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Response from Kevin Hurley, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey to the HMIC report 'Witness for the prosecution: Identifying victim and witness vulnerability in criminal case files.'

The HMIC report into victim and witness vulnerability provides a useful analysis of how vulnerable people are treated within the criminal justice system. I am pleased that nationally there has been some improvement in file quality and that in many cases the police are identifying and managing risk. However, from the cases examined it is clear that improvements need to be made and that national standards, templates and guidance need to be re-examined.

Although not within my remit, I support the recommendations made by HMIC to the College of Policing and the National Police Chief's Council to review the templates and standards to provide a better and consistent set of guidelines to police forces in dealing with vulnerable victims and witnesses.

Once that work has been done, I will expect that the Chief Constable of Surrey Police will ensure that the correct templates are in use, that the standards set out are followed locally and that the right training is in place for staff. I am particularly keen to see work between the national bodies and Chief Constable's to ensure that officers are better prepared for attending court. The report made comment that many officers will not have been inside a courtroom and need an understanding of their role in the criminal justice process but I would have liked the report to go onto make a recommendation with regard to training and experience of courtrooms for police officers.

Putting victims at the centre of the criminal justice system is one of the 6 Public Priorities within the Police and Crime Plan I have set for Surrey and I am committed to doing everything we can in Surrey to ensure that vulnerable victims and witnesses are supported.