



HMIC: PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (vulnerability) Inspection

As part of its annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), I welcome HMIC's vulnerability inspection of Northamptonshire Police which examined the overall question, 'How effective are forces at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?'. Northamptonshire Police received the overall rating 'Requires Improvement'.

HMIC examined four areas:

- How well does the force identify those who are vulnerable and assess their level of risk and need?
- How well does the force respond to vulnerable victims?
- How well does the subsequent police action and work with partners keep victims safe?
- How well does the force respond to and safeguard specific vulnerable groups (missing and absent children and victims of domestic abuse); and how well prepared is it to tackle child sexual exploitation?

Released on Tuesday, 15th December 2015, the report praises Northamptonshire Police's innovative work in dealing with child sexual exploitation as well as missing persons. However, it states improvement is needed across several areas such as assessment and investigations involving the vulnerable.

I am pleased that the significant amount of work we have undertaken to prevent and support victims of child sexual exploitation has seen an improvement in our effectiveness as judged by HMIC, including the efforts to work across agencies, such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) highlighted by the report as being good practice. The work across Northamptonshire, for example by the multi-agency specialist RISE team in Northamptonshire, has seen positive steps towards dealing with the horrendous effects of Child Sexual Exploitation. This is something Northamptonshire Police should look to replicate in other areas.

However I remain disappointed with the overall findings of the report.

My staff and I have worked extremely hard to design and implement an effective victim's support service – Voice – that helps and supports vulnerable people and victims of crime to recover and thrive following their ordeal. However, this process starts with the work of the police force and I am disappointed that they are still not dealing with victims of domestic violence in a manner that protects those most vulnerable.

I'm equally frustrated that HMIC have reflected that Northamptonshire Police are not responding to vulnerable people in the best possible way at the first point of contact in the Control Room. The Control Room is an area I have repeatedly called for improvements to be made to provide the best possible service to the public.

Too often victims are still living in fear of perpetrators and therefore not reporting crimes. It is imperative that we deliver a service people feel they can rely on and trust and I will be reiterating this to Chief Constable Simon Edens when I meet with him to discuss the findings of the report.

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

Adam Simmonds

Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner