

Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Date: 18 July 2024

Subject: The Baird Inquiry – an independent report into the treatment of people arrested and taken into custody in Greater Manchester with a focus on women and girls.

Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor

Purpose of Report

To update the Police and Crime Panel on the publication of the Baird Inquiry report into the treatment of people arrested and taken into police custody in Greater Manchester, with a focus on women and girls.

A copy of the Inquiry report is enclosed.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to:

1. Note and consider the contents of the Inquiry report.
2. Note the Mayoral Oversight Board that will oversee delivery of the recommendations in the report.

Contact Officers

Vicky Sugars, Assistant Director for Police, Crime, Fire and Criminal Justice.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Baird Inquiry was commissioned following a Sky News investigation in July 2023, that detailed distressing incidents experienced by women in police custody in Greater Manchester.

1.2 Since then, the Inquiry expanded to include 14 complainants, including three males, as well as anonymised contributions from trusted support organisations, and insights from focus groups, independent custody visitors and police officers/staff.

1.3 The Inquiry examined cases between 2021 and 2023 and considered custody records, detention logs, witness statements, complaints materials and many hours of Body Worn Video (BWV) and CCTV.

1.4 The report was launched on the 18 July 2024. A copy of the full report is enclosed.

2 What the report found

2.1 The resulting report uncovered evidence of poor conduct in areas such as arrest, custody, strip-search, domestic abuse handling, and complaints.

2.2 The report author asserts that: -

- a) Seven of the arrests examined and at the lower end of criminality are not lawful.
- b) From the cases examined, custody sergeants should be far more robust in challenging whether detention is required.
- c) Voluntary attendance should be better utilised.
- d) Strip search for welfare purposes should not continue. There are other ways that risks can be mitigated.
- e) The definition of strip search needs reforming.
- f) Police officers should be trained to better recognise trauma.
- g) Support for survivors needs improving.
- h) Better provision for women and women only officers are needed in custody to improve dignity – separate cells, welfare etc.
- i) The Subject Access Request system needs to improve.
- j) The complaints system needs to radically improve.

2.3 The report includes more than 30 recommendations.

2.4 There are recommendations for GMP to own, as well as one's for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor to take forward.

2.5 There are also some national recommendations. The Mayor will write to the Home secretary and engage with relevant national stakeholders regarding these recommendations and a copy of the report has been shared with them.

3 Delivery and Oversight

3.1 The Mayor has established a Mayoral Oversight Board to oversee the delivery of the recommendations which will include senior GMP and GMCA representatives and progress against the recommendations will be shared with the Police and Crime Panel.