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Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2022

Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

Title of Report:	Essex Police Initial Review of HMICFRS Findings on “A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service’s response to rape - Phase two” to inform PFCC Response
Classification of Paper:	Official
Agenda Number:	11.0
Chief Officer:	ACC Baldwin
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Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	30 th March 2022
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	D/Supt Neil Pudney
Date of Approval:	21 March 2022

1.0 Purpose of Report

On 25 March 2022, HMICFRS published their report titled ‘A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service’s response to rape – Phase two’. Appendix A provides a summary and context of the full report.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and early feedback on the force position in response to the HMICFRS Review Findings on the three recommendations to inform the PFCC Response.

2.0 Recommendations

There were 9 recommendations made within the report with three directly affecting police forces. They are;

Recommendation 1 “Police and prosecutors should review and significantly improve communications with victims from the point of charge onwards”

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Within Essex the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service conduct post charge joint visits to victims who are considering disengaging from the criminal justice process.

There is currently a six month funded pilot underway "Synergy Essex" which aims at increasing ISVA capacity to provide bespoke, targeted support to repeat victims or victims which data suggests are more likely to disengage from the criminal justice process this includes victims who are either black British; suffering from mental health issues; from low socio economic background and rape as opposed to other sexual offences.

The CPS have launched two online tools which aim to support victims and through going through the criminal justice system. First is a pre-trial therapy guidance online tool. This is currently being updated following a consultation and the tool will be back online in Spring 2022. The second is a CPS walkthrough guide to the criminal justice system, this was recently launched setting out what victims can expect at each stage of Criminal Justice process and how further support can be accessed.

Recommendation 8 "Police and the CPS should work collaboratively to ensure that bad character is considered in all rape cases and progressed wherever it is applicable."

Essex Police and the CPS are already collaborating on training which is being delivered through the Crime and Public Protection Training and Skills Board on an Offender Centric Approach. There is a revised investigative review template being rolled out which incorporates the requirement to detail offender centric approach for every DS/DI review. This has been designed to ensure consistency in investigative reviews and is attached as appendix B.

Early advice submissions have been a focus in Essex and we are seeing an increase in CPS and Police joint action plans with an offender centric approach a key element for any decisions.

Recommendation 9 "Forces to ensure victims of rape are given the opportunity to make a victim personal statement (VPS) at the earliest possible time, with the option of updating this statement closer to the court trial date."

The Victim Aide Memoire (appendix C) has been developed by Essex Police to deliver a consistent and high quality approach to victims and compliance with Victims Code of Practise (VCOP). The Aide Memoire has been circulated to all officers and is accessible through the Virtual Crime Academy portal.

A Victim Closure Template (appendix D) is currently being trialled in the North Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU). The next stage is to expand the use of the template across Crime and Public Protection and then wider throughout the force. This aims to professionalise closure of investigations and prompts reviewing supervisors to consider key point before finalising a case. The template includes both VCOP compliance which incorporates Victim Personal States (VPS).

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The Training and Skills Board develops inputs to deliver to frontline teams on the importance of VPS and uses cases studies to demonstrate the significance of VPS.

3.0 Governance and Oversight

The Training and Skills Board and Essex Victim Witness Action Group provide the governance and oversight against the work streams highlighted throughout the report.

4. 0 Summary

Crime and Public Protection continue to build strong working partnerships with the East of England regional CPS Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) office. Work continues around training and implementing new initiatives to ensure consistency across investigations and improve VCOP compliance and use of VPS as outlined above against the recommendations from the report.

Appendix A



Appendix A Police
and CPS response to i
Summary of full report

Appendix B



Appendix B DS
Review Template SOP
Investigative review template

Appendix C



Appendix C Victim
aide memoire - intern
Victim Aide Memoire

Appendix D

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Appendix D Victim
Closure Document.do

Victim Closure Template

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Appendix A



Appendix A Police
Summary of full report and CPS response to i

Appendix B



Appendix B DS
Investigative review template Review Template SOP

Appendix C



Appendix C Victim
Victim Aide Memoire aide memoire - intern

Appendix D



Appendix D Victim
Victim Closure Template Closure Document.do