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**west midlands**  
**police and crime**  
**commissioner**

## **An inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service**

### **Response from Simon Foster, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner**

The report from HMICFRS published on 2 November 2022, raises deeply concerning issues about police vetting. It is clearly a matter of significant concern that, having reviewed hundreds of police vetting files, the Inspectorate found many cases where people should not have been allowed to join the police, including officers with criminal records or links to organised crime. The evidence that a prospective officer might present a risk to the public was ignored and/or not considered with sufficient seriousness. This comes at a time when we are facing increased public distrust of police officer honesty and integrity, on the tail of some high-profile cases, most notably in the Metropolitan Police Service.

The Inspectorate has made 43 recommendations, which span across much of the professional standards work undertaken by the Force. I am supportive of these recommendations and I am working with the Chief Constable and the Force to determine how they can be implemented, to continue to deliver improvements in the West Midlands. We have already been working to make improvements to police vetting in the West Midlands, and the Inspection report builds on the work we have been doing. In 2019, HMICFRS recommended that all forces should comply with all elements of the national guidance on vetting in line with the College of Policing's National Vetting Standards. At the time, less than half (48%) of our workforce had up to date vetting for their specific role.

Over the last two years, we have worked with West Midlands Police, in order to meet this recommendation. As of November 2021, the number of Aftercare Vetting applications overdue was 1,495. At the end of January 2022, the vetting team had successfully completed a three-year aftercare project, bringing vetting for all police officers and staff up to date. All police officers and staff in the work place, have at least the minimum required level of recruitment vetting. There are an additional 40 officers/staff who are yet to be re-vetted, who are not in the workplace, as a consequence of being on long term sick, suspended, family leave or a career break. In July 2022, HMICFRS formally signed off the outstanding actions for the Force as complete.

To ensure future compliance with College of Policing Vetting, Approved Professional Practice, a new performance monitoring dashboard linked to robotics is being utilised, which is able to send out a request for re-vetting, prior to vetting levels expiring. A dedicated vetting aftercare team is responsible for the ongoing vetting of current employees. The vetting team have met all targets for the national police officer uplift project and have a dedicated team responsible for officer and staff recruitment vetting. Additional resource has been made available to the Department this year, in order to facilitate a more in-depth, open source and social media research of applicants. The additional research is essential for identifying and managing risk, so as to ensure WMP only employ people who will protect the most vulnerable in society and will enable the Force to fulfil the recommendations in the report.

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I have asked the Chief Constable to report to me and my Strategic Policing and Crime Board in February 2023, on the plans and progress to ensure compliance with all 43 recommendations in the Report.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Foster'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'S' at the beginning and a horizontal line extending across the middle.

**Simon Foster**

**West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner**