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| HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Report |
| **November 2023** |
| 1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION    1. Gwent Police are currently subject to a cause for concern for which this report provides progress updates in relation to prioritisation, key milestones and identified completion dates.    2. In relation to the cause for concern Gwent Police were subject to a Victim Service Assessment (VSA) revisit between 25th September and 6th October 2023 that focussed on “How good is the force at responding to the public?” An additional victim service assessment focussed on the standards of investigation.    3. The findings of that revisit will be available from the 1st December 2023. 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND    1. Following the 2022 PEEL Inspection Gwent Police were assessed as follows –      * 1. Focus was given to the area of Responding to the Public and the area was identified as a cause for concern. As a result the force dynamically responded implementing a Fast Change Improvement meeting. The force holistically reviewed a number of processes, procedures, resourcing opportunities and business priorities in order to respond to the concerns identified whilst maintaining service provision across all levels of delivery.   2. The next section of this report will focus on the initial priorities for which the cause of concern was issued.  1. RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC    1. The cause for concern recommendations were provided to Gwent Police with progress required within either a 3 month or 6 month time period. These milestones were prioritised over other recommendations made within the report.    2. It was identified that within 3 months Gwent Police should:  * Make sure a structured triage approach is used to assess risk and consider the needs of the victim; * Improve the process of risk assessing callers to identify those that are vulnerable or at risk; * Make sure that vulnerable and repeat callers are routinely identified, and that this is recorded;   *A structured triage approach and call script to assess risk has been implemented in the control room. The same process assists in the identification of vulnerability and repeat callers. Training and a new quality assurance process has been implemented although it must be noted that dependant on the nature of the call a script will not always be required. Current compliance sits at 92.3%.*  *The embedded triage approach allows for the assessment of risk which includes the identification of vulnerable and repeat victims. Process changes means that these victims and easily identifiable from an operators opening demand screen supporting focus and prioritisation.*   * Make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention   *Call scripts have been amended to ensure that operators provide the guidance required. Additionally processes have been amended and technical solutions amended which means that operators can send text messages to callers / victims contains advice and crime prevention information. Monitoring of compliance is routinely undertaken through the quality assurance process.*   * 1. In order to address these concerns and to meet the 3 month completion date for progress the milestone date for Gwent was the 13th July 2023 with the report having been received from HMICFRS on the 13th April 2023.   2. The VSA revisit reviewed data and information between April and June 2023 and a full update will be available from the 1st December 2023 in relation to the progression of the force.   3. It was identified that within 6 months Gwent Police should: * Make sure it can answer a greater proportion of non-emergency 101 calls so that caller attrition levels are reduced and kept as low as possible;   *In order to understand the changes to the performance and the progress made the abandonment rate for July 2022 for 101 new incidents was 46.9%, this improved to 26.5% in July 2023 and in October 2023 could be seen to be 16%. We have seen month-on-month improvements in this area despite significant demand.*   * Attend most calls within its published time frames and update victims if there is a delay.   *Within the control room a review and restructure of the supervision structure has taken place allow a focus on key roles and responsibilities, most notably in relation to this recommendation a dispatch manager. The changes were implemented in July 2023 and improvements almost immediately apparent.*  *In October 2023 Emergency attendance times could be seen to be 56.5% when compared to the baseline of 47.5% and priority calls has improved from 31% to 52.5%.*  *In relation to victim updates following a potential delay in attendance it is acknowledged that there is more work to do in this area although compliance has been embedded within the quality assurance process and will continue to be tested.*   * 1. In order to address these concerns and to meet the 6 month completion date for progress the milestone date for Gwent was the 13th October 2023.   2. The VSA revisit reviewed data and information between April and June 2023 and a full update will be available from the 1st December 2023 in relation to the progression of the force.  1. HOW GOOD IS THE FORCE AT INVESTIGATING CRIME ?    1. In addition to the areas identified as cause for concern eleven areas for improvement were identified. Of which four were identified within the thematic area of “How good is the force at investigating crime ?”:    2. Areas for Improvement are not given a timescale for completion as they are only assessed during a PEEL inspection with the exception of when a re-visit takes place. As such the following three were reviewed when the VSA re-visit was undertaken and a formal update will be received from HMICFRS on the 1st December 2023.    3. The identified areas for improvement that were reviewed are as follows;  * The force should make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with supervisory oversight and direction throughout. * The force should make sure investigations are completed without unnecessary delays and that all proportionate and relevant investigative opportunities are taken. * Where a victim has decided to withdraw support for police action, the force should ensure that there is an auditable record of this decision. This should include the reason why the decision was made. The force should make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases.   1. Whilst no prescribed timeline, work undertaken within the fast change programme prioritised these areas after those required for the cause for concern areas. With the exception of evidence-led prosecutions the measures have been embedded in the VSA performance for which twice weekly meetings are undertaken to scrutinise performance and for which daily up to date performance data is available. Evidence-led prosecution can only be assessed through the completion of supervisory updates and audit focus.   2. As an indication of progress the supervisor report compliance did sit at 87.7% and currently sits at 92%. Timeliness of investigations has reduced from 55 days in October 2022 to 29 days in October 2023 and the outcome 16 policy now states that there must be documentary evidence that a victim is withdrawing their complaint and a supportive explanation. CO16’s are audited twice weekly and compliance currently sits at 95%.  1. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT    1. The remaining areas for improvement are as follows;  * The force should improve its recording or reasonable grounds for stop and search, in compliance with force policy and the authorised professional practice; * The force should make sure that it has the capacity and capability to effectively investigate crime on behalf of the public, and that its governance and scrutiny arrangements result in improved standards of investigation; * The force should make sure that its governance and scrutiny arrangements provide enough capacity and capability to effectively protect vulnerable people; * The force needs to improve how effectively it meets national standards in relation to the use of the domestic violence disclosure scheme; * The force should make sure it appropriately manages MARAC demand to reduce the risk of serious harm to high-risk victims of domestic abuse; * Gwent Police should demonstrate that it can use its understanding of factors contributing to sickness and absence to improve the well-being of the workforce; * The force should make sure that it has an effective strategic planning framework to tackle important issues; * The force should make sure it can effectively manage current demand, with the resources available to it.   1. All areas for improvement have an allocated Head of Department as lead and AFI’s are reviewed regularly. Following the formal update for the VSA revisit these areas for improvement will form the priority for completion ahead of the next PEEL Inspection anticipated to be Spring 2024. A significant number of actions have already been undertaken as part of the fast change programme but priority focus has been given to those areas subject to the cause for concern.  1. COLLABORATION    1. Not applicable as a standing item to this report however where appropriate   Collaborative needs will be considered as part of the actions taken to address the concerns.   1. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS    1. There are no financial considerations required for noting at this time. Changes made to address the cause for concerns have been done so within the staffing and financial parameters available. Should financial constraints or considerations be identified for the outstanding AFI’s these will be recorded in future reports. 2. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS   8.1 There are no personnel considerations at this time.   1. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS    1. There are no legal considerations at this time. 2. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS    1. This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.    2. In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. 3. RISK    1. If the force is unable to continue the progress in relation to the achievement of appropriate outcomes for victims of crime there is a potential impact for them. This will continue to be monitored through local and force performance meetings. 4. PUBLIC INTEREST    1. In producing this report, has consideration been given to ‘public confidence’? Yes    2. Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? Yes    3. If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: N/A 5. REPORT AUTHOR    1. Ch/Supt Vicki Townsend 6. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER    1. A/DCC Mark Hobrough 7. ANNEXES    1. None. 8. GOVERNANCE BOARD AND CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL   This report has been presented to the following oversight board:    Meeting chaired by:    Meeting date:    Actions and amendments arising from meeting:    I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers’ meeting.    Meeting chaired by:     Meeting date:      **Signature:  Date:** | | |
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