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Sir Thomas Winsor
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Dear Sir Tom,

As you know, following my letter of 14 March, we have been considering what our priorities are for a thematic inspection into the police handling of female victims of crime and wider engagement with women.

I understand your draft inspection programme for 2021/22 will shortly go out for consultation and within it you plan to offer a range of insights into specific aspects of police performance in relation to its engagement with women and girls on crimes which disproportionately affect them. However, I am keen for HMICFRS to undertake an additional overarching - and more holistic - review to understand how well forces are engaging with women across the spectrum of policing activity. Whilst I do not see this work being limited to violent offences against women and girls, it will of course support and complement the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy which we intend to launch in the summer.

I therefore wish to commission HMICFRS, under s54(2B) of the Police Act 1996, and with effect from 1 April, to undertake a bespoke thematic inspection into police handling of female victims and engagement with women and girls. This inspection should include a broad assessment of the quality and effectiveness of interactions between the police and women (whether as victims, offenders or witnesses), with a focus on the lived experiences of women and girls.

Given the dependency of this commission with the ongoing development of our VAWG strategy, and the wide range of potential areas for consideration, I would be grateful if the Inspectorate could begin work immediately with my officials to define and agree the detailed terms of reference and an appropriate timeframe for its completion. I have asked to be kept updated on progress.

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP