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Comisynydd Heddlu a Throseddau Gwent | Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent: Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD

The Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

31st July 2023

Dear Home Secretary,

State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022

As required by statute, I am writing to you to respond to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) report entitled, 'State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022'.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome this reports that evidences Gwent Police is good and effective at preventing crime and managing offenders. These are important areas that impact our communities, I am immensely proud and steadfast in my commitment to ensuring Gwent continues to remain one of the safest places in the United Kingdom.

Despite the many positives, I am disappointed that the report continues to highlight the straining relationship between the police and the public and the significant reductions in trust and confidence the forces are facing. My office and I have placed a significant focus in strengthening our relationships with our communities through attending multiple events across Gwent to proactively engage with members of the public. These events provide opportunities to speak with residents about issues that matter to them and to feedback on their experiences of our policing services to contribute to our continuous improvements.

Gwent police officers and I continue to engage with young people and children as it is an important way to break down any barriers and build confidence in policing from an early age. Most recently, we attended the Pen-Y-Cwm cadet scheme, engaging with children on how to stay safe in the community.

I continue to feel reassured by the commitment and courage of our police officers, staff, and volunteers, this is re-iterated by the Chief Constable in her comment below:

I welcome His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2022. The report rightly recognises the dedication of police officers, staff and volunteers. I am hugely proud of

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg, a phan ddaw i law, byddwn yn ateb yn y Gymraeg – ni fydd hyn yn gohirio ein hymateb. Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg o hyn ymlaen, neu os ydych wedi cael eich gwahoddi gyfweiliad neu gyfarfod ac yr hoffech ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg, anfonwch e-bost at: Commissioner@gwent.police.uk. Darperir gwasanaethau cyfieithu.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and where received, we will reply in Welsh - this will not delay our response. If you wish to receive correspondence in Welsh hereafter or if you have been invited to an interview or meeting and you wish to use Welsh, send email to: Commissioner@gwent.police.uk. Translation services will be provided.

the commitment and courage of officers, staff and volunteers in my force, and indeed throughout the country, to keep the public safe.

The report highlights the significant challenges policing is facing, such as such as the long-term trend in rising demand and emphasises the importance of getting the basics right. As Chief Constable, I am focused on making communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly, preventing crime and antisocial behaviour, keeping the peace, protecting and reassuring communities, investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice. I will continue to work with partners to provide the best possible service to the communities of Gwent.

Further to the comments from the Chief Constable, I am confident that we can continue our focus on making communities safer by preventing crime and antisocial behaviour through working with partners to continue improving the safety and service for the people of Gwent.

My office has put a substantial amount of focus on implementing the Serious Violence Duty in Gwent with the aim to deliver an 'early intervention' approach to identify vulnerable people, intervene early, keep people from drifting into the criminal justice system, and break the generational cycle of crime and harm. My office is the lead convener for the Duty and so, is working closely with Gwent Police and relevant partners to seek an agreement at a local approach. All partners are jointly responsible for the decision-making regarding the Duty, for the purpose of preventing and reducing serious violence. A key element of our work to address serious violence is early intervention and prevention schemes with funding to support this. Implementing these schemes will also assist with keeping neighbourhoods safe and combatting serious crime across Gwent.

I was also disappointed to read that the minority of policing are 'unsure of or ignore the boundaries' between the roles of the Chief Constables and PCCs. I do not believe this to be the case in Gwent. The Chief Constable and I have a positive working relationship where we recognise our individual responsibilities but still work closely together to provide the best policing service possible for the people of Gwent.

My office and I have a significant role to play in improving community safety more widely than policing, I continue to work with community safety and criminal justice partners in Gwent and beyond to develop a common approach to crime and community safety. I continue to commission several services such as 'Fearless' that deliver activities free of charge that aim to tackle serious and organised crime across Gwent. These sessions are designed to give young people the education and confidence to recognise the issues within friendship groups and communities, but all give them the knowledge and confidence to report it. I will continue build on the shared vision and close partnerships I have developed to support the commissioned services.

The report also highlights the number of mental health incidents that forces deal with in England and Wales has increased by 116,000 incidents from the year 2019 to 2022. This is a significant increase; however, alongside Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), I continue to commission, and invest specialist services to support victims through a Wellbeing Practitioner, based within Connect Gwent, providing effective and short-term interventions in line with current best practice, for both mental and physical health.

I also continue to fund a dedicated mental health specialist who work alongside Gwent Police in the Force's control room, ensuring that when vulnerable people with a mental health illness or suffering a crisis come into contact with them, they receive appropriate care and support. I am committed to continue this work closely with partners, locally and nationally to ensure we can support people when they need us the most and to improve our overall response to them.

Overall, I am pleased to see that forces are generally providing a good service to the public although, there is always room to improve. I look forward to continuing working with the Chief Constable, partners locally, across Wales and nationally to improve policing further for the public.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Cuthbert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD
Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent