



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

To: Police and Crime Commissioner

From: Chief Constable

Date: 26 March 2020

The Constabulary response to the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection “Evidence led domestic abuse prosecutions” report

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the Constabulary’s response to the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection “Evidence led domestic abuse prosecutions report” published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on 23rd January 2020, to enable the Police and Crime Commissioner to discharge his duties under Section 55 of the Police Act 1996.

2. Background

2.1. Within 56 days of publication of a report by HMICFRS, the “local policing body” (the Police and Crime Commissioner) must provide a response to any report published under section 55(1) of the Police Act 1996.

2.2. The response must be:

- Published;
- Sent to the Secretary of State;
- Sent to the inspectors of constabulary.

2.3. The response must include:

- The local policing body’s comments;
- Any comments from the Chief Constable;
- Any comments from the local policing body on the Chief Constable’s comments.

2.4. The response should comment on the report as a whole. If a report includes recommendations, the comments should include an explanation of what action is being, or will be taken, or why no action is proposed.

3. Force response to the recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Police supervisors and Crown Prosecution Service legal managers should maximise opportunities to share examples of good work and successful outcomes with their teams.

Response: The Constabulary recognises the importance of learning lessons to drive improvement in evidence led cases. There is an ongoing audit process by the Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Group to identify good practice and learning needs specific to evidence led prosecutions. Positive feedback is provided to officers and CPS colleagues to continue to improve performance.

- Recommendation 2: As well as the Crown Prosecution Service's bespoke e-learning, which all Area prosecutors have to complete, the police and Crown Prosecution Service should ensure that refresher training in domestic abuse, and particularly evidence led cases, is available to staff as appropriate.

Response: The Constabulary is committed to ensuring that all officers and staff involved in responding to, and dealing with cases of domestic abuse have the correct training and skills. In addition to formal force-wide training that has been delivered, ongoing one-to-one training is provided to officers who are identified as needing support, this is heavily focused on positive action in domestic abuse cases, evidence led prosecutions and safeguarding to ensure compliance with best practice.

- Recommendation 3: The police should review training plans in order to ensure that all appropriate staff, both frontline officers and investigators, are trained how to handle domestic abuse cases.

Response: The Constabulary is committed to ensuring that all officers and staff involved in responding to, and dealing with cases of domestic abuse have the correct training and skills. Formal training inputs are delivered to all new recruits. Additional force-wide training on domestic abuse has also been delivered, all of which includes specific guidance on evidence led prosecutions.

- Recommendation 4: Police forces with domestic abuse champions should raise awareness of the role and seek to utilise them to maximum effect.

Response: The Constabulary has a cohort of domestic abuse champions. This is currently under review to ensure that we are making best use of this resource to provide advice and guidance for officers dealing with domestic abuse cases.

- Recommendation 5: Police forces should ensure that training, messaging and guidance is clear that evidence led cases should benefit from the same quality of investigation, early gathering of evidence and supervisory oversight as other domestic abuse cases, particularly in cases where the victim does not support police action. D Domestic abuse champions should reinforce this message.

Response: The Constabulary's position is clear, when a domestic abuse offence has been committed the focus should be on securing the best possible evidence in order to provide opportunity for an evidence led prosecution should the victim decide not to participate. This has been reinforced through consistent training, messaging and guidance.

- **Recommendation 6:** Police should ensure that investigations and decisions to take no further action in domestic abuse cases receive the same robustness of supervisory oversight as other domestic abuse cases.

Response: The Constabulary has implemented clear force-wide supervision standards and guidance. Compliance with best practice for domestic abuse investigations and safeguarding is monitored through the Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Group where decisions to take no further action are audited by a panel of officers and partners, including the CPS. Good practice and learning needs are reported and fed back to continue to improve performance.

- **Recommendation 7:** Prosecutors should ensure that in all domestic abuse cases, they set out clearly at the charging stage whether an evidence led prosecution is viable and, if so, define an effective prosecution strategy.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the Crown Prosecution Service. The Constabulary will await further information.

- **Recommendation 8:** At review stage, prosecutors should, in all appropriate domestic abuse cases, clearly outline a strategy for proceeding with an evidence led prosecution.

Response: This recommendation is addressed to the Crown Prosecution Service. The Constabulary will await further information.

Contact Officers	Detective Chief Superintendent Mark GREENHALGH – Head of Crime Alice THOMPSON – CDD Governance & Inspection Assistant
Reference Document	https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/ciji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/01/Joint-Inspection-Evidence-Led-Domestic-Abuse-Jan19-rpt.pdf