
BEV HUGHES

**DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER**

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

19th March 2020

Dear Home Secretary

SUBJECT: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Crime and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) Report on Evidence led domestic abuse prosecutions.

I write in response to the recent HMICFRS inspection that examined whether the guidance and policy on evidence led prosecutions is widely understood by both police officers and prosecutors and whether they seek to build viable evidence led prosecutions where appropriate.

Domestic violence and abuse requires a whole system response, taking robust and effective action in partnership. It is important also to consider the wider implications and impact on children and other family members affected through these crimes. To ensure that victims of domestic abuse receive the correct protections and meaningful support, it is imperative that police officers and prosecutors understand evidence led prosecutions and have a clear commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for those affected.

It was encouraging to see that this commitment was reflected within the inspection report along with the existence of strategic domestic abuse leads and current policies in those police areas visited. I was also pleased to read that frontline officers were fully aware of the various third sector agencies that provide advice and support for victims of domestic abuse, and refer victims to these agencies where appropriate.

The report makes six recommendations for the police service. I shall address each of these in turn:

HMICFRS and HMCPIS Recommendation 1: Police supervisors and Crown Prosecution Service legal managers should maximise opportunities to share examples of good work and successful outcomes with their teams.

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

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

In January 2020, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) established the Public Protection Governance Unit (PPGU) that works across all strands of vulnerability to establish best practice and consistency in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of society in Greater Manchester.

The PPGU already has strong links with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), with joint scrutiny panels for both Adults at Risk and Stalking and Harassment. In addition, CPS colleagues have been invited to audit domestic abuse case files that have resulted in no further action, which will facilitate ongoing dialogue about good practice and sound decision making. This will cover not just domestic abuse, but also rape and serious sexual offences and stalking and harassment.

To promote this work within GMP information on good practice examples and details of successful outcomes will be published on the intranet to share across the workforce.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI Recommendation 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.

In Greater Manchester, the subject of evidence led prosecutions is captured within initial police training provided to student officers as part of a Criminal Justice input on wider file preparation. The importance of gaining all available evidence is impressed upon new officers and how this could support an evidence led prosecution.

Refresher training around evidence led prosecutions will be incorporated into an ongoing programme to review the training offer across GMP. An aide memoire will be issued over the coming weeks for first responders around domestic abuse, to promote the effective capture of sufficient and sound evidence to support a case to be presented to the CPS.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI Recommendation 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.

The PPGU is currently undertaking a piece of work to review the vulnerability training that is offered across GMP, to include training for new recruits, continuous professional development and district tutor units.

All student officers receive initial public protection training on domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation, which is delivered both in classroom environments and through a series of e-learning packages. Following this, further consolidation courses are provided, which includes an input on evidence led prosecutions.

Further training is also offered to detective colleagues, predominately on the Specialist Adult Abuse Investigators Course, aimed at officers and staff working in safeguarding departments. A similar training input is also delivered on the Investigative Supervisors Development Programme (ISDP) for sergeants and inspectors, with elements of safeguarding woven through. The programme includes the importance of gathering evidence that would support evidence led prosecutions.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI Recommendation 4: Police forces with domestic abuse champions should raise awareness of the role and seek to utilise them to maximum effect.

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

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

Through the PPGU, GMP will continue to develop partnership links with the thematic leads for each local district to ensure there are open lines of communication. Such links exist for the thirteen separate vulnerability strands including domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and child abuse.

The PPGU will continue to monitor the performance of districts through a performance management framework, and any themes or issues highlighted through this process will be fed back to all districts. Details of these themes will also be included on the intranet as part of an internal communications campaign. The domestic abuse champions will be key to this process and will be the conduit from the PPGU to districts.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI Recommendation 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.

The Domestic Abuse Policy for GMP is currently being redrafted and will include a comprehensive section on evidence led prosecutions, to include the points referred to in this recommendation. In support of a new policy, an internal communications campaign will be developed and emphasis will be given to those points in the policy that have not previously been covered, including evidence led prosecutions.

HMICFRS and HMCPSI Recommendation 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.

I understand that the CPS will be reviewing 360 domestic abuse cases where No Further Action (NFA) decisions have been made by the police. The results of that review will be analysed and used in relation to an internal communications campaign linked to evidence led prosecutions.

In GMP, the authority of an officer of at least the rank of Inspector must be obtained before any crime can be classified as NFA. The new domestic abuse policy will detail these authorisation requirements and make provisions to review and, if appropriate, challenge CPS decisions to NFA.

As I outlined at the beginning of this letter, it is important to adopt a whole system approach to domestic violence and abuse. As Chair of the local Domestic Violence Partnership Board I am able to review police performance and will soon be implementing a domestic violence dashboard to further strengthen this approach. The board also provides a valuable platform for partners to share best practice to improve continuously the processes and outcomes, both in bringing offenders to justice, but also for the victims who are at the centre of proceedings throughout. I feel it is important to give the victims a voice and for this voice not only to be heard, but for it to strengthen the decision making processes. Our local Victim Services Co-ordinators play an important role in capturing this victim voice and quality assuring the work on all vulnerability cases. In addition, I am currently developing a Gender Based Abuse Strategy for Greater Manchester, further demonstrating our collective commitment to prevent these crimes and support victims.

Finally, I am aware of media reporting from last November in relation to a super-complaint by the Centre for Women's Justice in respect of 'police perpetrated domestic abuse' and I note that the complaint was formally submitted to HMICFRS on 9th March. This is an issue I have discussed already with the Chief Constable. Whilst I recognise that HMICFRS will now need to formally look into this issue I will continue to explore with GMP both the basis of the complaint and what proactive early measures may be appropriate.

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

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

As ever, I would welcome any feedback from other police and non-police partners as to best practice approaches, to ensure that collectively we are able to offer meaningful outcomes for all concerned.

Yours sincerely



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

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

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>