

**Katy Bourne**  
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

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The Office of the  
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**Sussex  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner**

Ms Zoe Billingham  
HM Inspector of Constabulary  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor – Globe House  
89 Eccleston Square  
London  
SW1V 1PN

26 July 2019

Dear Zoe

**HMICFRS – Fraud: Time to Choose**

I write in respect of the recently published findings for Sussex Police in the police response to fraud inspection. I welcome the opportunity to comment on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report and have carefully studied its findings and recommendations.

I acknowledge that the omission of a national strategy for tackling fraud is contributing to a "disjointed and ineffective" response from law enforcement agencies. This has led to police forces developing a range of different and localised responses that are not always disseminated or widely adopted.

I am pleased that HMICFRS recognised the "good practice" that exists in Sussex in terms of the fraud prevention work. The Force introduced Operation Signature in 2014 as a means of identifying vulnerability to fraud offences and to instigate individually assessed protective measures to reduce the risk of re-victimisation. This is now considered 'business as usual' in Sussex owing to the various strands of the process being developed and implemented. The success of this initiative was highlighted in the report through confirmation that approaches following the same principles have since been adopted by several police force areas across England and Wales. However, it is clear there is much more that Sussex Police can do if victims of fraud are to receive the service I firmly believe they deserve.

I have introduced a structured needs assessment, in partnership with Victim Support, to ensure that victims in Sussex understand exactly what support is available to them to enable services to be tailored to meet their needs more effectively. Vulnerable Victims of Fraud Case Workers (funded through my office) supported 638 victims (identified through Operation Signature) in Sussex between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. Many of these victims have experienced substantial financial loss and have various additional needs, such as physical frailty, that make them more vulnerable to becoming repeat victims.

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I can also confirm that a new pilot using volunteers has been designed to advise and support victims of fraud in Sussex. The pilot will provide 'packaged' support and advice to 'standard-risk' victims of fraud and will initially be trialled in West Sussex when it commences in October 2019. The volunteers will contact victims using the most effective and relevant means for each individual through a combination of telephone, letter and online contact. The content of the advice and support provided will concentrate on reducing risk through protective suggestions that are likely to be tailored to the fraud type relevant to that individual. This advice will also extend to signposting individuals to Safe:Space Sussex and local community events to educate them further about fraud and scams.

I am reassured that tackling fraud continues to remain a priority for Sussex Police. This includes raising awareness about scams and fraud, offering support and preventative measures to protect individuals from being targeted and through the provision of contacts and advice about fraud, scams and cyber crime on their website.

It is my intention to discuss the HMICFRS report with the Chief Constable at our webcast monthly Performance & Accountability Meeting (PAM) on 13 September 2019 at 13:00. I plan to ask the Chief Constable for his reflections on the report as well as seeking assurances that plans are in place to address the two specific recommendations and five areas for improvement identified for Chief Constables in England and Wales within the prescribed timescales. This session will be available to view on my website through the following link: [www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/](http://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/webcasting/)

I will continue to closely monitor the progress of Sussex Police in this area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katy Bourne', written in a cursive style.

Katy Bourne OBE  
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner