

RESPONSES BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF MERSEYSIDE POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection:

‘Everyone’s Business: Improving the Police Response to Domestic Abuse’ and ‘Merseyside Police’s Approach to Tackling Domestic Abuse’.

Date Inspection Published

27th March 2014

Type of Inspection:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Merseyside specific | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up | <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner Inspection | |

Is Merseyside Police quoted?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
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Recommendations?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local |
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FORCE RESPONSE

HMIC conclude that the public on Merseyside ‘can have confidence that generally, the Force provides a good service to victims of domestic abuse and help to keep them safe.’ This confirms the Force’s on-going commitment to tackling domestic abuse, a commitment which is recognised by HMIC who found that ‘tackling domestic abuse is a clear priority for both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Force.’

This commitment is shared by our staff. HMIC found that all staff demonstrate a ‘high level of commitment and awareness’ of domestic abuse and ‘displayed a commitment to reducing the threat, harm and risk’ associated with it. This is supported by HMIC who refer to ‘a strong focus on high quality investigations which has resulted in a significant increase in successful prosecutions.’

Whilst there are positive findings within the report, it is accepted that there are areas in which the Force's approach to tackling domestic abuse needs to improve. In particular, HMIC highlight concerns regarding the timeliness of the risk assessment process and the knock on effect this may have on safety planning. This is one of 8 recommendations made by HMIC that specifically relate to Merseyside.

In accordance with findings in the national report, which are applicable to all forces, a Force level action plan will be developed to address recommendations in both the national and Force reports. Governance arrangements to ensure actions are progressed will be exercised by a chief officer.

PCC RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

I welcome these reports from HMIC which rightfully praise the actions of Merseyside Police's officers and staff and highlight the investment the Force has made to continually improve the service they offer.

The report has added to the reassurance I already receive via my public performance and scrutiny meetings. At these meetings both myself and the Chief Officers assess data and information on repeat victims and domestic abuse case outcomes.

While I am pleased by the positive findings, I am working closely with the Chief Constable and our partner agencies to continually improve the support and service we provide to victims.

As recognised within these reports, tackling domestic abuse requires a partnership approach. We all need to work together to support vulnerable people. As Chair of the local criminal justice board, I gain an insight into the work of the police and partner agencies. At these meetings representatives from the police, probation, prisons, local authorities and courts discuss blockages to the criminal justice system around a range of topics including domestic abuse. Furthermore, the Board has also

established a domestic abuse strategy, to promote consistency in approaches to tackling abuse and supporting victims. This strategy was launched at a Merseyside domestic violence conference which I hosted in November 2013.

I am confident Merseyside Police are taking the force-specific recommendations made by HMIC on board and are already working to make further improvements. I will continue to make use of both the performance and scrutiny group and local criminal justice board to ensure the Force addresses these areas appropriately. I will also monitor the progress made by the Force in relation to these recommendations through my regular one-to-one meetings with the Chief Constable.

Tackling this issue is a priority for me. I want to make sure that all vulnerable people have the confidence to come forward and report abuse, secure in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously. I want every victim to know they will be listened to, believed and understood and that Merseyside Police will do everything possible to keep them safe.

Jane Kennedy, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

DATE RESPONSE SENT: 13/05/2014

(Responses to be sent to sofs.section55responses@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk & PCC@hmic.gsi.gov.uk)