

## RESPONSES BY THE PCC TO HMIC INSPECTIONS OF MERSEYSIDE POLICE

### INSPECTION DETAILS

**Title of Inspection: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – Merseyside Police**

**Date Inspection Published: 15 December 2015**

**Deadline for Response: 29 January 2016**

**Type of Inspection:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Merseyside specific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow up	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Local
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#### **FORCE RESPONSE:**

This inspection sought to establish how effective the Force is at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and in providing support to victims. In particular, the inspection focused on our response to missing and absent children, victims of domestic abuse, and how prepared we are to tackle child sexual exploitation. It is pleasing to note that overall, HMIC judged the Force as 'good' in all aspects of this inspection – one of only 12 forces to receive this grade. Amongst other things, HMIC recognised the Force: has effective processes in place to assess risk and identify repeat and vulnerable victims at the first point of contact; consistently applies the Code of Practice for Victims in the majority of cases; has a good understanding of missing children and responds well to reports in the majority of cases; and that the quality of investigations is generally good. Although HMIC do not identify any causes of concern or areas for improvement, the Force is not complacent and will continue to improve the service we provide to vulnerable people. We acknowledge HMIC's comments regarding our continued efforts towards developing a more comprehensive understanding and response towards child sexual exploitation and will build on the 'good progress' made so far.

**PCC RESPONSE TO THE REPORT:**

Protecting society's most vulnerable people from harm is very important to both the Chief Constable and myself. Given its importance I was pleased to see HMIC's inspectors have graded Merseyside Police as 'good' following their inspection.

HMIC's report has examined a number of areas relating to Merseyside Police's effectiveness in identifying and responding to missing and absent children and victims of domestic abuse (looked at separately in HMIC's 'Increasingly Everybody's Business' report), as well as the effectiveness of the Force's response to tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Effective policies and procedures to assess and identifying risk are crucial to protecting vulnerable people and ensuring they receive appropriate support and levels of service.

It was reassuring to read that Merseyside Police have established processes for identifying vulnerable people at the first point of contact. Although HMIC raise the issue of accurately recording this information, Merseyside Police has responded positively to this by introducing a new process specifically designed to capture such details relating to vulnerable people.

In terms of understanding risks facing victims, HMIC have commented that Merseyside Police 'continues to develop its understanding of...vulnerable and repeat victims'. It is through such analysis Merseyside Police's officers and staff can effectively develop their approach to responding to important issues such as CSE and domestic abuse.

Within the report, Merseyside Police were also commended for ensuring resources are dedicating to vulnerable people, most notably the report focuses on the work of the Vulnerable Persons Units (VPU) that work alongside Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) to deal with CSE, domestic abuse and missing persons. The concerns raised by HMIC's inspectors regarding the consistently high caseloads of the VPUs is something I will seek reassurance on

from the Chief Constable to ensure the level of demand is being met and not at a cost to quality in service.

Merseyside Police approach to prioritise their responses to vulnerable victims within the hour has also been praised by HMIC's inspectors. On Merseyside, at the first point of contact with the police, vulnerable victims are subject to an initial risk assessment to identify appropriate external support from partner agencies. However, where victims are not referred to a MASH HMIC found staff had little knowledge of assessing needs – this is possibly a result of this being a new policy and something I will address at my next Performance Scrutiny meeting with the Deputy Chief Constable.

Although HMIC recognise how Merseyside Police has made 'significant investment' in raising awareness of so-called honour based violence and female genital mutilation. However, given the serious nature of these crimes and the vulnerability of victims, I will seek reassurances on comments made in HMIC's report relating to some staff not having appropriate time to complete training to assist in recognising vulnerable victims.

HMIC identified how Merseyside Police are making good progress in their activity around CSE. In particular, HMIC commented on how locally the police and partners consider multi-agency child sexual exploitation meetings as valuable. I have witnessed first-hand the committed partnership approach to raising awareness of CSE at the Merseyside Community Safety Partnership, which I chair. At this meeting considerable efforts have been made to raise understanding amongst partners of how to identify vulnerable victims of CSE by sharing training and learning with each other.

It was also pleasing to read that HMIC had recognised the level of investment my office has put into protecting vulnerable people with the funding of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and creation of a victims' services web portal highlighted within the report.

Protecting society's most vulnerable will continue to be a focus of both my office and Merseyside Police's as the Force look to build upon the 'good progress' made so far.



Jane Kennedy, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

DATE RESPONSE SENT: 25/01/2016

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

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