



To: The Home Secretary
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire and Rescue Services

20 November 2019

Dear Home Secretary and HMICFRS,

HMICFRS PEEL - Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy 2018/19

I welcome the findings of this inspection of South Yorkshire Police, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), and congratulate the Force on the progress it has made.

Three years ago, when I appointed the present Chief Constable, Stephen Watson, South Yorkshire police was in a bad place. The judgement of the inspectorate at that time was that the Force was amongst the worst performing forces in the country and morale was low.

This was not a reflection on the officers and staff who were people of great professionalism and integrity; but they lacked a clear focus and a resolute purpose. This is what they have been given and the results are now beginning to show.

To go from 'requires improvement' to 'good' in all areas inspected is an astonishing achievement in a relatively short period of time, not least because it has been done against a background of cuts. It points to hard work and dedication by officers and staff at every level of the organisation.

It is also pleasing to see areas of 'notable practice' by the Force, such as the development of a specialist investigator course in conjunction with Sheffield University - the first of its kind in the country - and a multi-agency domestic abuse meeting that ensures that children are safeguarded.

Given some of the issues of the past, it is especially pleasing that the inspectorate has judged the Force 'outstanding' at developing and maintaining an ethical culture. This is an area where I have sought to support the Force by establishing an Independent Ethics Panel, one of the first in the country.

Three years ago the Chief Constable told me that his ambition was to take the Force from 'requires improvement' to 'outstanding'. That no longer looks like an impossible dream.

My job as Police and Crime Commissioner is to continue to set the force priorities; 'Protecting Vulnerable People', 'Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour' and 'Treating People Fairly' and to hold the Force to account against those priorities, on behalf of the

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people of South Yorkshire. This report reassures me that real and substantial progress has been made and the Force is now in a good place and heading in the right direction.

HMICFRS did not identify any causes for concern and made no specific recommendations in the PEEL inspection report for 2018/19, which is encouraging. However, the following areas for improvement have been identified:

- The force should ensure that all investigations are completed to a consistently good standard and in a timely manner
- The force should improve its ability to retrieve digital evidence from mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices quickly enough to ensure that investigations are not delayed
- The force should make use of the full range of data from its new systems, to better understand, analyse, and profile vulnerability, victims, and offenders
- The force should put in place appropriate controls to ensure that where there is a secondary review of domestic abuse cases, and a decision is made to re-grade the risk assessment, a supervisor oversees this decision
- The force should ensure it has effective governance arrangements in place to analyse a range of workforce data and information to identify the greatest threats to wellbeing and take effective action to address them
- The force should ensure that it analyses and understands disparities and patterns in its grievance and local resolution arrangements
- The force should improve its provision for physical and mental health referrals through its occupational health provision

I asked Chief Constable Stephen Watson for his views on the report to which he has responded:

“This is the latest milestone in our ongoing upward trajectory. The perseverance, commitment and passion demonstrated by police officers, staff and volunteers has paid off and developed a better service for the people of South Yorkshire.

We are now the most improved Force for the third year running. We have shifted our position from the worst performing Force in the country to the upper tier of top performing forces. I have had no doubts in the quality of the people within South Yorkshire Police and this report is testament to that quality.

We are a full spectrum Force making full use of all of the tools in our armoury to provide a better, more robust service. Policing can only happen in this country by consent and the people of South Yorkshire have shown great support and patience in South Yorkshire Police as we have transformed the service we offer. This transformation means we are now offering a better service to the public, a more robust approach to criminals and a more supportive role to victims.

This is a key milestone in our journey to outstanding. We're immensely proud of this assessment but this has only served to spur us on to become the most effective police Force and to be assessed as outstanding by the inspectorate but most importantly by the communities we serve.

The Force has a newly developed Performance Framework, the Force's mechanism to deliver its Plan on a Page. It brings simplicity to a complex landscape and ensures that efforts to improve are coordinated and effective: the Plan on a Page provides clear direction and outlines the strategic objectives of South Yorkshire Police while the Performance Framework introduces Key Performance Questions and Indicators to ensure that all force activity is channelled to help achieve those objectives.

Work is ongoing across the Force to fulfil AFIs (Areas for Improvement) identified by HMICFRS with theme specific, Chief Officer led strategic planning meetings and Gold Groups providing strategic direction and governance.

Where relatively quick changes to process can be effective, they have been implemented and monitored for compliance (as with the requirement to carry out a secondary review of risk regrading decisions in domestic abuse cases) and where longer term solutions are required, strategic governance groups work with the Force lead for the relevant theme, commissioning data and process reviews and revising policy and guidance.

Internal media campaigns support change and monitoring processes are put in place to confirm progress (as is the case with improving the quality of investigations and ensuring the well-being of all staff).

Force Performance Day and Quarterly Performance Reviews, chaired by Chief Officers, are in place to drive activity across the Force, ensuring that service delivery is consistent and that good practice is captured and shared. These forum are supported by increasingly complex performance reporting from the force's Performance and Governance department.

Strategic Change and Strategic Resourcing Boards combine with the performance framework to ensure that change is effective and sustainable.

By focussing on HMICFRS actions on a forcewide and on a thematic level, each individual action, whether a Cause of Concern, Area For Improvement or Recommendation, is scrutinised and a plan is agreed to address the issue. All activity is captured to audit change and improve corporate memory."

The Joint Independent Audit Committee will assist in monitoring those areas identified for improvement within the report.



I will continue to work with the Chief Constable to ensure that South Yorkshire Police is a service that the public can have real confidence in.

All good wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Billings".

Dr Alan Billings
South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner

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