

Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Home Secretary
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Please ask for: Mr. Martin Surl
Our Ref:
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Date: 24 August 2017

Dear Home Secretary,

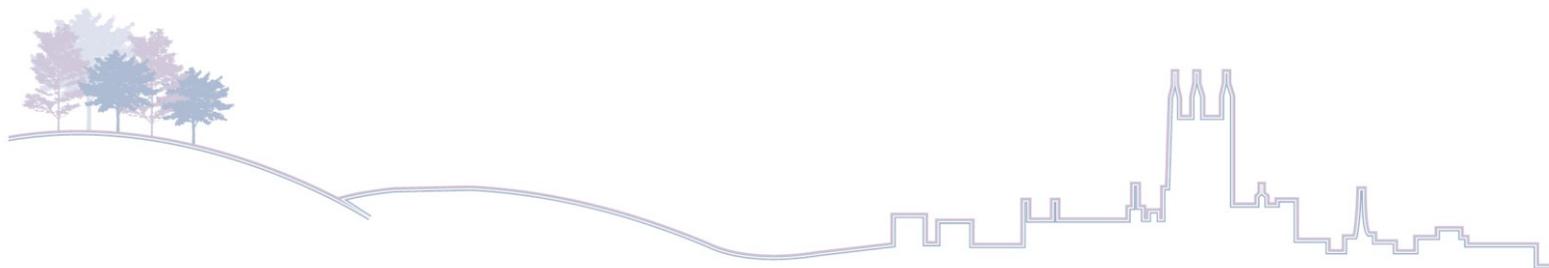
RESPONSE TO HMIC NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION INSPECTION - Gloucestershire Constabulary – 6-17 February 2017

I write in respect of the HMIC report in relation to the above inspection. I have carefully studied its findings published on 20 June 2017 and having discussed the report take this opportunity to comment on its conclusions and recommendations.

Although the inspectors overall conclusion was that Gloucestershire Constabulary's approach to child protection was found in some respects to be inadequate, they did note the Constabulary's commitment to protecting children and the dedication and hard work of many officers and staff who are engaged in protecting children, which I would endorse. I also welcome the positive findings identified by the inspectors in respect of the multi-agency CSE team, the force's awareness raising of CSE in schools and the wider community, the CSE screening tool that is used by the Constabulary and its partners and the good work undertaken to manage those individuals in the community who pose a risk to children.

I nonetheless accept the significant inadequacies and shortcomings identified in the report and note the inspectors' recommendations particularly in relation to the better use of technology and information management, improved supervision and leadership of officers and staff, more robust governance and performance management and further training of officers and staff especially in relation to missing children and CSE.

I have discussed the report and its findings with the Chief Constable for Gloucestershire and his officers and staff. I have also formally sought the Chief Constable's comments on the report and in particular the HMI's recommendations and these are now to be found on my website at www.gloucestershire-pcc.gov.uk. This includes a copy of the Constabulary's Child Protection Response Plan 2017 which sets out in some detail how the force intends to improve its services and indeed has already made changes to a number of aspects of its work in this area. I will continue to monitor the Constabulary's progress in delivering the plan and hold the Chief Constable to account for its successful implementation.



It is clear that at the time of the inspector's visit, Gloucestershire Constabulary was not in a good enough position when it came to child protection. Since the inspection I have however been assured by the Chief Constable and his senior team that work has and is being done to protect some of the most vulnerable in our county. The force is aware of my expectations and my Office will be holding them to account to ensure they deliver. I am also aware that child protection is never going to be addressed by the police alone and I am conscious that our colleagues in Gloucestershire County Council have been heavily criticised recently by Ofsted in relation to children's services. This suggests to me that a number of the issues and therefore the solutions to them are to be found amongst the wider child protection community and not just within the Constabulary and I intend to take action to bring together the various partners and agencies involved in this important area of work soon to significantly improve the standard of child protection in this county.

In summary, I am grateful to the inspectors for drawing attention to this state of affairs and for their constructive recommendations. I am re-assured by the Chief Constable's response and the plans he has developed and will continue to monitor the force's progress. I will work with senior leaders of the County Council and the other agencies involved to address the wider issues that appear to be a feature of child protection in Gloucestershire and look forward to seeing the outcome of the inspector's further inspection this month.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MAS', with a horizontal line underneath.

Martin Surl
Police and Crime Commissioner

cc. Ms Wendy Williams, HMICFRS