Cumbria Office of Police and Crime Commissioner

**Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections of Cumbria Constabulary published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

*Section 33 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Inspection Title:**  | Both sides of the coin: An inspection of how the police and National Crime Agency consider vulnerable people who are both victims and offenders in ’county lines’ drug offending  |
| **Date Published:** | January 2020  |
| **Type of Inspection:** | National Inspection  |
| **Key Findings**  |
| In 2019, HMICFRS inspected how county lines drug trafficking is dealt with at local, regional and national levels. They concentrated on how the police and National Crime Agency identify and treat children and other vulnerable people involved in county lines offending. The inspection found that:* Most forces have significantly improved their understanding of the scale of offending in their area but there are shortcomings in the intelligence processes. Forces do not understand enough about county lines criminality to tackle it as effectively as possible.
* The way forces identify how some people involved in county lines are vulnerable to exploitation is improving, but inconsistent.
* Some forces do not tend to prioritise attention on county line, when compared with other serious offences.
* Forces could work together more efficiently
* Joint working to protect vulnerable people involved in county lines is improving, but there is room for improvement
* The lack of a statutory definition of child criminal exploitation can lead to public services making different decisions about the levels of risk surrounding an exploited child.
* The police have a wide range of legal powers to tackle drug dealing and other crimes – they need to use them well.
 |
| **Recommendations:**  |
| The inspection report identifies 10 recommendations for other bodies to take forward.  |
| **PCC & Chief Constable Response to Report and Recommendation:** |
| The Police & Crime Commissioner is aware of this report and is confident the Constabulary is tackling county lines drug crime. “Officers are working daily, in partnership with other regional partners and national agencies to tackle the issues of county lines and those using vulnerable children and adults to move drugs and money in and out of Cumbria. I receive regular assurance through my Public Accountability Conferences and my weekly one-to-one meetings with the Chief Constable. I have also seen first-hand how the Constabulary is working hard to tackle these heinous crime, having been involved in large scale operations targeting county lines drug supply activity”.The Chief Constable also welcomes this national report, “A priority for Cumbria is to identify and support vulnerable people and recognise the locations at risk of being repeatedly targeted by multiple county line organised crime groups”. We are committed to dismantling these criminal networks and protecting the young and vulnerable people who are exploited, subject to violence, fear and intimidation. County lines can also have a devastating impact on the wider community. We will continue to do all we can to stop this cruel and horrific behaviour and protect our communities”.  |