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Police and Crime
Commissioner
for Warwickshire

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Your Ref: - Warwickshire IPA

16th March 2020

Dear Inspector / Minister,

As the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire I am providing the following response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Secretary of State for the Home Office in respect of the joint report by HMCPSI and HMICFRS 'Evidence Led Domestic Abuse Prosecutions' that was published on the 23rd January 2020. This action is pursuant to my obligations under Section 55(1) of the Police Act 1996.

1. LOCAL POLICING BODY'S COMMENTS

I welcome the Inspectorate's examination of this critical area of protection and note the report's comments that CPS recognise that domestic abuse is a priority area of work and has continued to commit resources, training and support to ensure that it is treated as such.

The report nonetheless highlighted gaps in the processes and training of both CPS and the police service that need to be addressed in order to improve the service to the victims of domestic abuse and to bring offenders to justice. A number of recommendations were consequently made in the report, and in response to those issues that have been identified for the police service to remedy I have received the following comments from the Chief Constable.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The report rightly recognises the good work undertaken by both police and CPS against a backdrop of cuts and highlights the ongoing focus placed on domestic abuse by criminal justice agencies. There are six recommendations which pertain to both the CPS and / or the police service, which we intend to respond to and add to our Domestic Abuse Action Plan.

Warwickshire Police are committed to putting the most vulnerable at the heart of our policing response and as such we will continue to focus our attentions on putting victims of domestic abuse first.

Recommendations

1. Police supervisors and Crown Prosecution Service legal managers should maximise opportunities to share examples of good work and successful outcomes with their teams.
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.
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.
4. Police forces with domestic abuse champions should raise awareness of the role and seek to utilise them to maximum effect.
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. Domestic abuse champions should reinforce this message.
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.

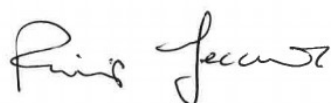
Warwickshire Police accept all of the recommendations and will seek to make improvements against them where this is deemed necessary. These improvements will be led by the Vulnerability Superintendent and tracked through the Vulnerability and Safeguarding Board, which in turn will report into the Warwickshire Assurance Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

3. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE LOCAL POLICING BODY ON THE CC'S COMMENTS.

The Chief Constable is therefore supportive of the report and has provided his assurance that the recommendations will be addressed. I will scrutinise the progress made by Warwickshire Police in achieving these objectives and 'hold to account' the Chief Constable in doing so.

This response will be published on the website of the Warwickshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) within the prescribed 56 day timeframe starting from the day on which the report was published.

Yours faithfully,



Philp Secombe. TD

Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner