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Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

20th August 2019

Dear 

The police Response to HMICFRS national thematic report – “The poor relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people”

Under Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, as Police and Crime Commissioner I am pleased to provide my formal response to HMIC’s inspection to the national thematic report entitled “The poor relation: The police and CPS response to crimes against older people”

I note that the majority of HMICFRS recommendations are for national bodies, such as the NPCC, CPS and College of Policing, and that Cambridge constabulary are awaiting their recommendations. However, I am pleased to note that HMICFRS have recognised the constabulary’s Victim and Witness Hub as demonstrating good practice. With regards to those specific recommendation for the constabulary I have discussed these with the Chief Constable who has assured me of the work the Constabulary have been doing with regards to vulnerability training and guidance to officers and staff to ensure that the safeguarding needs of victims are appropriately identified and referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Further reassurance will be sort, via my Board meeting, in due course.

The Constabulary’s response to HMICFRS recommendations are attached in Appendix 1

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason', with a large, sweeping loop at the beginning and end.

Jason Ablewhite
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner
cc PCC@hmic.gsi.gov.uk

1. Force response to HMICFRS recommendations:

- Recommendation: Within six months, the NPCC lead for adults at risk and the CPS should agree a joint and simple definition of what constitutes an older victim, and take a co-ordinated approach to understand and respond to the problem.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the NPCC and CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within six months, the NPCC lead for case file quality should work with the College of Policing to produce guidance for officers, which should be given to chief constables.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the NPCC and College of Policing. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within six months, the NPCC leads for adults at risk, age-related matters and the vulnerable people portfolio should develop a strategy for how the police service should respond to the problems faced by older people, and agree who should be responsible for it.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within six months, the NPCC lead for crime investigation should work with other interested parties to review current allocation processes, and recommend systems that more easily help forces to allocate an appropriate investigative response.

Response: The recommendation is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within three months, the NPCC lead for adults at risk should remind chief constables that it is important that officers consider whether a registered intermediary can help victims to give better evidence.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within six months, the NPCC lead for victims and witnesses should establish good ways for police forces to conduct a victim needs assessment. This should include whether the assessment should be completed when officers first meet victims and witnesses, and whether there are benefits in providing the assessment to the CPS and other appropriate organisations.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: As a matter of urgency, the College of Policing should develop guidance and training for officers involved in adult safeguarding arrangements.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the College of Policing. The Constabulary will await further information.
- Recommendation: Within six months, chief constables should make sure that victim needs assessments are always completed.

Response: The Constabulary is committed to ensuring that all victims of crime receive their entitlements under the Victim's Code of Practice. Following recent training inputs and guidance issued to officers and staff, referrals to the Victim and Witness Hub (that provides support to victims and witnesses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) will continue to be monitored to ensure that victim needs assessments are appropriately completed.

- **Recommendation:** Within three months, chief constables should conduct analysis of the current and future demand for adult safeguarding, including the gap in knowledge that may exist from those cases where referrals aren't made because of errors or omissions. This analysis should be incorporated into force management statements (FMSs).

Response: The Cambridgeshire Constabulary Force Management Statement (FMS) May 2019 contains an assessment of the current and future demand placed on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), including adult safeguarding. The force is commencing a further evaluation of demand across all areas of the Protecting Vulnerable People Department to improve its understanding of current and predicted demand. It is anticipated that this will inform and be incorporated into future versions of the FMS.

- **Recommendation:** Within six months, chief constables should work with police and crime commissioners and their mayoral equivalents, and other relevant organisations, to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way.

Response: The Constabulary's Victim and Witness Hub was highlighted by HMICFRS in this report as demonstrating good practice and believe that this system of support is better for victims. The Victim and Witness Hub is a combined service which provides end to end support to victims and witnesses across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The force remains committed to continuously improving the service provided to all victims and witnesses.

- **Recommendation:** Within three months, chief constables should ensure that adult safeguarding referrals are always made when appropriate, with effective processes in place to make sure this happens. The NPCC lead for adults at risk should advise chief constables as to how this is best achieved.

Response: The Constabulary recognises the importance of safeguarding referral forms. Officers and staff have received vulnerability training and guidance to ensure that the safeguarding needs of victims are appropriately identified and referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Information sharing thresholds are agreed with the local safeguarding partnership and performance monitored through the MASH governance boards, all learning is reported and fed back to continue to improve joint services.

- **Recommendation:** Within six months, the CPS should review its guidance about special measures. The CPS should also work with the College of Policing and the NPCC, so that special measures meetings are offered to victims and witnesses when appropriate.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the CPS, College of Policing and NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.

- Recommendation: Within three months, the CPS should remind prosecutors to record that a restraining order has been considered in all appropriate cases.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

2. Force response to HMICFRS areas for improvement:

- Area for improvement: Within six months, the NPCC lead for adults at risk should conduct a national survey to improve the understanding of any barriers, or enablers, to effective adult safeguarding that exist. Analysis of what works best should be used to help forces to respond effectively to adult safeguarding.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.

- Area for improvement: Within three months, the NPCC lead for case file quality should remind chief constables: to make sure a victim personal statement is included in the initial submission to the CPS; or to record the reason for the absence of a victim personal statement on the pre-charge advice form.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.

- Area for improvement: Within three months, the NPCC lead for adults at risk should produce a guide template for forces for safeguarding referral forms that can be adapted for local circumstances, so it is easier for officers to include all necessary information.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the NPCC. The Constabulary will await further information.

- Area for improvement: Within six months, chief constables should find good ways to assess the current demands on the police made by older people. These assessments should include a prediction of future changes in demand, account for the work of other organisations, and be incorporated into FMSs.

Response: The Constabulary is commencing an evaluation of demand across all areas of the Protecting Vulnerable People Department, including adult safeguarding, to improve its understanding of current and predicted demand. To inform this, the force will await further information from the NPCC lead for adults at risk and the CPS on the definition of what constitutes an older victim.

- Area for improvement: Within six months, CPS Areas should put in place effective monitoring arrangements so that cases involving older people are accurately identified and prosecuted in accordance with updated policy and guidance.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

- Area for improvement: Within six months, the CPS should assure itself that prosecutors consistently provide clear instructions on the prosecutions file as to a victim's entitlements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The instructions should be recorded on the charging advice form in CPS-charged cases, and at the initial review in police-charged cases.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

- **Area for improvement:** Within six months, the CPS should assure itself that prosecutors consistently record special measures entitlements on the relevant pre-charge advice form. Prosecutors should also be reminded to record on the file review that special measures meetings have been considered when appropriate.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

- **Area for improvement:** Within six months, the CPS should assure itself that prosecutors consistently include all relevant information about the victim as an older person in the instructions to court prosecutors.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

- **Area for improvement:** Within three months, the CPS should consider whether crimes against older people should routinely be incorporated into local scrutiny panels.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.

- **Area for improvement:** Within three months, the CPS should clarify that the lead for hate crime includes responsibility for crimes against older people.

Response: This area for improvement is addressed to the CPS. The Constabulary will await further information.