

South Yorkshire
Mayoral Combined Authority
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield, S1 2BQ

31 October 2025

To: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

Dear Chief Inspector

Response from Kilvinder Vigurs, South Yorkshire's Deputy Mayor, to the HMICFRS report - State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024-25

I welcome the findings of the latest annual assessment of policing. This report provides valuable insight to support preparations for future policing reform and contextualise progress in South Yorkshire against the national picture. While no formal recommendations were made, the report highlights several areas for improvement and focus, many of which will be familiar to forces across the country.

It is encouraging to see recognition of policing efforts to rebuild public trust and confidence. This is the first priority of South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Plan, and improving public confidence is fundamental to delivering an effective policing service. The report suggests that nationally, the decline in public perceptions may be beginning to stabilise, although some indicators remain mixed. For example, while confidence is said to be levelling out, the percentage of the public who believe the police are doing a good job continues to show long term signs of decline. I would be interested to understand HMICFRS' analysis of these trends in more detail.

Locally, we are starting to see early signs of improvement. According to the latest Crime Survey for England and Wales:

- The percentage of respondents in South Yorkshire who agree the police do a good or excellent job rose from 41.8% (year ending September 2024) to 47.8% (year ending March 2025).
- Agreement that police deal with local concerns increased from 39.8% to 46.1% over the same period.

While these trends are positive, building public confidence will require sustained effort. The report rightly identifies inconsistency in police communications, and it is clear that a more proactive and consistent approach to community engagement is needed. Neighbourhood

policing teams play a vital role, and through local performance monitoring as well as the forthcoming Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee framework, I will closely monitor progress.

The importance of neighbourhood policing and problem-solving approaches, particularly in tackling anti-social behaviour, is further reinforced throughout the report. South Yorkshire Police have continued their investment in neighbourhood policing through a focus on crime prevention and evidence-based practice. This was recognised in the recent PEEL inspection, with a graded judgement of 'Good' for preventing crime. These elements are essential to early intervention and long-term crime reduction, and maintaining this investment will be critical, particularly whilst balancing the challenges of finite resources and funding.

Improving the quality of crime investigations is another key area identified in both the State of Policing report and our recent PEEL inspection. This is central to public confidence, and work is underway in South Yorkshire to address this, as outlined within my recent response to the report on joint case building between the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). I will continue to monitor progress to ensure improvements are both meaningful and measurable.

I also welcome the report's focus on technology and the need for investment and collaboration. With the rapid advancement of criminal activity in the digital space, policing must keep pace. Better coordination between local forces is needed, as well as national support for enhanced digital capabilities. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition offer opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness, but their use must be transparent to maintain public legitimacy. I would welcome more streamlined approaches through the College of Police and Police Digital Service to promote ethical and sustainable innovation projects that can be rolled out nationally, providing better value for money for the public.

Finally, the report highlights the urgent need to reform the police funding formula and increased provision of capital budgets. South Yorkshire faces significant financial pressures:

- South Yorkshire experiences the fourth highest demand per 1,000 population nationally and fewer officers per 100,000 population than the national average.
- Bridging this gap would require around 350 additional officers, at a considerable cost each year.

Alongside this, we must also support a relatively inexperienced workforce:

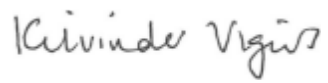
- At the time this report was published, national police workforce data showed that 35% of officers across England and Wales had less than 5 years' experience (year ending March-2024). This has since risen to 51% for year ending March-2025.
- In South Yorkshire, we have seen a rise from 41% to 59% during this same period.

Our officers need time to develop their skills alongside the wellbeing support needed to manage the realities of modern policing, including major events, protests, and multiple football fixtures. Continued investment is required to improve supervisory capability and ensure sufficient training. I would also advocate for flexibility in hiring police staff to increase analytical and IT capability to complement officer roles and support productivity. These pressures must be addressed if we are to continue delivering a high-quality service to the public.

Officers in South Yorkshire continue to do exceptional work to keep our communities safe, in the face of changing operational demands and a challenging budgetary position. I want to

thank them for their work and look forward to keeping the dialogue open with HMICFRS on how we drive up standards together.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Kilvinder Vigurs". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Kilvinder Vigurs

Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime