

Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA

Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddau De Cymru
Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales



2 September 2019

**POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:
*THE POOR RELATION: The Police and CPS Response to Crimes Against Older People***

I welcome this report, which addresses the response to crimes against older people. Not all older people are vulnerable, as the report identifies, but many older people clearly require a policing response that is appropriate to their needs.

In May this year I provided my response to the HMICFRS report '*Time to Choose: An Inspection of the Police Response to Fraud*'. There are obvious links between that report and this one, in that older people are often the target of fraud and scams. Since the production of the fraud report I have become increasingly concerned about the status of 'Action Fraud', which clearly requires improvement in its service. I would urge that alongside the taking forward of recommendations in this report, that action is taken to look into 'Action Fraud' so that victims of fraud (which in many cases will include older people) can be more confident of a positive service and outcome if they experience this crime.

This report makes a number of recommendations, some of which are for Chief Constables. I welcome these and will also be interested to see an implementation plan for the recommendations for the CPS, College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs Council.

I agree with the report's recommendation for 'a joint and simple definition of what constitutes an older victim'. If all forces and the CPS are working to one definition this can lead to better outcomes and greater clarity on how services can improve – but only if it is the right definition.

I welcome the recommendation for Chief Constables to ensure victim needs assessments are always completed, and work is already underway between my

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team and the Chief Constable's team in South Wales to consider ways to enhance the current process.

Regarding the recommendation to Chief Constables to review whether victim support services can be provided in a better way, I can confirm that earlier this year I commissioned a Victim Needs Assessment, which provided a comprehensive report to me on the services currently being received by victims of crime in South Wales. As a result of the assessment, I am working with the Chief Constable to consider victim services in detail. This has included a task and finish group incorporating partner agencies to look at safeguarding issues and the availability of services for older people in the area. This work will also now contribute to the Chief Constable's recommendation in this report to conduct a gap analysis of adult safeguarding demands.

The Chief Constable is supportive of the report findings and has said the following in response to it:

'Being the victim of crime can have a devastating impact on people's lives and South Wales Police works hard to reduce the numbers of persons subjected to crime and support those affected by it. Particularly insidious are those offenders who target the elderly or otherwise vulnerable; tackling these offences is a priority for South Wales Police. We have rolled out a training package to all officers to better equip them to spot the signs of offences such as fraud and distraction burglary offences, which prey on the elderly and protect those at risk of becoming a victim again. Furthermore, we have also recruited officers into specific roles to prevent online fraud from taking place.'

'We welcome the Inspection on how older victims of crime are treated by both the police and CPS and we will review its findings to see where improvements can be made to provide the best level of service and safeguarding to the older members of our community. Safeguarding elderly people can never be a police issue alone and we work closely with a number of different partners and agencies to do so.'

The Chief Constable and I will shortly launch our new Joint Equality Plan 2019-2022. This will contain a number of clear areas of development to enhance the equality objectives we are jointly committed to delivering over the next 3 years.

One of our joint objectives is to:

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Work to prevent older people from becoming victims of crime and to ensure that the service they receive is accessible and appropriate to their specific needs.

This objective has been introduced in recognition of the need to better understand the needs of older victims of crime in South Wales Police and to work to better provide the service they require. I will ensure that I will take account of the findings and recommendations within 'The Poor Relation' report as I look to hold the force to account for delivery of the older people equality objective.

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