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Acting Police, Crime & Victims' Commissioner:
Chief Executive:

Stephen White

25 September 2019

Dear Home Secretary,

HMICFRS Inspection Report: Crimes against older people

This letter constitutes the response to the above inspection from Ron Hogg, Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner, in order to fulfil his responsibilities with regard to Section 55 of the Police Act 1996. The reply to HMICFRS will also be published on his website. I am replying as acting PCC whilst Mr Hogg is unwell.

In turn, here are position statements showing what the Constabulary is doing to meet the recommendations and areas for improvement which relates to Chief Constables:

Recommendation: Within six months, Chief Constables should make sure that victim needs assessments are always completed

We believe that a victim needs assessment should be continuously reviewed throughout the victim's journey. An initial THRIVE (threat, harm, risk investigation, vulnerability and engagement) assessment is made by Durham's call handlers following report of an incident, and this informs the attending officer of that assessment. Following incident attendance, a further THRIVE and needs assessment are conducted and recorded and a bespoke victim contract is agreed. A continuous THRIVE assessment and consultation throughout is key, with appropriate adults being sought, and also specialist intermediaries if required to support our victim. Victims, or indeed people who have been affected during the crime, can be referred to our commissioned victim care service, VCAS (Victim Care and Advice Service), where they can review the information recorded and make a further needs assessment to ensure the correct level of support is provided by the correct support agency.

Following file submission, any special measures identified as required are recorded on the special measures form (MG2) so that colleagues within Criminal Justice Unit and the Crown Prosecution Service are aware

from the outset. This avoids delays to the court process which may cause undue anxiety to our victims, or may affect the chances of a successful prosecution. The force monitors MG2 completion levels.

Any concerns identified by Durham Constabulary operational staff during their interaction with a vulnerable adult will be shared with the relevant safeguarding agencies through completion of a Vulnerable Adult Concern form.

Recommendation: Within three months, Chief Constables should conduct analysis of the current and future demand for adult safeguarding, including the gap in knowledge that may exist from those cases where referrals aren't made because of errors or omissions. This analysis should be incorporated into force management statements (FMSs).

Durham Constabulary included analysis within the 2019 Force Management Statement regarding adult safeguarding including statistics around vulnerable adult referrals. The Force has seen an incremental increase in demand and expects this trend to continue over the next 4 years.

Recommendation: Within six months, Chief Constables should work with Police and Crime Commissioners and their mayoral equivalents, and other relevant organisations, to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way

There is an option to refer victims or indeed people who have been affected during a crime to our commissioned victim care service VCAS where they can review the information recorded, and make a further needs assessment to ensure the correct level of support is provided by the correct support agency. From initial attendance a victim contact contract is agreed with our victim and the VCAS service is offered. This is the choice of our victim and can be reviewed throughout their journey as this can change. We do not offer an automatic referral because of potential GDPR implications.

The performance of commissioned services is monitored by the Local Criminal Justice Board and the force's Total Victim Care Group. The contract to deliver a victim support and referral service, currently provided by VCAS, is due to be replaced in September 2020 and work is currently taking place to review the delivery model and services offered.

Area for Improvement: Within six months, Chief Constables should find good ways to assess the current demands on the police made by older people. These assessments should include a prediction of future changes in demand, account for the work of other organisations, and be incorporated into FMSs.

The Safeguarding section of our Force Management Statement (FMS) includes details of multi-agency working with other organisations and how this assists or impacts our ability to manage demand. Of particular note in relation to older people, who are victims of Fraud, the force's FMS states: 'Longer term, as the older victim group will almost certainly grow in size, older people are more likely to be targeted for fraud due to their perceived vulnerabilities. In Durham, those in the 60 to 79 age group remained most at risk of being victims (36%), which is well above the national average for this age range (27%).' For the next FMS where there are any 'themes' where the 'older age group' are more likely to be victims or vulnerable this will be highlighted as part of our analysis.

I am also copying this letter to Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

Yours sincerely,



Steve White

Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham

