

Chief Constable  
Northumbria Police  
Via email

Copied to: Police and Crime Commissioner

2 October 2017

Dear Chief Constable

**HMICFRS assessment: Abuse of position for a sexual purpose**

In December 2016, we published our national *PEEL: police legitimacy 2016* inspection report in which we referred to the problem as 'abuse of authority for sexual gain'. In the interests of consistency and in line with the terminology used in the National Police Chiefs' Council's national strategy, we now refer to this as 'abuse of position for a sexual purpose'.

The report highlighted our concerns that some police counter-corruption units did not have the capability or capacity to seek intelligence on the potential abuse of position for a sexual purpose. This meant that some forces were not able to intervene early to safeguard potential victims and tackle unacceptable and potentially corrupt behaviour. This concern led to the following recommendation:

*To address this cause of concern, we recommend that within six months, all forces should have started to implement a plan to achieve the capability and capacity required to seek intelligence on potential abuse of authority for sexual gain. These plans should include consideration of the technology and resources required to monitor IT systems actively and to build relationships with the individuals and organisations that support vulnerable people.*

Further to my letter dated 16 May 2017 and your force's subsequent document submission, we have reviewed your force's plans to address our cause of concern. I am writing to inform you of our assessment of your force's plans, which took place during June 2017, and included a review of all documentation submitted by 31 May 2017.

We were pleased to find that your plans submitted in response to our recommendation were comprehensive, and also reflected the national strategy agreed at the National Police Chiefs' Council in April of this year. While there was no apparent mention of a review of the capability and capacity of your counter-corruption unit, we found it to be well resourced during our 2016 inspection. The plans did include IT systems' monitoring capability, although work on this had yet to commence by the time of our review. Work to seek intelligence from those organisations that support vulnerable people was included in the plans and had already commenced.

This letter will be published on the HMICFRS website, alongside a national overview report. We will be returning to your force to assess implementation of your plans during a subsequent inspection.

If you have any queries, please contact John Young at [john.young@hmic.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:john.young@hmic.gsi.gov.uk) or on 07802 948502.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Cunningham".

**Michael Cunningham QPM**  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services