



9 June 2021

**POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:
'POLICING IN THE PANDEMIC: THE POLICE RESPONSE TO THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC DURING 2020'**

The pandemic during 2020 was an unprecedented event across the world and in Wales, and it is of course continuing. This report considers how the police responded to the challenge of the pandemic last year, and it rightly recognises the difficult balances faced by Chief Constables in ensuring services were delivered, officers and staff were protected, and proportionate enforcement action could be taken for social distancing breaches.

It has indeed been a challenging time, and throughout the last year I have worked closely with both my Chief Constables during the pandemic period to ensure that the correct approaches have been taken. From an early point South Wales Police responded by setting up internal contingency planning meetings, many of which my team were involved in, and the force also worked hard to communicate regularly with the public about regulations, guidance and enforcement. This included many opportunities for the public and internal officers to directly engage and ask questions, through Facebook Live events with the Chief Constable, for example. The force has worked hard to ensure the four 'E's approach has been the stance taken and this has been largely appreciated by the public.

As with the other recent HMICFRS report considering custody services provision during Covid-19, the report recognises the challenges that have been faced by forces during the pandemic, but also the commitment to working hard to provide a safe and secure environment that allows services to continue.

I have ensured that I have remained informed about Covid responses in our force throughout the pandemic, including formally monitoring and scrutinising issues through forums such as my Police Accountability & Legitimacy Group. I have also ensured oversight of our commissioned services that have been impacted by the pandemic. I welcome the report and recognise that there are some findings and

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recommendations that will assist further in protecting the public, police officers and staff.

The Chief Constable responds to the content of the report as below:

'The delivery of the policing response to COVID 19 has been an incredible challenge for the team. The benefit of scrutiny and recommendations in a constantly changing world is useful to benchmark our plans and to understand where improvements can be made. We accept the report and we are ensuring that the recommendations are being fully progressed'.

In agreement with the Chief's comments, I am already aware of progress being made against the recommendations in our force and will continue to monitor their implementation.

Rt Hon Alun Michael
Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales