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.*

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| **Inspection Title:** | Police response to violence against women and girls – Final inspection report |
| **Date Published:** | 17/09/2021 |
| **Type of Inspection:** | National Inspection |
| **Key Findings** | |
| In March 2021, the Home Secretary commissioned Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to inspect the effectiveness of Police engagement with women and girls. This report sets out findings and recommendations from one part of this inspection, which focuses on how effectively the Police respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG). It builds on the interim report we published in July 2021.  VAWG offences are acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls (in this report, girls are those who are 17 years old or younger). Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking and so-called honour-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online.  While we were commissioned specifically to inspect Police effectiveness in engaging with women and girls, men and boys can be victims of many of these crimes too. We hope that some of our recommendations, if adopted, will lead to improvements for all. | |
| **Recommendations:** | |
| 3. Structures and funding should be put in place to make sure victims receive tailored and consistent support.  3.2: By March 2022, all Police Forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of victims is accurately and consistently recorded.  4. All Chief Constables should immediately review and ensure that there are consistently in their forces’ responses to violence against women and girls and should be supported in doing so by national standards and data.  4.1: By March 2022, Chief Constables should establish and publish an action plan that specifies in detail what steps the force will take to improve and standardise its approach to responding to violence against women and girls offences, with the aim of ensuring policies, processes and practices are effective, actively monitored and managed, and meeting national standards.  This should include:   * The use of Police powers to protect women, including arrest of perpetrators, use of pre-charge bail, the applications for orders (where appropriate) and processes for responding to breaches of non-molestation and other orders. * The use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme. * The capability of generalist and specialist staff to respond to violence against women and girls offences effectively including consistent understanding of newer offences (such as coercive control). * The identification and management of high-harm violent offenders against women and girls (in partnership with other organisations) * The identification and protection of the most at-risk of violence against women and girls offences (in partnership with other organisations) and * Internal and public communications related to violence against women and girls to ensure that messages raise awareness of the risk and emphasis the seriousness of the issues. | |
| **PCC & Chief Constable Response to Report and Recommendation:** | |
| The Police & Crime Commissioner welcomes the final inspection report published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS): *Police response to violence against women and girls*. “I will continue to closely scrutinise how Cumbria Constabulary is responding to the recommendations made in the report, and on the 8th December 2021 at my Public Accountability Conference, the Chief Constable will present to me what they are doing to ensure women and girls are protected in our area.”  “I will continue to protect victims of violence through the commissioning of services, and I will also continue to provide perpetrator programmes which focus on opportunities to change their behaviours or face a consequence for their crime.”  The Chief Constable for Cumbria said, “As a Constabulary we were swift to identify Violence Against Women and Girls as an area for special attention – acknowledging that offences against women and girls were both increasing and disproportionate. This enhanced the comprehensive work, and initiatives, we had on going.  “We conducted a public survey to identify why local communities feel vulnerable and unsafe in their areas and to understand what could be done to make them feel more safe and less vulnerable. Over 5000 people responded to the survey and the results are at the heart of our strategy moving forward.”  “Practical steps have already been taken to support women and girls who have experienced violence. Additional domestic abuse training has been provided to officers. Rape scrutiny panels are held to review cases and investigations. The constabulary are currently trialling a Rape Surgery in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service with the aim of improving the quality and timeliness of investigations, increasing referral rates to the CPS and, ultimately, the outcomes and convictions.” | |