

Pre-charge bail and released under investigation 'Striking a balance'

**RESPONSE OF DAVID KEANE, POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR CHESHIRE**

I welcome Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection into pre-charge bail and released under investigation - 'Striking a balance', published 8th December 2020 which I raised with the Chief Constable at a recent public scrutiny meeting. I note that most of the recommendations are for the Home Office and the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), however, I am aware of the subsequent recommendations for Constabularies to protect vulnerable victims, increase safeguarding and ensure there is effective communication with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

I am pleased to report that Cheshire Constabulary have supported the Home Office consultation and through the NPCC Bail portfolio with Chief Constable Darren Martland supporting the work nationally to ensure the future changes are backed up by the appropriate guidance, protocols and annual data requirement.

The report rightly acknowledges that vulnerable victims and communities may have not been afforded adequate protection in some cases and that systems need to be in place to understand the risks. I have been reassured that Cheshire Constabulary has the following processes and systems in place to provide accurate monitoring and management of suspects subject to pre-charge bail, released under investigation (RUI) and voluntary attendance (VA). The NPCC Pre-Charge Guidance has been incorporated into the Constabulary's systems and processes and key elements of this include a dedicated Bail Management Team. Performance data is available to managers and supervisors across the Constabulary to identify which RUI cases requires review and this is done in parallel with a risk management regime overseen by senior officers.

The Constabulary's 'Suspect Management' meeting is chaired by the Criminal Justice Superintendent and the meeting reviews suspect management performance across the force for each month. The meeting is informed by the Suspect Management Report which details the use of Pre-Charge Bail, RUI and VA, including the use of these methods to manage suspects linked to high harm offences such as Domestic Assault.

In addition, I also support the recommendation within the report highlighting the importance of working with the CPS. Cheshire Constabulary have advised me that the CPS are informed of the suspect's bail or RUI status via internal systems and cases are rejected if this information is not present on the documentation before they are transferred to the CPS.

I agree with the recommendations for provided within the report and I will be following the Constabulary's progress on these matters closely through my scrutiny programme.



David Keane
Police & Crime Commissioner
19th January 2021