



OPCC

Office of the Police &
Crime Commissioner
for Gloucestershire

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
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Please ask for: Mr. Martin Surl
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Date: 28 June 2019

Dear Home Secretary,

RESPONSE TO HMICFRS FRAUD INSPECTION 2018

I write in respect of the HMICFRS report in relation to the above inspection. I have carefully studied the report published on 2 April 2019 and take this opportunity to comment on its findings.

There is no doubt that fraud offences are in a class of their own in terms of their prevalence throughout the world, their range of scale and impact and their potential for undermining society's most fundamental values. However, they are, as the report recognises, often complex to investigate and require investigators to be particularly skilled and well informed to stand any chance of detecting and disrupting the offenders and securing justice for victims.

The report is highly critical of the national situation in relation to these offences. Although most of the Inspectorate's recommendations were directed to the NPCC Coordinator for Economic Crime, the responsibility for ensuring the recommendations are acted upon sits with chief officers, individually and collectively, and, with my fellow PCCs, I shall do my part to ensure that those recommendations are given proper consideration by the national coordinator and the relevant working group of the NPCC on which I am pleased to see that Gloucestershire is represented. Some investment has already been made in this area nationally since the Inspectorate completed its study and we will look to see that that investment has been used to best effect.

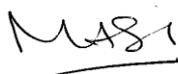
More locally, I have discussed this report with my Chief Constable and sought his comments on the report and in particular the two recommendations and the other areas for improvement highlighted and these are now to be found on my website at www.gloucestershire-pcc.gov.uk. I am reassured by his comprehensive response and have detected a distinct shift in the Constabulary's approach to fraud. However, I will continue to monitor the Constabulary's progress in delivering its plans and will hold the Chief Constable to account for their successful implementation. While a consistent regional policy for the South West will be welcome, I shall also be expecting the Chief

Constable to put in place a policy for this Constabulary to ensure that officers and staff in Gloucestershire are fully aware of the evolving approach to fraud offences and how it will be implemented in this county.

I am aware of the effective use that has been made of Op. Signature, especially in relation to the more vulnerable victims of fraud, and the work that is being done to raise awareness of the dangers of cybercrime among various audiences. I am however not convinced that that is the total answer and I will be expecting the Chief Constable to make maximum use of the intelligence that is received by the Constabulary whether from local sources or via national agencies and ensure that effective action is taken to disrupt the OCGs and others responsible for these insidious offences.

In summary, I am again grateful to the inspectors for their work in highlighting the issues in this area of business 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 Constabulary's progress accordingly.

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