

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

[section55responses@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:section55responses@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Kelvedon Park, London Road, Rivenhall,  
Witham CM8 3HB

Telephone: 01245 291600  
Fax: 01245 291601  
E-mail: [pfcc@essex.police.uk](mailto:pfcc@essex.police.uk)  
<http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk>

Your Ref: n/a  
Our Ref 20211101 SH  
Date: 12 November 2021  
Enquiries to: Suzanne Harris  
E-mail: [pfcc@essex.police.uk](mailto:pfcc@essex.police.uk)

Dear Home Secretary,

I write in response to the HMICFRS final inspection report: **Police response to violence against women and girls.**

I acknowledge the recommendations made in this report and understand that recommendations 11, 13 and 20 (listed in appendix A for reference) are applicable to all Forces, including Essex Police.

The Chief Constable has provided a detailed response to me regarding each of the recommendations relevant to Essex Police. This assures me that the Force is on target to achieve recommendations 11 (3.2) and 13 (4.1); information for compliance with recommendation 20 is awaited from the NPCC VAWG National Delivery Lead.

Since publication of the interim report on this topic, Essex Police have improved the recording of the protected characteristics of victims. The Force is now (since September 2021) one of only 12 forces nationally to have begun recording gender in respect of hate crimes.

Essex Police has established a structure for stopping VAWG, including a VAWG Oversight Board (chaired at ACC level) and a Performance Board, as well as appointing a strategic lead and a tactical lead – who is developing a delivery plan and building an associated performance framework which will feed into a national performance framework.

Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls is a key priority in Essex, outlined in my Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024. We need to understand the size and scale of the issue, support victims and then deal with the problem. My focus is on ensuring that the women

feel able to report crimes against them; ensuring that the Force respond appropriately to victims and do all within their power to bring perpetrators to justice; and working together to prevent future violence against women, so that women and girls feel safe in our communities.

I will continue to monitor the work of Essex Police in this regard, and to hold the Chief Constable to account, including through the monthly Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Hirst', written in a cursive style.

Roger Hirst  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

c.c. Ben-Julian Harrington, Chief Constable, Essex Police.

## **Appendix A – Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 11**

- Recommendation 3:  
Structures and funding should be put in place to make sure victims receive tailored and consistent support
- 3.2:  
By March 2022, all police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of victims is accurately and consistently recorded

### **Recommendation 13**

- Recommendation 4:  
All chief constables should immediately review and ensure that there are consistently high standards in their forces' responses to violence against women and girls and should be supported in doing so by national standards and data.
- 4.1:  
By March 2022, chief constables should establish and publish an action plan that specifies in detail what steps the force will take to improve and standardise its approach to responding to violence against women and girls offences, with the aim of ensuring policies, processes and practices are effective, actively monitored and managed, and meeting national standards.  
This should include (but is not limited to) improving and standardising:
  - the use of police powers to protect women, including arrest of perpetrators, use of pre-charge bail, the applications for orders (where appropriate) and processes for responding to breaches of non-molestation and other orders;
  - the use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme;
  - the capability of generalist and specialist staff to respond to violence against women and girls offences effectively, including consistent understanding of newer offences (such as coercive control);
  - the identification and management of high-harm violent offenders against women and girls (in partnership with other organisations);
  - the identification and protection of the most at-risk victims of violence against women and girls offences (in partnership with other organisations); and
  - internal and public communications related to violence against women and girls to ensure that messages raise awareness of the risk and emphasise the seriousness of the issues

### **Recommendation 20**

- Recommendation 5:  
Immediate review of use of outcomes 15 and 16 in violence against women and girls offences
  - 5.2:  
By December 2022, the NPCC VAWG National Delivery Lead should develop and disseminate to forces a process for consistent and robust monitoring of outcomes 15 and 16 violence against women and girls cases. This should require, as a minimum, inspector-level sign-off of these cases and that evidence on the rationale for these closure codes is recorded and auditable.
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