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Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

CC Drusilla Sharpling CBE

4 June 2014

Dear Home Secretary

I am writing to you regarding the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) Police Response into Domestic Violence and Abuse.

As per my statutory responsibility to comment on these reports I acknowledge their conclusion that West Midlands Police is providing some good services when identifying and tackling domestic abuse.

Whilst I also appreciate the HMIC comments that there are still some areas where improvements can be made to strengthen the services to victims, it is my understanding that the majority of these had already been identified and are in the process of being addressed.

Domestic violence and abuse is a priority issue within the West Midlands and I applaud initiatives such as Operation Sentinel which sought, and succeeded, in raising both the reporting and recording of domestic issues to the police.

I do have a concern that headlines are generated from the figures and statements in the report which are derived from stratified samples, which are not statically valid, as a representative figure and the impression anyone reading the reports of the inspection would conclude.

The report also highlights that "For every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were 50 arrests in West Midlands. For most forces the number is between 45 and 90. This low arrest rate compared to other forces indicates that this is an issue the force may want to review." I understand that it was made clear that West Midlands Police is not confident that domestic violence markers are applied consistently by custody officers across the force. Although the footnote does mention that the data may be inaccurate I would suggest that no direct comparison with other forces should have been made in the document due to the differences in data compilation. The report also infers that a higher arrest rate is the better outcome which is, at least, debatable for those involved.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R M Jones".

Bob Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner