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**Response from Kevin Hurley, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey to HMIC's thematic inspection report '*The depths of dishonour: Hidden voices and shameful crimes. An inspection of the police response to honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation*'**

I welcome the HMIC report published on 8<sup>th</sup> December, entitled "The depths of dishonour: Hidden voices and shameful crimes". Victims of these crimes are controlled, assaulted and betrayed by family and people closest to them, directly impacting on their freedom and human rights. I have long taken issue at the term honour-based violence, as there is absolutely no honour in these abhorrent crimes and it can act against professionals having an understanding of the reality.

The report examines the effectiveness of police forces in England and Wales in relation to the protection of people from harm caused by honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and at supporting victims of these offences.

I am very grateful to the survivors who participated in the report's research and it's important their voices are heard to ensure police forces get the response right first time and victims receive the support they desperately need.

The HMIC found Surrey Police to be prepared to protect people from these crimes, in terms of leadership, awareness and understanding and protection, but is not yet prepared in terms of enforcement and prevention.

More must be done to work with local communities, to identify those who pose a risk to victims and intervene early to protect them. I will carefully review the recommendations made in the report and work closely with partners to develop the co-ordinated approach needed to protect, support and safeguard victims.

These despicable crimes must not remain hidden in our communities and Surrey Police has taken significant steps to increase the understanding of HBV amongst officers and staff, from call handler through to specialist investigator. Investment has been made in

specialist training and a powerful input by an exceptionally brave HBV survivor has been extremely beneficial for first responders.

I have also recently awarded funding to Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum to work at a grassroots level across the county. This innovative project recognises victims may feel inhibited to seek help from the police and other agencies. It will build capability within local communities to safeguard vulnerable people and help to ensure victims do not live in fear and silence, but come forward with confidence that they will be supported.