

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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09 May 2016

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC Inspection: 'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse'

In line with my statutory responsibilities I am writing in formal response to the HMIC 'Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse' from December 2015. I am now in a position to provide a considered response to this report now that Dorset Police have had time to fully consider the report recommendations and implement any required changes.

The implementation of any action required as a result of the report recommendations is overseen by the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Board locally.

Domestic abuse action plan

Domestic abuse is one of the thirteen strands of public protection which is overseen by the strategic Protecting Vulnerable People Board internally. Information relating to domestic abuse is published on the Dorset Police website.

In terms of understanding and identifying risk, Dorset Police ensure there is an immediate 'triage completed' in respect of victim vulnerability and the Force utilises the THRIVE risk assessment process when determining the response and provision of a high quality service when handling initial calls into the Force Command Centre (FCC). Attending officers then assess the incident using the SCARF risk assessment process. This has formed part of all face-to-face domestic abuse training for frontline and Command Centre staff. SCARF risk assessments are audited to ensure vulnerability issues are identified and to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are undertaken in partnership, in addition to identifying any lessons to be learned.

Regarding prioritisation, the Force allocates investigations on the basis of crime type and risk with investigations managed within Territorial Policing, the volume crime team, and CID. Oversight of risks are conducted by domestic abuse specialists, with special arrangements in place for high risk cases (Operation MAPLE).

The Office of the Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner

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The separate HMIC vulnerability inspection as part of the annual PEEL process identified Dorset Police as one of 12 forces graded 'good' in this area.

Review of progress

As mentioned earlier, the Protecting Vulnerable People Board provides strategic oversight of this work and the ongoing review and implementation of the domestic abuse action plan. A performance framework for the 13 strands of public protection is also under development to enhance the understanding of demand and risk areas. A policy and procedure is also in place for the management of domestic abuse affecting officers and staff directly.

Dorset Police regularly promotes issues relating to domestic abuse issues, both internally and through joint working with partners, particularly through local pan-Dorset domestic abuse and sexual violence communication groups. This is in addition to dedicated face-to-face training for frontline officers and staff on domestic abuse.

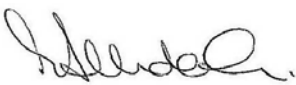
In terms of ongoing staff development, the Force leadership and development strategies require officers to evidence their work against Force priorities, which includes the protection of vulnerable people.

Innovation and evaluation

Dorset Police works closely with partners and has recently brought the provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) under direct control of the specialist MAPLE project. Prior to this it had only happened in one force area and required considerable consultation with partners to implement effectively. An independent evaluation programme has been put out to tender to ensure that the MAPLE project achieves national accreditation for the delivery of the IDVA service.

I can confirm that I have consulted with the Chief Constable in formulating this response and trust that this provides you with the necessary reassurance around action being taken locally by Dorset Police in response to the relevant HMIC report recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner