



**domestic
abuse
commissioner**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales
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21 April 2021

Sent by email (CC: Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Crime and Policing)

Dear Victoria Atkins MP and Kevin Foster MP,

Response to HMICFRS super-complaint: Review into Data Sharing between police and immigration enforcement

I am writing regarding the Home Office Review into data-sharing procedures between immigration enforcement and the police, to request an update on the options the Home Office are considering and your plans for consultation.

As designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, I have been a strong advocate for the establishment of a safe reporting mechanism to help ensure that all survivors of domestic abuse have the confidence to report crimes to the police and are treated first and foremost as victims. I was disappointed that proposed amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill to achieve this have not been supported by the Government. It was, however, positive to hear that these measures are being considered in good faith through the review, and that you believe the necessary changes can be implemented through NPCC guidance.

I would welcome an update on the options the Home Office are currently considering in the review. As the HMICFRS report states, 'the effect of the review should be to establish safe reporting mechanisms for all migrant victims and witnesses.' The report provides an overwhelming body of evidence to demonstrate that the impact of any data sharing agreement, regardless of how widespread the use is, acts as a significant deterrent to victims coming forward. For this reason, I would strongly welcome an ambitious and wide-reaching set of proposals in the review and call on the Government to establish a firewall as a matter of urgency. The fear of immigration enforcement amongst victims is such that alternative measures suggested by officials, such as communications campaigns, or similar measures, would be insufficient to address this issue.

Secondly, I have some concerns about how experts and representatives of migrant victims are being consulted as part of the Home Office's review. The HMICFRS report is clear that the review 'should be conducted in consultation with victim and survivor representative groups, practitioners and other interested parties'. As we are less than six weeks away from the reporting deadline in June, I am concerned that representatives from the sector have not yet been contacted to feed into the review process, and there has been little communication from the Home Office about the progress of the review. Whilst my office has approached and met with the team working on the review in the last couple of weeks, I am concerned that the very limited time we have left before publication will seriously impact on the meaningful

consultation required with specialist organisations working with victims and survivors required to develop these recommendations.

I have high hopes for this review, which constitutes the first response to a successful HMICFRS super-complaint, and serves as a vital opportunity to ensure migrant victims can access support and perpetrators can be held to account. It is important to remember that without a clear firewall between police and immigration enforcement, dangerous and violent offenders will continue to use the threat of deportation to evade justice.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you both to discuss the options the Home Office is considering, and to hear your plans to meaningfully engage victim and survivor representatives in the decision-making process for the review.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Jacobs
Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales