

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

20th September 2022

Dear Home Secretary,

The Police Response to Burglary, Robbery and Other Acquisitive Crime – Finding Time for Crime

As required by statute, I am writing to you to respond to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report entitled, 'The Police Response to Burglary, Robbery and Other Acquisitive Crime – Finding Time for Crime'.

Acquisitive crime is a blight that can erode the public's confidence and feelings of safety in their home and community. Victims of crimes such as burglary and robbery can be left traumatised. There is also the financial impact on victims which, with the current economic challenges we face, present a cost they should not have to bear.

For these reasons, it is vital that policing treats acquisitive crime with the seriousness it deserves. To that end, I have made reducing acquisitive crime and repeat re-offending a key commitment in my Police and Crime Plan. I also monitor the force's performance against this commitment on a quarterly basis in my Police and Crime Plan performance framework.

I acknowledge that there has been a tendency across England and Wales to categorise acquisitive crime as 'volume crime'. This has resulted in these crimes being deprioritised when competing with incidents and crimes that pose immediate risk of harm. It must be noted that challenges in police resources over the past decade have contributed to this issue.

Nevertheless, all victims of crime have the right to a robust policing response and access to justice. Failing to treat acquisitive crime with the appropriate severity risks undermining community confidence. I share the HM Chief Inspector's view that it is not sustainable to continue with such an approach.

I am pleased to inform you that Gwent Police have made significant strides forward in tackling acquisitive crime. Detail on this can be found in the Chief Constable's comment below:

'I welcome this inspection report from HMICFRS which examines the police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime.'

As the report highlights, these crimes have a long-lasting effect on how safe people feel in their homes and communities. In Gwent, investment has been made in a We Don't Buy Crime team to tackle acquisitive crime and associated harm across communities. The team provide a holistic, comprehensive and sustainable approach to crime prevention. There are six strands which

underpin the work of the team: burglary response and crime prevention, safer neighbourhoods, covert work, second hand/stolen goods market, fuel stations and associated harm. Their work helps prevent crime and keeps communities safe across Gwent.

To further enhance the service provided to victims, a Burglary Response Improvement Pilot has recently been launched to ensure a quality initial response and immediate support for victims of burglary, improve standards of investigation and victim satisfaction relating to burglary offences, ensure identification and robust management of offenders and ensure a problem-solving, proactive approach to the identification and reduction of offences of burglary across the Gwent Police force area. The results of the pilot will inform any future investment in this important area.

Throughout the report, I welcome the inspectorates' clear signposting of good and innovative practices within police forces. I am committed to implementing the recommendations made in the report to continue to improve the service provided to victims and disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of acquisitive crime.'

I would like further support the Chief Constable's comment by stating that the We Don't Buy Crime team have been delivering excellent work in tackling acquisitive crime. The team also undertake public engagement to offer crime prevention advice and build community confidence in policing. The team have accompanied my team and I many times at public engagement events and have been very impressive.

The drive to tackling acquisitive crime has delivered real and tangible results in Gwent. We Don't Buy Crime and the Problem Solving Hubs, both introduced over the past two years, are strong examples of good practice that chime with the findings in the report. Thanks to these efforts there has been a sustained reduction in acquisitive crime. Indeed, Gwent has managed to maintain the reduced rate of acquisitive crime seen during the pandemic, countering the upward trend observed nationally. This is an excellent achievement, and I am assured that the force are committed to reducing acquisitive crime further again.

With regards to the relevant recommendations in the report, I refer you to the responses below which have been provided by Gwent Police:

Recommendation 1

By March 2023, forces should make sure their crime scene management practices adhere to the authorised professional practice on managing investigations for SAC or provide a rationale for deviating from it. They should also include:

- **giving victims timely and appropriate advice during their initial call;**
- **applying a risk assessment process such as THRIVE, clearly recording it, and flagging those re-victimised for further support.**

In relation to Force Contact Centre position:

- *all burglaries are now tagged to FIM and are recorded on DMM*
- *THRIVE is applied and re victimisation is flagged*
- *CIS is tasked on Niche from FCC operator and recorded on the log*

- *If CIS is not practical the rationale is recorded in the log.*

Recommendation 2

By March 2023, all forces should ensure SAC investigations are subject to effective supervision and direction. This should focus on:

- **making sure supervisors have the capability and capacity to meaningfully supervise investigations**
- **making sure investigations meet the necessary standard and achieve suitable outcomes that consider the voice or opinion of victims**
- **applying investigative outcome codes appropriately**
- **complying with the Victims' Code and recording evidence of compliance.**

The Victims' Code of Practice is built into a number of the templates within NICHE. Supervisors review and agree these, and we have the SU01 to reinforce the stance and quality assurance processes to ensure the relevant steps are followed before an investigation can be considered for closure.

The supervisor/officer 1-2-1 process has also been reviewed with a clear emphasis on investigative updates. The 1-2-1 also considers compliance with the Victim's Code, and there are a number of investigation dip samples which are undertaken through the 1-2-1's. There is support and oversight from We Don't Buy Crime and problem solving to ensure golden hour principles are covered and enquiries such as property alerts and prevention needs are covered.

To further enhance our approach to investigations, the Learning and Development department are delivering an introduction to management course for all of our newly promoted Sergeants. One of the inputs focuses on Supervising Investigations and Investigators. The content of the input is taken from a College of Policing product (Supervising Investigations). The main object of delivering this input is to improve the quality of our investigations. Within the input we look at the important role the Supervisor plays in the course of an investigation. We explore areas such as overseeing and deploying resources to recovery evidence whilst it is still available during the Golden Hour period through to the further investigation stage, developing investigation strategies utilising the Crime Investigation Building Blocks (this is a nationally approved investigation model). We teach the students the importance of identifying potential hypotheses and raising all reasonable lines of enquiry that will test the credibility of each hypothesis. We encourage meaningful workload reviews and giving guidance, support and direction to the investigation and the investigators.

In terms of capability and capacity, the introduction of the Virtual Response Team and the i-Hub aim to release some capacity to allow supervisors opportunities to focus further on investigations. Specifically in the East, an Inspector has been allocated an internal demand portfolio to identify opportunities of releasing demand.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have made a firm commitment to tackling acquisitive crime and ensuring that the public are getting the best possible response from policing when it comes to these crime types. We have made real progress in Gwent and have an excellent platform to build on in the We Don't Buy Crime team and Problem Solving Hubs. I look forward to continuing my work

Swyddfa Comisynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu Gwent / Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Pencadlys yr Heddlu / Police Headquarters
Croesyceiliog Cwmbrân / Cwmbran
NP44 2XJ

Ffôn / Tel: 01633 642 200
E-bost / Email: commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Gwe / Web: www.gwent.pcc.police.uk



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

with the Chief Constable and will use the good practice highlighted in the report as basis for discussion with her.

Yours sincerely,

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