

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

How effective police forces are in the deployment of firearms

Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

I am pleased this inspection has taken place and agree it is essential that all improvements to the deployment of firearms be prioritised. It is encouraging to see the force successfully rolled out armed response vehicles airbox track ahead of time in 2022, and that all AFOs have a license and are trained.

I continually seek performance updates as part of my ongoing scrutiny of Wiltshire Police. My office conducts monthly, structured reviews of all aspects of force performance. We have investigated Wiltshire Police's firearms from deployment to licensing, to ensure any risks are being effectively managed by the Force.

Coinciding with this inspection the force has conducted an overarching estate security review, which has incorporated a CCTV upgrade for the armoury. My office will have oversight of the quality assurance audits and refreshed standing operating procedures to ensure they provide additional clarity. Firearms Commanders deployment documents and briefings are stored securely on Share point but must now move to the CLIO.

The Chief Constable and I have agreed to the redevelopment of Devizes headquarters, which will improve the placement and structure of the armoury.

The regional Firearms Lead Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) attends the National Armed Policing Portfolio meetings and must drive national conversations to ensure sufficient Firearms commanders are in place 24/7. Resource solutions must be found to support forces, with shared armed response exercises co-ordinated to drive improvements.

Annual mandatory accreditation for tactical and strategic commanders continues to be successfully rolled out, to include familiarisation with any new weapons systems, new tactics, and specialist munitions introduced or to be. The strategic and tactical firearms commanders will observe the firearms tactics and the use of specialist munitions they can authorise, before being operationally deployed for all with new TFCs and SFCs.