

BEV HUGHES
DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER

Rt Hon Priti Patel,
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

18th December 2019

Dear Home Secretary

**SUBJECT: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Crime and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) Report
Cyber: Keep the light on – An inspection of the police response to cyber-dependent crime.**

I write in response to the recent HMICFRS inspection that examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the police response to cyber-dependent crime.

Cybercrime represents a significant threat to the UK and was recognised by the Serious & Organised Crime Strategy. It is estimated to cost the Greater Manchester economy around £860m per year and can have a devastating impact on businesses and individuals.

In an ever-evolving policing landscape, the demands for services around digital crimes are increasing, often targeting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities as well as businesses. As I outlined in my Police and Crime Plan, digital harm is real harm.

I am pleased to note that the inspection report found the law enforcement response to cyber-dependent crime as good. However, there is a need for the police service to continue to improve this response to ensure a high quality service to victims and the better co-ordination of future campaigns.

The report makes one recommendation for respective national leads to revise the current police structure for the response to cyber-dependent crime. In doing so, consideration should be given to the following:

- the creation of a national police cyber-dependent crime network;
- the remit of any such network;
- how the network engages with other law enforcement agencies; and
- the tasking and co-ordinating responsibilities that will be required for the network to be effective.

Although the recommendation does not directly relate to Chief Constables, I would like comment on this.

GMCA, Churchgate House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

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Whilst in theory this may sound like a reasonable course of action in response to the inspection, consideration is required as to how such a model can align and complement local delivery. Following recent Government funding for the establishment of local Cybercrime Units across the country, the existing local policing model of investigation and community engagement around cyber-dependent crime is still in its infancy. As such, any national review should take into consideration local cyber-dependent crime data since the inspection.

Additionally, the investment in Digital Media Investigators (DMIs) by Greater Manchester Police is helping to bridge the gap between cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crime and to keep informed of changes in technology. To move the cyber function to a national response may endanger that development and risks widening the gap of the policing response to cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crime.

I would ask that representatives from local operational policing Cybercrime Units are included in any discussions regarding the future structure and management of cyber-dependent crime, to ensure that these issues can be considered and addressed at an early stage.

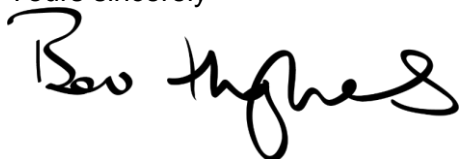
The report also provided one area of improvement for Chief Constables. I can respond to this as follows:

Chief constables should evaluate the use that their force makes of cyber specials and volunteers to ensure that they are used effectively.

Greater Manchester Police was an early adopter and supporter of the Cyber Specials Cyber Volunteers programme. In 2017 the Cybercrime Unit introduced a Cyber Special, who later went to work on the national programme. The Special has now joined the Cybercrime Unit on a permanent basis as a police staff cyber investigator, having had a really positive experience as a cyber special. This member of staff is now leading a recruitment campaign for further Cyber Specials and volunteers, providing their positive experience of being a Cyber Special. The recruitment campaign will commence early 2020 and will include the use of Employer Supported Policing. The campaign will also engage with local academic institutions to identify students who wish to volunteer.

As I outlined at the start of this letter, digital harm is real harm, and I am committed to working with Greater Manchester Police and other partners to support our communities and equip them with the tools to stay safe. I have committed funding to support the establishment of a Cyber Resilience Centre for Greater Manchester and spoke at the launch event last month. This new not-for-profit partnership between Greater Manchester Police and Manchester Digital will support business by providing cyber prevention leadership, whilst leveraging the tech expertise of Manchester Digital's membership base. The Centre will also work very closely with local students and Universities through a unique collaboration with the Greater Manchester Cyber Foundry, to help upskill and increase employability into this growing sector.

Yours sincerely



Baroness Beverley Hughes
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester
Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice

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