advisor Service) is linked to the SARC which provides victims and witnesses with the practical and emotional support they require on their journey through the criminal justice system.
- Identifying the needs of young victims of crime is the key focus of a study designed with the force and my office. The research agency Ecorys is currently undertaking an in depth study with a focus on young victims of sexual offences, domestic abuse and hate crime. A survey will pick up the views of other crimes. Findings will be available in May when we will then look to how we can respond better to meet the needs identified.
- Managing demand - Further work has been undertaken by West Yorkshire Police to ensure that the operating model remains fit for purpose for the future and the growing operational challenges including Cyber Crime, Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking. The dedicated teams that were set up through the use of short term reserves have been built into the base budget for 2016/17 and beyond to ensure that these key challenges are appropriately resourced and aligned.
- Data integrity – Throughout the last year I have worked closely with the T/Chief Constable to ensure that our crime recording practices within West Yorkshire are compliant with national standards so that the public can have confidence in our crime figures. West Yorkshire Police carry out mirror audits of the key crime types for example Serious Sexual Offences and Domestic Burglary are now consistently showing an EXCELLENT compliance rate of 95% or above. The increases in recorded crime that we have seen as a result of these improvements are now beginning to stabilise, however we are not being complacent and have been liaising closely with HMIC to identify best practice and use learning to ensure consistent recording across all other crime types.
- Cyber crime – I am pleased that HMIC noted some of the good progress around cyber-crime in West Yorkshire and would just like to provide a brief update on this work; I have made available an additional £3.5M to the police for increased capacity to deal with CSE, human trafficking and cyber-crime, and have also funded the creation of a dedicated West Yorkshire Police Cyber Crime Unit which launched in October 2015. The specialised Unit acts as a cyber point of contact and assists in and progresses complex cyber investigations, and also help officers investigate more traditional crime types using the latest techniques and technology. West Yorkshire Police and I also regularly promote ways to stay safe online through our websites, social media channels, web chats, posters and other promotional items.

I would also like to encourage HMIC to take account of feedback from the recent Inspection Programme Consultation. Whilst I am supportive of the style of the PEEL assessments, I do feel that more consideration needs to be given to the wider elements of policing beyond crime reduction and financial efficiency. The focus in relation to the efficiency element of PEEL is to *“inspect on how efficient the force is keeping people safe and reducing crime”*; it would be useful to understand how HMIC define keeping people safe. In my police and crime plan I included a commitment to better understand what makes people feel safe, in order to do this my office have consulted with the public and partners and have carried out a large survey returned by nearly 3,000 people across the county. HMIC have noted this work and have described such surveys as “instruments of very great importance” however it is unclear as to whether such indicators ie public feelings of safety, will be incorporated into future PEEL assessments.

In West Yorkshire it is recognised that the police alone cannot tackle crime and disorder and ensure people feel safer in isolation. I have established a strong partnership structure to ensure that police, community safety and criminal justice partners come together on a regular to identify where working together can achieve the outcomes in my Police and Crime Plan (refreshed 2014). The Force play an active, but not solo role within this structure and taking forward joint initiatives. Examples include responding to Child Sexual Exploitation/Abuse involving the County’s Directors of Children Services and pilots in two districts where mental health nurses and located in call centres providing valuable triage for those who suffer from mental health problems. I would like to request that future inspections give more consideration to the work with partners going forward.

I hope you have found this feedback useful.

Yours sincerely



Mark Burns-Williamson
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire

Copied to:

T/Chief Constable Dee Collins
West Yorkshire Police