

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP  
Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

28 June 2019

Dear Home Secretary

**Response to the National Thematic HMICFRS report ‘Fraud: time to choose – an inspection of the police response to Fraud’**

In line with my statutory responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner, and following consultation with the Chief Constable, I am pleased to provide the following response to the HMICFRS and the Secretary of State for the Home Office in respect of the national thematic report ‘Fraud: time to choose – an inspection of the police response to Fraud’, published on 2 April 2019.

I welcome the findings and recommendations of the HMICFRS report and I am keen to ensure ongoing improvements in this area. Dorset Police takes fraud extremely seriously and takes whatever measures it can to combat fraud related crimes. As you will read below, the Force has put in place an action plan to address the issues and, in particular, those recommendations that are relevant to the Force. I will be holding the Force to account against this plan.

As you are aware, Dorset Police was one of the forces reviewed by the HMICFRS as part of the thematic review into fraud. Since the review, the Force has developed a bespoke Fraud Triage Team who are responsible for assessing victim vulnerability and investigative opportunities at the earliest point in the detection process.

The Force has continued to support a proactive prevention campaign and has worked with the banking industry to save hundreds of thousands of pounds from potential victims, through the banking protocol. I am also pleased to note that 56% of the crime referrals passed to the Force by Action Fraud have resulted in a judicial outcome, compared to 17% nationally.

A key part of my Police and Crime Plan is to protect people at risk of harm. It is disappointing to note that the level of service victims of fraud receive is not sufficient. I share the concerns about the service provided by Action Fraud, especially the matter of call abandonment rates. This is especially the case as technology moves on apace, which provides an ever greater potential for exploitation by those with a malicious intent.

The two recommendations that are relevant to forces are noted as:

- Recommendation 2 – Ensuring processes are in place to accurately and efficiently report fraud outcomes to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB);
- Recommendation 9 – Publishing the Force’s policy for responding to and investigating allegations of fraud.

Additionally the areas for improvement are noted as:

- Improving the way the Constabulary uses the NFIB monthly victim lists to identify and support vulnerable victims and others who require additional support;
- Ensure the Constabulary improves the identification and mapping of organised crime groups in which the principal criminality is fraud;
- Ensure that fraudsters are included among those considered for serious organised crime 'prevent' tactics, including by local strategic partnership boards and through integrated offender management processes;
- Increase their forces' use of ancillary orders against fraudsters; and
- Ensure that their force complies with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime when investigating fraud.

Dorset Police Chief Constable, James Vaughan QPM, has provided his views as follows:

"I welcome the HMICFRS Fraud report and agree with the Inspectorate's support for the creation of a national strategy in relation to the development of fraud intelligence and other measures to combat fraud.

"I look forward to guidance to be issued by the National Police Chiefs' Council in relation to fraud related calls for service, including those where cases may be referred to Action Fraud. I also look forward to publishing our Force's policy for responding to and investigating allegations of fraud by the end of September 2019.

"Under my direction, the Force has drawn up an action plan to address those recommendations and areas for improvement."

I would add to the Chief Constable's comments above by iterating my view that a much more coordinated national approach is needed to combat fraud, with clear roles and responsibilities, clear operating procedures and a commitment to provide resources for the long term.

I trust this response provides reassurance around the work being undertaken in Dorset in response to the HMICFRS findings. I will continue to take a keen interest and scrutinise this area of business closely and this response will be published on the OPCC website.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill  
Police and Crime Commissioner