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RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT

Police response to violence against women and girls Final inspection report

Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

I welcome and take on board all comments and recommendations on the HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's and Fire Services). All of the evidence gathered will inform the Government's violence against women and girls' strategy. It recognises that while 'great progress' has been made by the police over the past decade, there is still evidence of inconsistent support for victims and low prosecution rates.

While I am new to the role of commissioner, I am not new to the growing concerns being voiced daily around the safety of women and girls in our country. Wiltshire OPCC supported Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council to prepare bids for round three of the Safer Streets Government funding - which focuses on improving the safety of public spaces, particularly those areas of potential concern to women and girls.

My office is leading an independent review of RASSO (rape & serious sexual offences) across the Wessex area (Dorset Hampshire and Wiltshire). This work aims to identify system issues to improve outcomes for victims, including the support they receive, collaboration across the system and service improvement.

I am pleased interim measures for RASSO victims, were built into Quality Assurance Assessment to monitor the recording of protective characteristics, allowing Crime Standards Auditors to review compliance. I am also satisfied in April 2022 the Wiltshire Police action plan is one that aims to make dramatic improvements.

The appointment of newly appointed DCI was overdue as was standardisation and training for all front lines staff in DVPN and DVPOs. I am reassured to see the initial response did include audits focusing on VAWG offences. I am also pleased with foundational work on investigative standards, training and enough skilled staff to investigate, greater coordination with OPCC and ISVA services as well as improving learning from victims' feedback.

Wiltshire Police's response to violence against women and children continues to be focused whilst recognising it requires sustained improvement and change across three forces and CPS. That is why we provided full support to work across Wessex as part of OP Soteria. I will challenge the force response to audit outcomes and expect to see improved support for victims