



HMIC Review of Domestic Abuse

March 2014

I welcome the recent HMIC report and review of domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse is a key priority in my Police and Crime Plan. I have consistently said that the violence rates in Northamptonshire are simply too high, comparable to Merseyside and Greater Manchester when I took office in November 2012.

Violence of course takes many forms and Domestic Abuse or Domestic Violence forms a key part of how I want Northamptonshire Police and other partners to tackle the rates of violence in our county.

As the HMIC report identifies; "Domestic Abuse is a priority on paper, in the majority of forces, not in practice. The stated intent is not necessarily translating into operational reality for most forces."

I have been clear that this issue should not be the poor relation to serious acquisitive crime or serious and organised crime. Northamptonshire Police needs to get much better at understanding the scale and size of the problem of domestic abuse, before we are ever going to be able to respond effectively to the challenges that these pose.

The only way we can understand the problem is to encourage people to come forward and report incidents of abuse, once that incident has been reported it needs swift, prompt and effective action to ensure that victims have confidence in the system and will continue to report incidents in the future.

It is encouraging to see that HMIC has recognised the importance of partnership working and the growing relationships and established working practices between MARACs and MASHs, but it is disappointing to learn that Forces are still failing in identifying risks in relation to victims of domestic abuse.

I will work with the Chief Constable, the College of Policing and other partners to support the development of the Force's Domestic Abuse action plan and look at how I can better support victims and witnesses of domestic abuse on their journey throughout the criminal justice system, when the commissioning of victims services are devolved to me in October this year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Simmonds', with a horizontal line underneath.

Adam Simmonds
Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner