

3rd October 2024

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: HMICFRS PEEL Assessment of West Yorkshire Police 2023-2025

As Mayor of West Yorkshire, I welcome the PEEL assessment and the work that has taken place to produce this comprehensive document. The information that it provides gives an important update on the effectiveness and legitimacy of our local police service. This report delivers the first West Yorkshire Police PEEL Assessment since November 2022, and we notice that it reflects the new methodology which HMICFRS have adopted

In 2022's report West Yorkshire Police (WYP) received a positive assessment, with four 'Outstanding' grades, four 'Good' grades, and two 'Adequate' grades. WYP were recognised for 'Outstanding' performance in areas such as preventing crime, treatment of the public, and disrupting serious and organised crime. However, the report also recommended that improvements were needed regarding vulnerable or repeat victims at the first point of contact; providing crime prevention or evidence preservation advice, also at the first point of contact; and completing a victim initial needs assessment in all cases.

Over the period since the previous assessment, we have worked tirelessly with West Yorkshire Police to look at these areas and we believe that West Yorkshire Police has made a number of improvements since the last inspection, these include:

- 1 Despite facing significant and increased demand in relation to emergency 999 calls (up 7.1% since 2019) the force is answering these calls more quickly. The average 999 answer time in the past 12 months is just 6.9 seconds and this is the second-best performance of all forces in the country and the best by a metropolitan force.
- 2 The force is attending Emergency and Priority calls faster. In the past 12 months, 87.4% of all Emergency incidents were attended within 15 minutes, which has improved from 83.0% in 2019. 86.1% of Priority calls are now attended within the hour, which is an improvement from 79.2% in 2019.
- 3 Police officer workloads have increased due to the significant increases in demand and complexity. However, investment in safeguarding resources means officer workloads in safeguarding are now reducing. Neighbourhood officer workloads have also fallen in comparison to previous years.
- 4 Overall, crime levels in West Yorkshire are lower compared to last year (down 10.1%) and are also lower than they were in 2019 (down 3.8%).
- 5 The long-term downward trend in neighbourhood crimes continues. Neighbourhood crime is now 27.1% lower than in 2019 and a further 1.7% reduction has been reported over the past year.
- 6 Knife crime remains a priority and knife related offences have fallen by more than 10% since 2019.
- 7 The force is now achieving more offences brought to justice. 33,719 offences have been brought to justice in the past 12 months, which is a 5.7% increase on 2019 and a 3% increase in the last year alone.



- 8 The force is also charging more people than they have done previously. Over 23,000 charges have been achieved in the past 12 months which is a 7.8% increase in last year and a 2.4% increase on 2019.
- 9 All these improvements are set against a backdrop of being graded 'outstanding' for crime recording, which means we often record more crime than others and makes percentage comparisons harder.

It's important for us to make note of the changes to the current inspection cycle and that this cannot be compared to the previous cycles due to the increased focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public. With that being said, I am encouraged by the findings of this PEEL assessment, particularly around the Force's performance in keeping people safe, reducing crime, and providing victims with an effective service.

In the latest report, the inspectors have awarded one 'Outstanding' grade, one 'Good' grade, five 'Adequate' gradings and two 'Requires Improvement' gradings.

This PEEL report recognises West Yorkshire Police's strong record on high standards of crime recording, the trail blazing Pol-Ed programme, ensuring officers are trained to engage with the public respectfully, and the Force's timelier service to members of the public who make contact using the 999 system. We welcome this recognition of the work to excel in these areas and look forward to sharing more of the innovative practices that we are working on together.

We have already worked with West Yorkshire police to understand the 18 areas for improvement which were raised in this report, and we are reassured that there is a plan to address each one with key managers holding responsibility for this to happen. We have provided a summary on the following pages of some of this work that is already underway to address these concerns.

No causes of concern were raised for WYP in the most recent PEEL report. When looking at the national context, it is noteworthy that West Yorkshire Police are the largest force not to enter special measures. This is particularly pertinent to raise given that we know officers have faced significant increases in demand, and the increased complexity of these demands.

The new year will see the publishing of my second Police and Crime Plan for West Yorkshire. This Plan sets out the strategic direction for West Yorkshire Police and is informed by a public consultation which is currently ongoing. This gives residents the opportunity to tell us what policing issues matter most to them, so we can bring about long-term lasting change to our area.

I look forward to working with colleagues at West Yorkshire Police to help embed the recommendations of this report and build upon their commendable work identified during this inspection.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy Brabin

Mayor of West Yorkshire



Feedback from West Yorkshire Police on PEEL assessment 'Areas for Improvement' (AFIs)

West Yorkshire Police accept the report in full and will use it to improve their service to the public. 18 areas for improvement have been identified in the PEEL report. The areas for improvement can be attributed to one of three key themes throughout the report:

- applying greater consistency (across district boundaries) in the service they deliver,
- better collection and use of data to drive improved performance,
- Or managing workloads more effectively, to ensure they are delivering a victim-first service and supporting the wellbeing of officers and staff.

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, (DMPC) Alison Lowe has held a series of meetings with West Yorkshire Police to examine the report in more detail and understand what the Force is doing in response to the findings, particularly the AFIs. We have addressed how the police is addressing the 18 AFIs which come under one of three themes below:

1) Applying greater consistency (across district boundaries) in the service they deliver

West Yorkshire is made up of 5 distinct council areas and West Yorkshire Police has previously changed its own policing districts to be coterminous with these boundaries. With these 5 areas comes a challenge around consistency. More recently we have been working with them to look at the consistency of information around child protection services. We have seen the move to the Public Protection Notices on the crime system as a way to bring consistency, but the implementation has brought challenges which we are working through.

This is just one example of the way we are looking to give a consistent service to all the public in West Yorkshire and we continue to work with West Yorkshire Police on their training provision to ensure that it is received by all officers

2) West Yorkshire Police still needs to improve how it records equality data

The DMPC is the APCC lead in this arena and regularly speaks to other areas about the provision of equality data. She is very aware that recording equality data is a challenge for many forces, not just West Yorkshire, but is an area that we have worked with the Police on to ensure as much coverage as possible.

Under the Police Race Action Plan, West Yorkshire Police have worked with black communities across the area to understand their response to policing and how this can change. We have looked closely at such areas as Stop and Search and looked to improve the experience of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. We understand that there is always more to do in this area, but we believe that this is already a priority for the Police and the improvements have already started.

3) Managing workloads more effectively, to ensure they are delivering a victim-first service and supporting the wellbeing of officers and staff

When we started with the first Mayoral Police and Crime Plan, we recognised that workloads were particularly high for the Safeguarding Units in West Yorkshire Police and we have been pleased to see the emphasis put into these units to bring down

workloads, and not just in Safeguarding but also the lower workloads for the Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

We recognised that with a finite number of officers, this would mean that other areas of policing would have higher workloads, but we felt was the right thing to do.

We know that with the outstanding crime recording that takes place in West Yorkshire there will be high numbers that require investigating, so we want to work with the Police to ensure that we understand this alongside what the victims want from the police and where we can support the wellbeing of officers and staff.