

**Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA**

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



16 August 2021

**POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:  
'REVIEW OF POLICING DOMESTIC ABUSE DURING THE PANDEMIC'**

I have read this report with interest, as policing has been faced with very difficult circumstances over the last year and protecting vulnerable people throughout the period has been a priority for me and the Chief Constable.

While the past 17 months have been immensely difficult for everyone, we have worked with a range of partners to keep the people of South Wales safe and the close joint working has brought about some very positive developments, particularly in tackling domestic violence and abuse.

It is pleasing to see that some of the developments in South Wales, such as the DRIVE programme, have been recognised in the report, and I believe the findings are an endorsement of the work we have undertaken to ensure that our local police service is as good as it can be through such a challenging time.

The DRIVE programme in South Wales is an innovative approach that challenges the behaviour of high risk, high harm perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. It has been shown to reduce violence, victimisation and reoffending. The results of a three-year, independent evaluation by Bristol University show that the DRIVE programme has significantly reduced levels of harm and risk for victims.

I am also pleased that the Inspectorate has recognised that prevention is at the heart of our approach to keeping South Wales safe. Protecting vulnerable people is a priority so I am particularly pleased to see that our clear focus on protecting victims and working with offenders has been highlighted.

I can confirm that I have already make enquiries on several the issues highlighted in the report during the year. My team, which includes a Strategic Lead for Vulnerability & Victims, is working diligently with partner agencies to ensure that victims are supported and able to report, and that they can highlight any issues of concern regarding any victim dissatisfaction.

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Mae'r Comisiynydd a'i dîm yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg  
The Commissioner and his team welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English

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I agree that it is important to better understand why victims may not want to continue with an investigation and for the force to do all it can to support victims to do so. It is crucial that victims are supported and updated throughout their journey, including while waiting for any court proceedings to come to trial. My Scrutiny & Accountability Board has been looking at this issue for all victims during the year. I will ensure the force is working to implement this as well as the other recommendations in the report, and I am reassured that work has already begun.

Indeed, the Chief Constable reiterates this in his comments on the report:

*'The continued delivery of policing during the pandemic has been an incredible challenge and created a number of new and unexpected circumstances. We recognised that we needed to adapt to meet these new challenges.'*

*The report highlights the collective and innovative response across England and Wales and the good practice developed as a result and we will ensure that the recommendations will be worked upon vigorously and used to develop our future strategy.*

*The force remains completely committed to providing a quality police service and a high standard of care for all those who live in, work in, or visit South Wales and will continue to focus on protecting and supporting victims of domestic abuse as an absolute priority'.*

I note the recommendations in the report and feel that they appropriately capture what forces need to do to ensure the safety of domestic abuse victims. I will continue to oversee their implementation in South Wales.

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