



**ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE**

**PAPER NO: AP16/6**

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
26 FEBRUARY 2016**

**SUBJECT: PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE - CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE**

**SUMMARY:**

1. This report provides an update from the Protecting Vulnerable People Directorate in relation to Children and Young Persons, identifying key performance information and any significant operational or organisational issues.
2. There are no significant financial implications to note within this report.
3. Increasing demand is placing greater strain on current resources.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the ongoing increase in demand involving offences against children.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Child Protection in its widest definition continues to attract close scrutiny through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other review bodies and inspectorates.
- 1.2 The Constabulary's still expects to be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in relation to child protection in its widest form. The Constabulary has also recently supported Suffolk County Council and the Local Safeguarding Children Board through their Ofsted inspection on Child Safeguarding. A number of police processes were scrutinised within this inspection.
- 1.3 The Constabulary continues to work on the 'areas for improvement' that were highlighted in the HMIC Vulnerability Inspection.
- 1.4 The Constabulary continues to increase the resources into Child Protection and into policing vulnerability more widely.
- 1.5 Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and HM Inspectorate of Probation have recently published their framework for Joint Targeted Area Inspections. From February, all four inspectorates will jointly assess how local authorities, the police, health, probation and youth offending services are working together in an area to identify, support and protect vulnerable children and young people. The new short inspections will allow inspectorates to be more responsive, targeting specific areas of interest and concern. They will also identify areas for improvement and highlight good practice from which others can learn.

### **Local Children's Safeguarding Board**

- 1.6 The Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body with a wide remit to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Suffolk. There have been some minor changes to representation at the various board meetings. The Detective Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) represents the Constabulary at the full LSCB and at the Executive Committee. In addition he chairs the Exploited Children Group. The Detective Chief Inspector PVP now represents the Constabulary at the other sub-groups of the Board.
- 1.7 The core statutory duty of an LSCB is to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place across agencies to protect children from harm. There are also obligations placed on LSCBs to ensure that the welfare of children is promoted. The work of the LSCB includes:-
  - The development of policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
  - Communication and awareness raising;
  - Monitoring and scrutiny of safeguarding and child protection work across the county.
- 1.8 The Constabulary will again present its audit under Section 11 of the Children Act in May this year.
- 1.9 The Exploited Children sub-group has made significant progress, particularly in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and there are now effective multi-agency processes in place to identify and manage those young people at risk of exploitation. This process was subject to positive comments by Ofsted. Awareness raising

continues to be a priority and focus has been on raising awareness of those with responsibility for scrutiny and to taxi drivers across Suffolk. The focus on taxi drivers has been due to their opportunity to identify exploitative factors connected to young children.

### **Working Together**

- 1.10 The Constabulary continues to support a number of ongoing Serious Case Reviews.

### **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

- 1.11 The MASH continues to develop both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The availability of meaningful management information has led to focussed intervention and development in a number of areas including child sexual exploitation. The parallel tasking and coordinating process that sits alongside MASH processes receives strong partnership support and has added depth to the management of children at heightened risk of exploitation.
- 1.12 Governance of the MASH continues through the MASH Strategic Board which meets on a bi-monthly basis. Suffolk MASH is recognised nationally as good practice.
- 1.13 The planned alignment of Domestic Abuse processes into the MASH is scheduled to commence in early February. This will see the co-location of both Constabulary Domestic Abuse Team officers but also the Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) service. This will create additional dynamism in information sharing and risk assessment. Work continues to move more Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes into the MASH. This work is supported by 'SaveLives'.
- 1.14 Processes are now in place to facilitate the sharing of police child concern referrals linked to Domestic Abuse with schools and health visitors.
- 1.15 In the twelve month period January 2015 to December 2015 the MASH received 23,211 contacts in relation to concerns for children. For the period June 2013 to May 2014 this figure was 13,650. Whilst some of this increase is undoubtedly due to the development of awareness of the MASH it also represents the increase in demand seen across the child protection arena. Approximately 40% of all referrals relating to children are generated by the police. Of the 23,211 contacts 895 cases resulted in S.47 Children's Act procedures being commenced (where there is a concern for serious harm).
- 1.16 The 895 S.47 cases represent those that result in joint investigations between Police and Social Care. These cases have grown steadily over the last three years. In 2013 618 cases met this threshold.
- 1.17 The longer term trend remains one of increased referrals. The period post the 'Baby P' Serious Case Review has seen a marked increase in referrals and this shows no sign of abating. Additional focus on CSE and now on child neglect have added to the demand across child protection.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)/Missing Children**

