

South Yorkshire
Mayoral Combined Authority
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield, S1 2BQ
8 September 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 Criminal Justice Joint Inspection report on joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service

I welcome the recommendations set out in this report.

Effective joint working between policing and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is essential if we are to see an efficient criminal justice system that achieves better outcomes for victims.

It is encouraging to note that the inspectorate has observed improving relationships at senior leadership level, with early signs of positive impact on frontline practice. Increasing public confidence in policing and the wider criminal justice system remains a key priority within the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan and I will be monitoring progress made throughout the life of the plan.

This report makes three specific recommendations for policing, all of which have been accepted by the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police. As Deputy Mayor with responsibility for Police and Crime, I retain oversight of the implementation of these recommendations through established local governance arrangements.

(Recommendation 5) By July 2026, police forces should have in place as part of their gatekeeping or comparable arrangements:

- an effective governance and decision-making capability to ensure investigations are timely and completed to the appropriate standards
- agreed contact arrangements in place in forces and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Areas to facilitate clear, consistent, and transparent communication between police and CPS
- sufficient, trained, and competent decision-makers
- effective and efficient systems and processes to manage case file submission queues, to avoid unnecessary delays and risks to cases subject to statutory time limits.

I support this recommendation. As this report highlights, the national shortage of detectives, high levels of inexperience, increasing workloads, and the growing complexity of cases present significant challenges. These challenges are compounded by digital technology that is often

incompatible. The level of investment required to upskill supervisors and maintain competency should not be underestimated.

There is a strong commitment in South Yorkshire to improving the quality of case file submissions, though it will take time to achieve the outcomes we are aiming for particularly given some of the challenges highlighted. Progress to date includes:

- Enhanced gatekeeping arrangements for rape and serious sexual offences, providing consistent and rigorous oversight. This has enabled closer monitoring of action plans and more proactive engagement with the CPS for early advice.
- Investment in a comprehensive training programme as part of a wider file quality improvement plan, targeting all supervisors, frontline officers, and student officers.
- New governance structures to identify recurring themes and drive organisational learning.
- Development of PowerBI dashboards to support continuous performance management at both team and individual levels.
- Revised quality review processes that enable supervisors to more effectively assess investigation plans.
- Innovation: use of national funding to support the exploration of the use of AI to increase efficiencies in file preparation
- South Yorkshire Police are also working to strengthen communication with the CPS through a new escalation process aimed at improving oversight and the timeliness of action plans. In addition, the force is exploring the use of a Microsoft Teams channel to support more efficient charging decisions.

We need to ensure that case files meet the required standards and contribute to more effective prosecutions. I have oversight of the work taking place to improve file quality through local governance arrangements.

(Recommendation 7) Within 12 months of the completion of recommendation 6 (*College of Policing to develop a national supervisors' training course and assessment on case file building*), police forces should ensure that every supervisor responsible for assessing case files prior to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision is trained in case file building and Director's Guidance on Charging (6th edition) (DG6) quality assurance.

I agree with this recommendation in principle. However, as nationally set training programmes continue to increase across policing, this generates additional financial and resourcing pressure to ensure compliance. Plans for national roll out should be considered alongside existing training schedules and be fully costed prior to implementation. Modules to support continual professional development should also be considered to ensure that any investment is not lost, especially for those who submit files less frequently.

It is also important to note that South Yorkshire Police will be transitioning to a new records management system within the next 2 years. While this change presents opportunities to improve digital workflows and data quality, it may temporarily impact progress made in embedding training and quality assurance processes.

(Recommendation 9) By July 2026, the police and Crown Prosecution Service at Joint Operational Improvement Meetings should develop a joint local training plan to increase awareness and understanding of each other's roles, including the operation of IT systems.

I agree with this recommendation. Cultural change is needed to rebuild trust and improve frontline collaboration. In South Yorkshire, discussions are ongoing through Joint Operational Improvement Meetings (JOIM) to help to increase efficiency and enhance mutual understanding of actions necessary to progress a number of specific case types.

Commenting more broadly, improvement efforts must be understood within the context of significant operational pressures — including detective shortages, increasing demand, and financial constraints — which limit capacity and resilience. In addition, the lack of interoperability and a unified digital system between police and CPS continues to hinder progress. National investment in digital infrastructure is essential, as fragmented local solutions are inefficient and unsustainable. While local performance accountability remains vital, improvement should be seen as a long-term, iterative goal. The focus must extend beyond compliance to embedding lasting improvements in quality, consistency, and collaboration, ultimately driving better outcomes for victims.

We look forward to keeping the dialogue open with the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Yours sincerely



Kilvinder Vigurs

Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime