

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP  
Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

20 August 2025

Dear Home Secretary

**Response to [Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service: final report - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)**

In line with my statutory responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner and further to above report by HMICFRS which was published on 10 July 2025, I am pleased to provide the following response to the HMICFRS and the Secretary of State for the Home Office.

I have liaised closely with the Chief Constable in submitting this response.

We welcome the report from the joint inspection by HMCPSP and HMICFRS of the building of prosecution cases by the police and CPS which, following the interim findings from phase 1 of the inspection in January 2024, highlights the need for a strategy for the whole criminal justice system, and improvements to increase public trust and provide a better service for victims.

Please see the responses below provided by Dorset Police in response to the report's recommendations for forces:

**Recommendation 5 (pages 11 and 59 of the report) - By July 2026, police forces should have in place as part of their gatekeeping or comparable arrangements:**

- an effective governance and decision-making capability to ensure investigations are timely and completed to the appropriate standards.

Dorset Police's decision makers are Sergeants. Up to April 2025, they were trained on the Acting Sgt course, which includes Evidential Review Officer (ERO) training which contains specific learning outcomes with Case File/National File Standard (NFS) and Director's Guidance on Charging, sixth edition (DG6). This is normally completed prior to acting duties, or at the latest within 12 months of promotion via the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) (the four-step process designed to guide officers through the promotion process to the ranks of sergeant or inspector). Some officers also return on just an ERO refresher course as required to upskill them from other roles. The ERO course remains available as a standalone course for any gaps in the

Sergeant cohort. From May 2025, all new Sgts will attend the PIP1 Supervisor Development Programme (Dorset is a pilot Force for this purpose) which replaces the Force's Acting Sgt course – and contains specific learning outcomes around Case File/National File Standard and DG6.

In addition, Dorset Police's Investigative Standards Delivery Board (ISDB) which is chaired by the Head of Crime, provides effective governance and oversight to ensure investigations are timely.

The Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) in Dorset reviews all pre-charge case files prior to submission to CPS to ensure the appropriate standards (DG6/NFS) are complied with. DG6 compliance meetings are held with CPS on a monthly basis and any learning or good practice is fed back into the relevant organisations. *(For clarity, the NFS sets out the national standard for how case files should be prepared throughout an investigation. DG6 provides detailed instructions for both police and prosecutors on how to prepare and submit case files for charging decisions.)*

Overall DG6 compliance and any learning from the related meetings is fed back into the Joint Operational Improvement Meeting (JOIM) between Dorset Police and the CPS and then into the Strategic JOIM (SJOIM), which is also held between Dorset Police and the CPS but at a strategic level. DG6 compliance remains a SJOIM priority.

DG6 compliance forms part of the performance packs for all Local Policing Areas (LPAs) and Commands across the Dorset Police and this is monitored during the relating performance meetings. Dorset Police's ISDB and its Strategic Force Performance Board, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) also closely monitor both DG6 compliance at the point of entry into CJU and upon submission to CPS.

#### **Recommendation 5 (continued):**

- agreed contact arrangements in place in forces and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Areas to facilitate clear, consistent, and transparent communication between police and CPS.

Dorset Police have a well embedded, effective, and positive relationship with CPS Wessex; this is supported by a number of processes that are already in place and are continuously improved on a collaborative basis. Regular meetings take place in Dorset Police between the Chief Constable and Chief Crown Prosecutor and the Assistant Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor. Operational JOIMs for crime, Domestic Abuse (DA) and RASSO are established and meet regularly with SJOIM, providing direction and oversight.

Regular scrutiny panels relating to DG6, DA, RASSO and Disclosure are well attended, and issues or good practice identified are managed and shared. Two-way tiered escalation processes are in place and understood by both the Force and CPS to ensure that cases requiring additional oversight are managed at the correct level and support is provided for both the OIC and prosecutor. OIC contact details are included as standard in form CM01 (formerly form MG3), which is Dorset Police's report by the investigator to the prosecutor setting out the strengths and weaknesses of the case (report to the Prosecutor to request a Charging decision). Dorset Police and CPS also have had an established forum which has met for a number of years via Microsoft Teams, enabling dynamic conversations and meetings between both organisations.

In July 2025 work commenced to set up Real Time Case Conference (RTCC) processes. This will allow direct communication with the prosecutor rather than remote submission of documentation to the CPS. This builds on the Action plan pilot in place in Dorset since October 2024 which enabled reviewing lawyers to contact CJU directly via Microsoft Teams to try to overcome basic issues that CJU staff could resolve, for example missing documents or provision of further contact details for

OICs. The RTCC will formalise this process further by encouraging planned discussions between OICs and prosecutors reducing the need for action plans, improving timeliness, and promoting constructive engagement. By July 2026 it is anticipated that RTCC will be well established and part of Business as Usual.

**Recommendation 5 (continued):**

- sufficient, trained, and competent decision-makers.

As noted above, the Force's Sergeants up to April 2025 were trained on the Acting Sgt course (containing ERO) which contains specific learning outcomes with Case File/National File Standard and DG6. This is normally completed prior to acting duties, or at the latest within 12 months of NPPF promotion. Some officers also return on just an ERO refresher course as required to upskill them from other roles. The ERO course remains available as a standalone course for any gaps in the Sgt cohort. From May 2025 onwards, all new Sgts will attend the PIP1 Supervisor Development Programme (we are a pilot Force) which replaces our Acting Sgt course – and contains specific learning outcomes around Case File/National File Standard and DG6.

**Recommendation 5 (continued):**

- effective and efficient systems and processes to manage case file submission queues, to avoid unnecessary delays and risks to cases subject to statutory time limits.

Case file submissions are monitored closely, and form part of a daily performance report received by the senior managers within CJU. The CJU Inspector meets daily with the Case Progression Manager (CPM) team to ensure case files subject to bail, Statutory Time Limits or Custody Time Limits are prioritised accordingly.

The process for the general prioritisation of cases has been discussed and ratified at Investigative Standards Delivery Board (ISDB) which has oversight from the Head of Crime. Case file submissions also form part of the capabilities quarterly input for ISDB.

Statutory Time Limits (STLs) and Custody Time Limits (CTLs) are included in the SJOIM priorities and submissions of case files subject to STLs and CTLs are a standing performance agenda item at Operational JOIM. In addition, Corporate Development produce a fortnightly report which lists all occurrences which include offences where an STL applies which is shared with performance inspectors within the LPAs and CJU in order for them to monitor and support as required.

**Recommendation 7 (pages 11 and 62 of the report) - Within 12 months of the completion of recommendation 6, police forces should ensure that every supervisor responsible for assessing case files prior to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision is trained in case file building and Director's Guidance on Charging (6th edition) (DG6) quality assurance.**

Dorset Police already has in place the mechanism to achieve recommendation 7.

As noted under recommendation 5 above, the Force's Sgts up to April 2025 were trained on the Acting Sgt course (containing ERO) which contains specific learning outcomes with Case File/National File Standard and DG6. This is normally completed prior to acting duties, or certainly within 12 months of NPPF promotion. Some officers also return on just an ERO refresher course as required to upskill them from other roles. The ERO course remains available as a standalone course for any gaps in the Sgt cohort.

From May 2025 onwards, all new Force Sgts will attend the PIP1 (Professional Investigators Portfolio (PIP1)) for volume crime investigators i.e. patrol officers who deal with crimes such as

theft, low level assault, certain burglaries Supervisor Development Programme (we are a pilot Force) which replaces our Acting Sgt course – and contains specific learning outcomes around Case File/National File Standard and DG6.

In addition, monitoring of file timeliness and quality is undertaken by the Dorset Criminal Justice Board (DCJB) which is chaired by me as Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Recommendation 9 (pages 11 and 66 of the report) - By July 2026, the police and Crown Prosecution Service at Joint Operational Improvement Meetings should develop a joint local training plan to increase awareness and understanding of each other's roles, including the operation of IT systems.**

At Dorset Operational JOIM July meeting, an action was set to arrange an awayday for CPS and Police colleagues to attend in the autumn where the recommendations within this report could be discussed and further developed. The joint local training plan to increase awareness and understanding of each other's role will be planned and initially drafted at this event.

I trust this provides reassurance in response to the recommendations made within the HMICFRS report.

For completeness I have copied this letter to both Mr Evans and CI Tamblyn.

This response is published on the OPCC website [HMIC Inspection Reports · Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Sidwick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Sidwick  
Police and Crime Commissioner

cc: CI Danny Tamblyn, Dorset Police  
Mark Evans, Force Liaison Lead, HMICFRS