



26 September 2022

**POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT: 'PEEL 2021/22: POLICE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY & LEGITIMACY – AN INSPECTION OF SOUTH WALES POLICE'**

I welcome the latest 'Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL)' inspection report and note that South Wales Police has been recognised for the way in which it prevents crime and anti-social behaviour, responds to the public, and investigates crime. I also note that the report highlights the need for South Wales Police to improve the way it protects vulnerable people from harm.

The 2021-22 inspection has graded the force's performance across eight areas of policing. The report rates South Wales Police as being:

- Good in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Good in responding to the public
- Good in investigating crime
- Good in strategic planning, organisational management, and value for money.

Engagement with and treating the public with fairness and respect, managing offenders and suspects, as well as building, supporting, and protecting the workforce were rated as being in the adequate category. I acknowledge that inspectors found that the way in which the force protects vulnerable people requires improvement.

Pleasingly, the report has highlighted that South Wales Police has the highest charged or summonsed rate for sexual offences across all 43 police forces in England and Wales, and the 3rd best charge or summons rate for all victim-based crimes. This is clearly an excellent finding and one that I'm sure the public of South Wales will welcome.

The report also found that the force champions an ethical culture, with staff feeling confident and supported if they need to challenge or report unprofessional behaviour.

## Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA

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



I welcome all of the recommendations in the report and am already aware of progress being made to address some of the issues raised, including some I have already visited as part of my own scrutiny and oversight role. For example, I am pleased to note that the report references the recently-established Bodywornvideo Scrutiny Panel, jointly established between my team and the force's Communities, Partnerships & Cohesion team. I accept that this is in the early stages of development, but it is already working very well, and an agreement to allocate an independent Chair to the group has already been made as part of the commitment to openness and transparency in this area. My team will also continue its ongoing dip sampling of completed stop search forms and bodyworn video footage, and will continue to engage our own Police Accountability & Legitimacy Group in the oversight of these policing powers.

I also note that the report references the need to better record victim decisions in relation to the use of Out of Court Disposals, and indeed in relation to their withdrawal of support. This is something my own scrutiny programme has also flagged and asked the force to address. My Scrutiny & Accountability Board seeks updates on this area and will keep doing so in light of the report findings.

I have now established my scrutiny programme for the year ahead. In light of this report, I have incorporated the need to visit Child Exploitation and Vulnerability within our deep dive programme. I will work to hold the force to account for improvements in this area but will also continue to consider where partner agencies can assist with this.

I continue my commitment and passion to address Violence Against Women & Girls and Sexual Violence, and am pleased that the report references some of our work in this area. However, I also note the area for improvement raised in the report in relation to the use of Claire's Law. I will look to oversee the use of this power and the waiting times for those accessing their rights under this legislation.

Protecting vulnerable people has been a key priority for me from the start, as reflected in my Police & Crime Plan. I recognise that the needs of vulnerable individuals are often complex and cannot be addressed by the police alone. My lead for Victims & Vulnerability works closely with policing colleagues and partners at both a regional and national level, focused upon early intervention and prevention. Investment in initiatives such as the Vulnerability Change Programme, are enabling

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us to strengthen opportunities to learn and adapt in partnership, influencing the training and understanding of frontline staff to be more trauma-informed but this will always be a difficult and challenging area of work.

The strong relationships that we have forged with partners over many years here in South Wales remain key to our success. We must build on the significant progress that we have made to date, seize the opportunity that this report offers and use the challenge to propel us forward in our ability to protect children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation.

My Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan has also welcomed this inspection report, and makes the following comments:

*I am pleased that the HMICFRS have acknowledged that the core of South Wales Police is strong and, importantly, that we have the plans in place to continue to improve and develop the organisation. The HMICFRS have also recognised the good work being done by our staff and officers to keep people safe, respond to those who need us most, investigate crime effectively and provide the public with value for money. We have invested heavily in developing a positive workplace and the HMICFRS have acknowledged that ethical standards were high, with clear leadership that supports improvement through learning*

*The inspectors have found that there is a requirement for us to improve the way in which we protect vulnerable people, particularly children who go missing and are at risk from exploitation. Protecting the vulnerable from harm is my top priority and we have invested in this complex area of policing with more specialist officers working daily to protect vulnerable people than ever before. We work closely and more effectively with a range of partner agencies to spot signs of sexual abuse and exploitation far earlier, so we are able to offer intervention to support victims and bring offenders to justice. We have demonstrated our commitment to protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation now and in the future, as an organisation and as an integral member of the wider network of partners who keep young people safe.*

*We have taken on board the feedback from the HMICFRS and have made significant progress in taking forward the areas for improvement identified in the report. I am very proud of our achievements and along with my team, remain determined to continue improving the service we provide to the public of South Wales.*

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It is good to see that the findings of the PEEL assessment recognise the hard work and high performance of the officers and staff of South Wales Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime across our communities. We all need to work tirelessly to address the areas for improvement within the report. I am proud of the work being undertaken in South Wales Police and of the ongoing dedication of the Chief Officer team. I will work to oversee the implementation of the report recommendations and look forward to seeing ongoing improvements.

**Rt Hon Alun Michael**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales**

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