

Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA

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



19 December 2022

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT: 'AN INSPECTION OF VETTING, MISCONDUCT, AND MISOGYNY IN THE POLICE SERVICE'

This comprehensive report details the findings from thematic inspections of police forces, including South Wales Police. The HMICFRS inspection looked at how effectively police forces carry out vetting of its officers and staff, how effectively it protects information and data it holds, and how well corruption is dealt with. The inspection also included assessing forces' abilities to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour.

The award of a 'Good' grade during the vetting and corruption inspection is very encouraging, and I know that it is a result of lots of focus and hard work - it is no coincidence that some aspects of the South Wales Police vetting procedures have been shared as best practice by the National Police Counter Corruption Advisory Group.

These issues are so important, and they will never go away totally, which is why achieving a high standard is enormously important and in the public interest.

The Chief Constable and I both take the view that there is no room for complacency where tackling misconduct and misogyny is concerned so that work and commitment will continue, but it is important for the public also to hear about the positive progress and good performance that is being achieved. The damage caused by those who do wrong within the police service is enormous and it erodes public trust in the service as a whole, so weeding out those bad actors already in the organisation and preventing such people from joining in the first place is vital – and that's why the inspection of this work by HMICFRS is enormously helpful.

A report of this sort is extremely valuable for each Police and Crime Commissioner by pointing to areas for improvement and enabling us to work with the Chief Constable, on behalf of the public, to seek continuous improvement towards the

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highest possible standards. It enables us to recognise progress and success so that we give a balanced picture to the communities across South Wales who depend on having the best possible police service, held to the highest standards.

The Chief Constable summarises his views on the report as follows:

‘As Chief Constable of South Wales Police I am incredibly proud off the ethical culture that my senior leaders and officers promote and display. My staff feel confident in the support they receive when they need to challenge or report unprofessional behaviour. Our high standard of behaviour was recognised by the HMICFRS in their recent PEEL report. In addition, out of the 12 forces that have recently been inspected in relation to their approach to vetting and counter corruption, South Wales Police were one of only two forces that were given a good grading for this area.

However, I have made it clear that I will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour and there is no place in the police service for misogyny, racism, or any other form of discrimination. The public must be able to trust police officers and staff. The vast majority of the officers and staff who work for South Wales Police conduct themselves impeccably and work tirelessly to protect the public; those very few who choose to breach the standards expected of them undermine all this work and erode the public’s trust in us.

South Wales Police is also leading UK policing on identifying and tackling sexual harassment in the workplace, encouraging victims to come forward to deal with this behaviour, and the abuse of position for sexual purposes. Police conduct is a very important national conversation, and I am fully committed to ensuring that we uphold the highest standards of behaviour.’

I am grateful for the Chief Constable’s comments and the commitment to working towards the recommendations in the report. It is clear that any recommendations are necessary and welcomed. I will use my Scrutiny & Accountability Board to track progress against this matter.

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