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04 December 24

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

Dear Chief Inspector

Response from Oliver Coppard, South Yorkshire's Mayor, to the HMICFRS report: The policing response to antisocial behaviour.

I welcome the findings of the report and the renewed focus on problem-solving approaches and partnership interventions, both vital in addressing the root causes of antisocial behaviour. The prevalence and impact of antisocial behaviour on local communities should not be overlooked or minimised, and it is imperative that police and partners work in collaboration to provide an effective response.

The report included eight recommendations, five of which are applicable to local police forces and Chief Constables.

The recommendations for Chief Constables have been accepted by the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police. As the Mayor with PCC responsibilities in South Yorkshire, I have clear oversight of the implementation of these recommendations (as appropriate to South Yorkshire) through local governance arrangements. I will receive appropriate updates on progression from each of the lead police officers to whom each of the recommendations have been allocated.

(Recommendation 1) By 31 March 2025, forces should review their processes for recording antisocial behaviour to make sure all antisocial behaviour and associated crime are recorded correctly.

I agree with this recommendation and will consider findings from South Yorkshire Police's review through existing governance arrangements.

As identified within the report, it is essential that there is accurate recording of antisocial behaviour incidents so that forces can build a comprehensive picture of associated victims, locations, and offenders. I am assured that South Yorkshire Police are recording antisocial behaviour in line with national requirements. Previous PEEL inspections have shown that South Yorkshire Police is good at recording crime, and there is a high level of confidence in the force's crime data integrity. It is important that these high standards are upheld, not only to enable the force to understand the scale and nature of the problem, but to improve access to support for identified victims.

(Recommendation 2) By 30 September 2025, forces should make sure personnel are appropriately trained to identify and record antisocial behaviour and associated crime when they are first reported.

I agree with this recommendation.

Better identification from the outset of an incident being reported will support policing to implement victim-based approaches when tackling antisocial behaviour. A key component in achieving this will be through local training provisions.

The force has an Incident Management Team embedded within the Force Control Room, with oversight of antisocial behaviour incident recording standards. Call handlers receive specific inputs on processing the initial incident and identifying and responding to vulnerability.

I will monitor this recommendation through my governance arrangements.

(Recommendation 3) By 31 March 2025, forces should:

a) **review their risk assessment processes for antisocial behaviour cases to make sure that risks are properly assessed from initial contact to case closure; and**
b) **make sure completed risk assessments are retained in line with management of police information guidelines.**

I agree with this recommendation and will consider findings from South Yorkshire Police's review through existing governance arrangements.

It is vital that a comprehensive risk assessment process is in place that identifies risk and harm at the point of initial contact, as and when circumstances may change, and at the point of case closure. This is evident within the antisocial behaviour management policies and frameworks in place at South Yorkshire Police. Ongoing case management processes include daily checks for vulnerability and repeat victimisation, supported by an indexing tool to identify repeat victims most likely to need enhanced support and intervention. Completed risk assessments are retained in line with information compliance policies.

(Recommendation 4) By 31 December 2024, forces should:

a) **make sure all antisocial behaviour problem-solving plans fully specify the problem, contain sufficient detail, are effectively supervised; and**
b) **evaluate all antisocial behaviour problem-solving plans for an outcome in line with national police Chiefs' Council Neighbourhood Policing Outcome and Performance Guidelines.**

I agree with this recommendation.

Problem-solving approaches help forces to address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour and maximise opportunities to reduce harm. Problem solving cannot be achieved in isolation and requires collaborative working with partners and communities themselves. To be effective, plans must consider the role of partners and be well developed, managed, and evaluated. I welcome the use of national guidelines to support the evaluation process, as this will enable local forces to implement the most cost-effective solutions and contribute to the national evidence base of what works well.

My Chief Constable is the national lead for the Problem Solving and Crime Prevention Programme, and the force has led on this on behalf of all UK forces since 2017. In addition to this, the Chief Constable is also the Chair of the College of Policing Guideline Committee on Problem Solving. As such, the principles of problem-oriented policing are embedded within the ethos and capability of local policies, and I am confident that this will be reflected in the force's review of their problem-solving plans.

The report details examples where effective plans can already be evidenced at South Yorkshire Police, such as the work of the off-road bike team which focuses on reducing vehicle-related antisocial behaviour and associated criminality. It is encouraging to see this practice being recognised as an effective prevention tool. The long-term benefits of this investment can be seen through the additional engagement opportunities that a high visibility team has provided for our rural communities, and in the large quantity of seized assets they have secured.

(Recommendation 8) By 30 September 2025, forces should give all neighbourhood policing teams antisocial behaviour training that makes best use of the College of Policing's antisocial behaviour guidance and resources.

I agree with this recommendation.

Neighbourhood policing teams play an integral role in tackling antisocial behaviour. A national approach to training is welcomed, especially in the effective use of enforcement powers, and so I support the recommendation for forces to utilise the College of Policing's resources to achieve this.

South Yorkshire Police has seen success in following this approach. As highlighted within the report, the force ensures that training for neighbourhood policing teams is easily accessible and updated in line with new legislation and guidance. Teams are also supported by antisocial behaviour support officers who lead on the use of statutory powers, Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs), and ongoing partnerships with the local authorities to ensure that all enforcement opportunities are explored.

Commenting more broadly on the report, I am pleased to see that there were several examples of good practice from South Yorkshire Police, and I am proud of our local approach. The force recognises the importance of early intervention and is guided by good leadership on problem-solving approaches through the Chief Constable's expertise in this space.

However, it is important that we do not remain complacent, especially considering some of the national findings coming from the most recent Victims' Commissioners report. This emphasized that there is still much that police and partners can be doing to reduce repeat victimisation, address barriers to support, and improve trust and confidence in the criminal justice system.

Our communities consistently tell us that tackling antisocial behaviour is important to them. I am committed to ensuring that my forthcoming Police and Crime plan represents the voices of our local communities, especially those who are most vulnerable.

I support the report's findings that neighbourhood policing teams need to be well protected to enable an effective response. However, I would extend this to consider the positive impact of other specialist units that are also in need of continuity and protected resourcing. At South Yorkshire Police, this includes the off-road biking unit whose presence contributes to greater proactivity in our local communities. Further, the support of the mounted team which helps manage community tensions in South Yorkshire, as well as regularly providing national resilience for the policing of public order incidents.

The report also notes the positive impact of hotspot policing initiatives which have seen promising outcomes in several forces. The approach is built on a solid evidence base, and when visited by the Home Office South Yorkshire Police were praised on how this has been implemented locally. However, these initiatives were introduced as pilot schemes only, and their long-term viability is threatened as the additional funding required has not been confirmed beyond March 2025. Patrols are currently carried out though officer overtime, which is not sustainable. There are concerns that

without more permanent resolution, there would be a significant negative impact on the amount of high visibility patrolling the force is able to provide within South Yorkshire.

The issue of single-year funding is also mentioned within the report with regards to ongoing IT issues that prevent forces from using data effectively. The issue is one which impacts on policing generally and is wider than ASB. Local forces will continue to face challenges and be limited in their capacity to improve data collection, sharing and analytics without sustained investment in IT. I think there is benefit to be had by Mayors and PCCs working with HMICFRS, the Home Office, NPCC and Police Digital Service to explore how we might address this issue.

Overall, I am pleased that in South Yorkshire, the Police are working in partnership to embed a problem-solving ethos in tackling antisocial behaviour. I am assured by the findings of your report that South Yorkshire Police are considering innovative practice to engage with our communities, train our officers and utilise early intervention.

I have copied this letter to the Home Secretary for her information.

I look forward to working with you both to keep people safe across South Yorkshire.

Oliver Coppard
South Yorkshire's Mayor