

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Date: 29th January 2021

Subject: HMICFRS – Victim Services Assessment update report

Report of: Ian Pilling - Chief Constable GMP

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Police and Crime Panel with progress to implement the recommendations from the HMICFRS VSA report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members note the content of the report

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Overview:

In December 2021 HMICFRS published 'An inspection of the service provided to Victims of crime by Greater Manchester Police (GMP)'. The focus of this assessment was to understand the experience of the victim; this is known as a victim service assessment (VSA).

The report sought to understand; "How good is the force's service to victims of Crime?" The terms of reference for this inspection looked specifically at:

- The management of incoming calls with specific focus on the assessment of risk and the prioritisation of resourcing
- The recording of crime at all points of entry and whether these entry points can be trusted
- The force's arrangements for screening and allocation of crime, with specific consideration of vulnerability and risk at each point
- The proportionality, thoroughness and timeliness of investigations into reported crime
- The extent to which senior-level governance provides robust scrutiny of crime standards across the force
- Whether the force follows national guidelines and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime

The report made a number of recommendations for Greater Manchester Police with specific timeframes for completion. The force, in response to these recommendations has initiated a comprehensive action plan to support and intensify ongoing activity. The action plan has specific focus on the immediate recommendations, recommendations to be completed within three months and recommendations to be completed within six months.

The work and plan are supported by robust governance and audit process. At the heart of this is the Gold Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. This meeting also includes representatives from the Home Office and Mayors office. The force has also been engaged as part of the Police Performance Oversight Group process, which will bring further scrutiny and support from across policing.

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress made by Greater Manchester Police in response to the VSA inspection and the ongoing commitment to delivery of the action plan moving forward.

Although this report is more specifically concerned with the actions being taken in response to the report, it is of important to note that significant further work is ongoing to understand the wider strategic issues which may be impacting on the failure to sustain improvements in the long term. This includes leadership, culture, the way the force manages demand and the appropriateness of the current force delivery model.

There has also been ongoing work underway for many months to make significant changes to the way crime is recorded in the force. At present, Grade 4 and 5 incidents (incidents where an officer doesn't physically attend) have their crimes recorded by a central unit. This unit records about half

of the force's crime and does so to a very high standard. The next stage of this project is to record crimes relating to Grade 1, 2 and 3 incidents (where an officer physically attends) within the central unit.

Most importantly, the force is clear that all of the ongoing work is aimed at providing the best possible service to victims of crime across Greater Manchester.

Detail:

Immediate remedial action instigated

There has been significant progress on the action plan since the inspection with immediate action to drive the improvement of identifying crime at the earliest point, to increase quality assurance of our investigation standards and supervisory oversight and a bespoke training delivery programme for all frontline officers and supervisors to be completed by the end of March 2021, with focus on the key findings of the VSA inspection.

Grade 1 - 3 Incident/Crime identification

Additional audit has been implemented to ensure that crime recording decisions made by officers are correct and that crime is recorded in a way which is NCRS compliant. The force accepts this is not a long term solution, as outlined in the action plan; the move to centralised crime recording for all aforementioned incidents within the Operational Communications Branch (OCB) is now being prioritised under a specific change programme board.

The purpose of this immediate remedial action is to enable the identification and submission of the reported crime at the earliest opportunity in this interim period. The force is using the learning from these audits to support and drive the long term aim of sustainability for improved crime recording moving forward. The central governance team feed details back to the supervisor of the relevant frontline officer, where a crime should have been recorded and learning is addressed.

Investigation Standards and Victim Focus Audit

A forcewide response to drive immediate improvement and quality assurance of investigation standards and victim service has been launched.

The purpose of the review is to enable GMP to draw out learning in relation to supervisory support and oversight of said investigations and in relation to reasons for a crime being finalised, the views of the victim at the heart of every decision. This insight is then being used to address learning and performance discussions with officers and staff at a district level and also feeds into the overarching force action plan.

The force has also commenced a process to review every open crime to ensure that the investigative standards comply with the required criteria, particularly regarding investigative standards and supervision.

HMICFRS Recommendations and Timescales

The following are recommendations whereby HMICFRS stated immediate action should be taken.

1. Identify and address gaps in the systems and processes for identifying and recording all reports of crime.

As outlined above much work has already been completed to date in relation to grade 1 - 3 incident reporting and the introduction of a prioritised programme board to ensure the effective delivery of a centralised crime recording response.

Significant work continues to expand on this recommendation including the review by the Force Crime Registrar (FCR) of all 'doors in' to GMP to ensure GMP are wholly satisfied that any gaps have been identified and remedies instigated, where required. The aim is to ensure that all entry points are in adherence with national crime recording standards and Home Office counting rules and that they have the right level of supervisory oversight and provide the best possible service to all GMP service users, at the earliest point.

2. Reinforce requirements to use investigation plans and document where they should be recorded.

This recommendation has made good progress. Improvement is being driven as part of the force Crime Standards Board and the Investigation Standards Audit recently introduced (as above). A force position has been agreed in relation to the location of investigation plan updates within the recording systems. This clear and consistent message for all officers and staff is to be included in the investigation standards training to be delivered in January to March to all frontline supervisors and officers.

In relation to the standards of investigation plans, the force is reviewing the current methodology it uses to ascertain and assess those standards. The force has recognised that the current audit and quality assurance methodology used is primarily process driven. Whilst this is important, this does not draw out qualitative learning and a true understanding of standards of investigative mind-set. A new action to identify effective methods of assessing the more qualitative measures of investigative standards is currently being completed by the Force Crime Standards Team and forms part of the VSA action plan.

3. Supervisory responsibilities for assessing investigations.

This has made good progress. Improvement is being driven as part of the force Crime Standards Board; the newly introduced Investigation standards and victim focus audit and also the supervisory open crime review directive. Bespoke training for all supervisors outlining the requisite standards and performance requirements also forms part of the bespoke training delivery programme. All supervisors are to be trained in supervisory responsibilities by the end of February 2021.

4. Introduce effective governance to ensure the above are being completed.

Significant progress has been made across the force in enhancing and embedding clear and accountable governance lines which focus on the delivery of the action plan and the improvement of victim satisfaction and crime standards. There are now strong accountable governance lines in each district, chaired by the senior leaders in the relevant areas. These senior leaders feed into the force Crime Standards Board, which currently sits bi-weekly to ensure timely progress and information delivery. This in turn reports to the Gold group.

5. Put arrangements in place to make sure that in all investigations the risk to victims has been appropriately assessed and sufficiently documented, and that any risks are mitigated.

Much progress has been made in delivering key improvements in the identification and assessment of risk to all service users of GMP, whether a victim of crime or reporting any other concern to the police. The Operational Communications Branch (OCB) have commenced THRIVE training to all OCB supervision and this training is to be delivered to all OCB call handlers by the end of February.

The THRIVE training enables **every call** made to Greater Manchester Police to be endorsed with a comprehensive risk assessment at that very first point of contact.

Threat - What is the source of harm indicated (person, object, group), how it is made (in person, via social media, by phone etc.) and the circumstances.

Harm - If the THREAT is carried out or the situation deteriorates, what HARM is likely to be caused. Identify the nature of the actual HARM (e.g. physical, financial, sexual, emotional, neglect, other).

Risk - What are the possibilities or likelihood of something occurring? Consider a full range of current, historical and foreseeable factors. SAFEGUARDING options should be considered and the risk level set as low, medium or high.

Investigation - The earliest opportunity to give advice to secure evidence that may assist the investigation and help bring the perpetrator to justice.

Vulnerability - Is the person vulnerable? As a result of their situation or circumstances, are they unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation? Document why someone is or is not vulnerable.

Engagement - Victim focus. What does the service user want from GMP, what action have we agreed being open and honest about our proposed response? Who else can I engage with to support this service user for example ambulance, other key partners?

Greater Manchester Police have themselves identified that further work needs to be completed to ensure the risk to victims is understood to be fluid and that risk assessments must be continuous throughout the life of all investigations. There are a number of potential challenges which need further work in relation to this recommendation, as this applies to every 'door in' identified in the first recommendation, for every incident identified as having some form of vulnerability and for all open investigations.

The following are recommendations whereby HMICFRS stated action should be taken within three months:

1. Start crime recording training for all supervisors, officers and staff in a crime recording role, to include the crime recording requirements for harassment, stalking and coercive controlling behaviour offences.

Bespoke continuous professional development sessions have been authored in direct response to this recommendation. These sessions are specifically for all staff and officers in crime recording roles across the force. Three sessions are to be completed during January 2021.

As outlined above GMP are expanding this action and embarking on a force wide online training programme for all frontline officers and supervision.

The training plan has been devised using subject matter experts. The training is being delivered online with interactive facility enabled to allow officers and staff to interact with the training sessions. The training will be delivered over 5 sessions detailing:

- Identifying victims of crime and their obligations
- Victim contact and wider areas of support
- Understanding of the requirements of crime recording
- Stalking, harassment and coercive control
- How and where to correctly record pip1 updates
- Understanding closing codes
- Knowing what documentation is required to support certain outcomes, for example outcome 16
- Supervisory training about the expectations of their role, how to positively influence staff and how to encourage strong team working

The first training session commenced on Monday 25th January 2021. The first week focusses on supervisory officers and tutor constables. Weeks 2 - 4 focus on training practitioners.

2. Complete an assessment of the standard and supervision of investigation plans and put in place remedial actions to ensure the plans support a high standard of investigation and a good service to victims.

As outlined above, action has been underway to address this recommendation with the introduction of the force wide Investigation Standards and Victim Focus audit and the supervisory directive and the additional action to identify effective methods of assessing the more qualitative measures of investigative standards by the Force Crime Standards Team.

3. Make arrangements to improve the use and supervision of cautions and community resolutions so that they are only applied in appropriate circumstances, taking into account the nature of the offence and the background of the offender.

Bespoke continuous professional development sessions have been authored in direct response to this recommendation. These sessions are specifically for all staff and officers in crime recording roles across the force. These will be completed during January 2021.

As outlined above GMP are expanding this action and embarking on a force wide online training programme for all frontline officers, staff in relevant roles and supervision. This training includes national crime recording standards, behavioural offences, investigation outcome training and the importance of having a victim focussed mind-set throughout the life of every investigation

4. Complete a review to understand why GMP uses such a high proportion of outcome 16 (where a victim is recorded as not supporting or withdrawing support for police action) in respect of domestic abuse. This review should ensure the use of this outcome is not being affected by the quality and timeliness of investigations or workload pressures on police officers and staff and that it is only being used in appropriate circumstances, supported by an auditable record of the victims decision.

Qualitative audits in relation to the use of outcome 16 have been completed in relation to cases of domestic abuse and rape. The findings of these audits are being collated to enable identified learning to be cascaded as part of the overarching action plan.

Greater Manchester Police seek to really understand why victims are not supporting the prosecution of offenders. To enable a transparent and holistic approach to gaining this understanding GMP have commenced an audit of body worn video. A sample has been collated of domestic abuse incidents where outcome 16 has been recorded and the body worn video, from the attending officer responding to the call, secured. The aim of this review is to enable GMP to have a true perspective of the victim. To see and feel what service is given by the attending officer so GMP can better understand why this is happening and identify any learning.

Alongside this body worn video review GMP are, using informed risk assessments, to contact via victim services victims of crime where outcomes 16 have been recorded. This is to allow GMP to hear the thoughts, feelings and experiences from the victims in their own words to ensure these are incorporated into trying to understand why this has happened.

The dual approach will enable GMP to draw out tangible learning which will then inform future training and our internal communication plans to officers.

Internal Communications campaign

GMP launched an internal communications campaign on 18th January 2021. The campaign seeks to speak to the hearts and minds of all our officers and staff and reiterate our core purpose; to "Think victim". The aim is to support our people in our absolute commitment to deliver the best possible service to victims of crime.

This campaign will be launched internally and sustained through a range of internal communications activity over the next six months and beyond. It is vital that all staff in GMP have confidence in the force to improve the identified issues and that they feel listened to and part of the process.

External Communications

The force has recognised that there is a real risk to the confidence of partners and the public, particularly victims of crime, following the report publication.

GMP have committed to fully involving and engaging both partners and the public in designing the response to the report and in scrutiny of the work ongoing. As with the internal campaign, this will be supported by the Think Victim campaign.

This will be supported by a media strategy as a means of informing and updating the public of our progress.