- 1.18 The CSE Coordinator post (constable) created in Summer 2015 has proved to be very effective in coordinating responses both internally and across a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. There are now strong links to the Regional CSE coordinator post and increased work in respect of cross border risks. This post has had significant impact in a number of high risk CSE cases.
- 1.19 By the end of March the MASH, Exploitation Team and both Missing Person and CSE Coordinator roles will sit under a single Detective Inspector increasing coordination and join up in these inter-linked areas of business.
- 1.20 The Constabulary is to review and revise its CSE guidance material for front line officers. The College of Policing has recently provided training materials in relation to CSE and Learning and Development have been asked to consider the delivery of this material.
- 1.21 The Constabulary is liaising with both the College of Policing and the Local Safeguarding Children Board to deliver the multi-agency critical incident training on Child Protection to Suffolk.
- 1.22 The Constabulary has now developed stronger relationships with the county children's homes and, assisted by the Joint Performance and Analysis Department (JPAD), provide individual reports to each home to assist in safeguarding children.
- 1.23 The Constabulary has led on the setting up of a multi-agency oversight panel in relation to complex abuse investigations. These investigations impact across a range of agencies. With the increase in investigations falling into this category there is the need for effective strategic oversight to consider resource and response.
- 1.24 In 2015 there were 803 reports of missing children, up from a figure of 687 in 2014. The number of high risk cases fell by 15% whilst those categorised as medium rose by 90% and low by 43%. The reduction in the number of high risk cases is mostly as a result of increased attention to the risk assessment process.
- 1.25 Frequent missing children continues to be a significant issue. One child has now been missing in excess of 60 times. Many of these repeat missing cases are high risk and are linked to exploitation. A number of investigations are in place to address these issues. A wider review of how early intervention would reduce the number of children who repeatedly go missing has been commenced.
- 1.26 The Constabulary has received 6 referrals from Operation Hydrant. Operation Hydrant is the national coordinating response to historic allegations of child abuse linked to prominent individuals or institutions. There have also been referrals from the National Child Abuse Panel and the Independent Enquiry into Child Abuse. The number of referrals from these origins is likely to increase.

## **E-Safety**

- 1.27 The Constabulary is supporting a county wide conference focussing on E-Safety and how to raise awareness of these issues across professionals and the public.
- 1.28 The Constabulary is commencing work to look at how a coordinated E-Safety platform can be used to support this county wide awareness issue.

## **Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

- 1.29 The Child SARC is now fully operational and provides a more child friendly environment for young victims of serious sexual abuse.
- 1.30 In the period from September 2014 to August 2015 92 children attended the SARC, this compares to 65 for the same period the preceding year. With the increases seen in the MASH and across serious sexual offences more generally it is again likely that this number will continue to grow.

## **2014 Child Protection Review**

- 1.31 As part of a continuous improvement programme, Suffolk Constabulary commissioned a review of 30 child abuse investigations.
- 1.32 Of the seventeen recommendations arising from the audit that was carried out in December 2014, all have now been completed.

## **On-Line Investigation**

- 1.33 The Constabulary continues to focus on those individuals making, possessing, sharing and distributing indecent images of children (IIOC). The Constabulary makes effective use of technology to identify those using file sharing platforms.
- 1.34 In 2015 the On-Line Investigation Team undertook enforcement action against 104 individuals linked to IIOC. 22 of these cases were assessed as High or Very High risk.
- 1.36 The indication from the National Crime Agency is that the number of referrals to forces concerning IIOC is likely to increase. In response to this identified risk the NCA have significantly increased resources both at the national and regional level to support forces.

## **2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 There are no financial implications to note.

## **3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 3.1 Demand across all areas of child protection has risen significantly and steadily over the last 24 months and this increase shows no sign of reducing. This increase in demand will place greater strain on current resource levels.

<b>ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)</b>	<b>PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'</b>
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No – as no financial implications noted
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No – there are no issues likely to impact on either diversity or human rights implications
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes – no HR implications identified.
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes – the report makes reference to Objective 4 – 'caring for victims and vulnerable people'
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes – Both the MASH and SARC are subject to multi-agency governance arrangements.
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	Yes - increase in indecent images of children has been discussed with the Constabulary Corporate Communications department.
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes