

REPORT TO SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

1. Meeting:	South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
2. Date:	2 May 2014
3. Title:	HMIC Report – South Yorkshire Police’s Response to Child Sexual Exploitation
4. Organisation:	Police and Crime Commissioner

5. Summary

This report provides members of the Panel with information in relation to the Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report South Yorkshire Police’s Response to Child Sexual Exploitation and the response by the Police and Crime Commissioner to this report.

6. Recommendations

That the Panel note the contents of the report and comment on any matters arising.

7. Proposals and details

The Commissioner's overriding aim is to keep the people of South Yorkshire safe. Vulnerable people from a diverse range of demographic groups are potentially more at risk of being a victim of crime, and may therefore need additional support from the police and partners.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a national problem and the exact scale is difficult to determine, due to a lack of reporting and identification of risk factors. Though seemingly small in comparison to other recorded crimes, this heinous crime is evident throughout South Yorkshire. As such, the Commissioner decided that protecting vulnerable children - particularly those at risk from CSE should be an immediate priority.

In 2013/14 the Commissioner made a significant financial investment to help tackle CSE by providing extra resources to the Force and increasing the number of District-based officers by five. The officers are co-located with multi-agency Protection Units, to ensure the best use of resources, and are supplemented by a central team of officers that undertake specific investigations across the county.

He also set up a strategic Child Sexual Exploitation Forum which brings together a number of key organisations from across the county. It was at this Forum it was agreed to launch a countywide CSE awareness raising campaign in February 2014.

In addition the Commissioner has commissioned Victim Support to provide dedicated support to victims of child sexual exploitation to help them through the difficult process of going to court and has agreed to becoming a member of the National Taskforce on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People (SCACV) which gives him an opportunity to shape national thinking and policy making.

In August 2013, the Commissioner also commissioned HMIC to provide:

- an independent assessment of the effectiveness and resilience of the current arrangements in place within South Yorkshire Police to protect children from sexual exploitation; and
- recommendations for improvement.

The report was published on 11 November 2013 and can be obtained from both the Commissioner's and HMIC's website (www.southyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk and www.hmic.gov.uk) respectively.

The report concluded that South Yorkshire Police had made considerable efforts to improve its child sexual exploitation response. However, HMIC considered that the force-led focus and commitment to this was not truly and consistently replicated in all districts. Whilst there were pockets of good and effective practice (most notably in Sheffield), the approach taken to tackling this kind of offending varied significantly across the force's four districts.

The report went on to say that this situation must not be allowed to continue and that it was unarguably of paramount importance that all children in South Yorkshire receive the same high levels of protection, irrespective of the policing district in which they live.

HMIC therefore made the following recommendations:

Immediate

1. *The force should review the management of cases by staff in the dedicated child sexual exploitation teams, and ensure this always complies with statutory child protection guidance.*
2. *The force should communicate and explain to the PCC, staff and other interested parties the delay in deploying the ten additional child sexual exploitation officers to the districts.*
3. *Failure to fill a vacancy in the Rotherham team that manages sex offenders means that the remaining officers face an unmanageable workload. The force should review the team to ensure that it has sufficient staff to manage sex offenders in line with national guidance.*
4. *The force should audit its response to child sexual exploitation, to assess whether the changes it is making are having the desired effect (ie improving outcomes for children), and to identify any further work that is required.*

Within three months

5. *The force should review its internal communication regarding child sexual exploitation and ensure that clear, consistent messages are passed to all officers and staff. The messages should ensure that everyone knows which chief officer is the lead on tackling child sexual exploitation.*
6. *The force should review the tool used to assess the risk of child sexual exploitation to ensure it provides the best possible reflection of the level of risk faced by victims. This could involve additional training for those using the tool, or a change to the scoring mechanism used to calculate the level of risk.*
7. *The force should translate the PCC's strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.*
8. *The force should review the workloads of all staff within public protection units to ensure they have the capacity to manage effectively the cases they are allocated.*

Within six months

9. *The force should review its training plan to ensure all staff develop and sustain a good understanding of child sexual exploitation.*

10. *The force should review the processes in place to respond to child sexual exploitation in all four districts, with a view to creating greater uniformity, and ensuring all areas attain the high standards achieved in the Sheffield district.*
11. *The force should review the operation of its local intelligence units to ensure child sexual exploitation is thoroughly supported by an intelligence approach.*
12. *The force should review how it monitors the internet for evidence of child sexual exploitation to ensure intelligence opportunities are not being overlooked.*
13. *The force and its partners should examine how it can more efficiently manage the handling of child sexual exploitation information and intelligence. In particular, the difficulty in sharing information with the multi-agency teams at Doncaster and Rotherham (because of incompatible information and intelligence IT systems) should be resolved.*

Attached at Appendix A is Commissioner Wright's response to the HMIC report.

The findings of the HMIC review were subject to an action plan and regular updates provided to the Commissioner at his monthly Governance Advisory Board and to the Countywide CSE Forum.

The Commissioner is pleased to report that the recommendations have now been implemented and that tackling this heinous crime has been greatly strengthened over the last year.

The force will be re-inspected against the report findings in spring 2014. This will be undertaken as part of the national HMIC inspection of Child Protection.

8. Finance

The Commissioner allocated £0.5 million additional funding for 2013/14 to increase the number of Public Protection officers and specialist training for staff.

As part of the Commissioner's budget setting process for 2014/15 the Commissioner has provided an additional £2.26 million to the Force to deliver a full Platinum model which will offer a significant increase in the services provided to the public of South Yorkshire. This model provides additional resources to create CSE and Domestic Violence Investigations Teams. These teams will be capable of managing CSE locally and at a force level as well as managing all offenders relating to high-risk victims of domestic abuse and some medium risk cases. This model will also provide additional resources on the Public Protection Unit investigation teams, adult and child safeguarding and VISOR (the management of sex offenders) providing greater resilience and capacity in relation to adult and child abuse management and investigations.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

To ensure children within South Yorkshire are able to achieve the outcomes identified in Every Child Matters (2003), the force must work consistently with key partners to increase the number of successful outcomes for violence against women and girls in sexual assault, rape, stalking and harassment.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

HMIC South Yorkshire Police's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation

11. Contact

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