

20th February 2020

The Rt Honourable Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary

RESPONSE TO 'CYBER KEEP THE LIGHT ON' PUBLISHED ON 24TH OCTOBER 2019

This report highlights the very important issue of cyber dependent crime and is timely as it has recently been highlighted that over half of all recorded crime, nationally, is now cybercrime.

The report makes clear the expertise needed to tackle this type of crime and these criminals operate in an entirely borderless manner. The challenge is exacerbated by the ending of funding for the Police Transformation Fund and the National Cyber Security Programme within the next two years and the inconsistent approach at local, regional and national levels.

There were no recommendations for the Chief Constable but there was an area for improvement (AFI) noted as:

- Chief constables should evaluate the use that their force makes of cyber specials and volunteers to ensure that they are used effectively.

In response to this AFI, I can confirm that the Constabulary has recruited a Cyber Special and Cyber Volunteer Coordinator that started in September 2019. Their twelve month project is to identify and recruit specials and volunteers with skills that will complement and enhance the force's cyber capacity in respect of prevent, pursue, protect and prepare. The force is also utilising the specialist knowledge of a Special from another force to deliver product training and is working towards securing two secondments from universities which will be funded through the NPCC Cybercrime Programme.

I recognise that there are improvements the Constabulary needs to make, over and above the AFI, in order to better respond to this crime type; but I do not consider this force to be an outlier in that respect. I welcome the recommendation which promotes a national response as, much like the perpetrators, our response also needs to be borderless.

This response is published on the OPCC website (<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Audits-and-Inspections/HMICFRS.aspx>).

Regards

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Sue Mountstevens".

SUE MOUNTSTEVENS
Police and Crime Commissioner
for Avon & Somerset

cc. Wendy Williams, HMI
Chief Constable Andy Marsh, Avon & Somerset Constabulary

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