

Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP
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Your ref: n/a
Our ref: SH
Date: 02 May 2023
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Dear Home Secretary

I write in response to the HMICFRS inspection report: **An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence.**

I acknowledge the 4 recommendations made in this report and understand that recommendations 3 and 4 (2 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 recommendations 3 and 4. I am pleased to see that Essex Police is working towards full compliance with both recommendations 3 and 4.

Recommendation 3

It is expected that full compliance will be achieved by the target date of 31 March 2024. The force has already made progress by ensuring that up to date guidance has been circulated. Further training is on hold until the Home Office Counting Rules Review is complete, but it is intended that further targeted training will be developed and delivered if a need is identified.

Recommendation 4

The force has already undertaken an initial assessment of the requirements and is developing further specific data measures to ensure it can continue to accurately assess and determine if racial disproportionality exists.

Disproportionality is reported on and scrutinised in a number of ways. Regular reporting is provided to my Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board, in an Equality report and in thematic reporting. The force has internal groups, such as the Use of Force Board, which include disproportionality as part of their scope. The force is also subject to independent scrutiny by Independent Advisory Groups. Additionally, the Essex Criminal Justice Board commissioned some research into disproportionality across the system, which is nearing completion. I am confident that the additional work which has been started in response to this recommendation will ensure that robust monitoring continues to enable the force, and myself, to understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in Essex.

These two recommendations now form part of monthly reporting to an OPC Strategic Board (led by an ACC) and to Chief Officer Group. Each recommendation has a thematic lead (a D/Supt) who will take responsibility for ensuring that compliance is achieved.

It is helpful to see a focus on this area and recognition of the importance of partnership working which is enhanced by the VRUs. We support the recommendation that the Home Office should define processes for VRUs to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, which will build on the good work already undertaken by the VRU network.

Our own VRU (known locally as the Violence and Vulnerability Unit) is making a positive impact in Essex. It has established strong partnerships with other organisations and this is strengthened by co-location of those working in the VRU. In Essex the force is represented by a Detective Inspector from the Serious Violence Unit, which helps to ensure linkages across operational work, including Op Grip (Hot Spot policing focussing on violent crime).

I will continue to maintain close scrutiny of the work of Essex Police in this regard, and to hold the Chief Constable to account.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Hirst', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roger Hirst
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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

Appendix A – Recommendations

Recommendation 1

By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should define processes for violence reduction units to use when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce serious youth violence.

Recommendation 2

By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should further develop existing joint evaluation and learning for violence reduction units to share learning with each other.

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.

Recommendation 4

By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.