

Our Ref: CC/JP/CDI/0087

17 July 2018

Mr Marc Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire Fire and Police Headquarters
Deepdale Lane
Nettleham
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Dear Marc

HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Inspection

Thank you for your letter of 5th July 2018 expressing your concerns around our recent HMICFRS inspection. It will come as no surprise that I share many of your concerns, and we are taking urgent and significant steps to address these areas.

Whilst I do not seek to defend the indefensible, I wish to make it clear that we were disappointed with some of the unfair statements HMICFRS made in their report, and we have robustly challenged these. Consequently they have agreed some minor changes to the language they use in the report. We disagree with them on some key areas such as the use of the N100 form to record allegations of rape until the allegation is corroborated; we are not content with the use of this form and go beyond its scope by recording crimes of rape at the first point of contact, demonstrating to victims that we believe them from the outset. Despite this, HMICFRS regard this as “non-compliance.”

HMICFRS changed their inspection methodology during their current cycle, which saw them look in detail at domestic abuse risk assessment proformas completed by officers when dealing with reports of domestic abuse. This is used by the force as a risk assessment tool, but HMICFRS expected that we should record individual crimes based on any disclosure the victim made during the risk assessment. Other forces which had been inspected previously did not have domestic abuse proformas examined. In these cases we were investigating the matters reported by the victim, assessing risk and taking care of their safeguarding needs; failing to record each crime was an administrative oversight which we are taking steps to correct by briefing officers and supervisors accordingly.

Hopefully the examples above give you some assurance that we have met the needs of our victims, and we continue to investigate all incidents reported to us. I echo your sentiments about the risk of becoming slavishly beholden to compliance at the expense of victim focus and am clear that our

Continued...

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overwhelming priority remains caring for our victims. Clearly we have some work to do around the administrative side, and to that end we have produced an action plan in order to take decisive action on the points raised by HMICFRS. I am pleased to enclose a copy of this for your reference as requested. We are well on schedule to make significant progress by the time the HMICFRS report is published, which should minimise any reputational fallout for the force.

In respect of inadequacies in auditing practices, it appears that the root of this is a misunderstanding on the part of the Force Crime Registrar, rather than negligence. This is being dealt with internally via a support plan, and we are introducing additional safeguards to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

I apologise for the delay in resuming the regular assurance reports while we review and refresh the process for delivering these in line with my Distinctively Lincolnshire plan. Work continues on this and I look forward to providing these again in the very near future.

Our media strategy has broadly been to accept the findings of the report, indicate the progress we have already made in advance of its publication, and reinforce that our priority is victim focus. We are very keen to reflect that this report is more about integrity of crime recording functions, and less about the service we provide to victims.

We are open to the creation of an independent panel and are happy to assist with this wherever possible. I would ask that we are able to participate in agreeing the panel's terms of reference, to ensure that we are all working to the common purpose of improving crime data integrity without disadvantaging public service.

Finally, I am pleased to hear that you have confidence in the leadership of the Chief Officer Group and are supportive of our efforts to remedy the situation, which is also reflected in the HMICFRS report. With your assistance and support I am confident that we will achieve marked improvements in the near future, coupled with our longer term action plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bill Skelly', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Bill Skelly
Chief Constable

ENC(s)