

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP17/6

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
24 FEBRUARY 2017**

**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 continues to develop its Child Protection and associated areas of work in line with HMIC inspection findings, Local Safeguarding Board procedures and other best practice.
- 1.3 The ongoing programme of work is significantly increasing resources within Protecting Vulnerable People Directorate; in particular within the Safeguarding and Investigation teams.

Local Children's Safeguarding Board

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The Exploited Children Sub-Group has made use of the regional CSE Strategic Assessment to inform its current action plan. The links to online safety and to the risk of radicalisation has been made with the relevant county processes. As before, awareness raising continues as a priority with focus now on hotels and similar establishments.

Working Together

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

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 1.8 The MASH has been recognised as a model of best practice in a number of reviews, and attracts national interest in its structure and process. The parallel tasking and coordinating process that sits alongside MASH processes focusses on children at risk of exploitation and has had a positive impact on the multi-agency management of these risks.

- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The integration of Domestic Abuse processes into the MASH has been completed. Further work commences in spring 2017, supported by SafeLives, to enhance these processes and look at a 'single front door' model for Domestic Abuse.
- 1.11 In the period December 2015 to December 2016 the MASH received 19,679 contacts in relation to concerns for children. For the period December 2014 to December 2015 this figure was 23,748. The decrease seen is due to increased data cleansing linked to additional records created as a result of siblings. Approximately 40% of all referrals relating to children are generated by the police. Of the 19,679 contacts 793 cases resulted in Section 47 Children's Act procedures being commenced (where there is a concern for serious harm).
- 1.12 The 793 Section 47 cases represent those that result in joint investigations between Police and Social Care. In 2015 867 cases met this threshold.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)/Missing Children

- 1.13 Suffolk Constabulary continues to work closely with the Regional CSE Coordinator with strong links coordinating responses both internally and across a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The Constabulary continues to identify opportunities to link with the Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit (ERSOU).
- 1.14 The Human Trafficking & Exploitation Team (HTE) and Online Investigation team sits under a single Detective Inspector increasing coordination of these inter-linked areas of business.
- 1.15 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.
- 1.16 Between December 2015 and December 2016 there were 2338 episodes of missing children. A large number of the missing episodes are attributable to a smaller number of children and young people, for example during this period one young person went missing a total of 79 times and 16 children and young people were reported missing between 23-56 times. The majority of children (770) were reported as missing only once. Significant work has been completed to ensure the more robust management of safe and well and return home interviews.
- 1.17 The Constabulary continues to receive 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.
- 1.18 The Human Trafficking & Exploitation team have been engaged in a number of complex investigations. The team continues to robustly support a complex interfamilial historic sexual abuse investigation linked to the Rotherham CSE enquiry and led the Constabulary's participation in two National Modern Slavery action weeks under the banners of Op Hornsman and Op Perceptual.

Multi-Agency E-Safety Crime Prevention (MESCP) Project

- 1.19 Suffolk Constabulary and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner have been successful in being awarded a grant through the Home Office Police Innovation Fund (PIF) for 2016/17 for a proof of concept Multi-Agency E-safety Crime Prevention Proposal (MESCP).
- 1.20 Primary research has been completed including a rapid evidence assessment, good practice review and evaluation of the results undertaken by appropriate academic professional(s). An evaluation report has been received and is currently being considered analysing the types of risk behaviours young people display when communicating in the digital space, on issues pertaining to personal e-safety, cyber bullying, sexting and associated behaviours on line.
- 1.22 The MESCP Project Board has requested additional bespoke secondary data analysis work to further contribute towards developing a Proof of Concept Model Design and will provide specific information on vulnerability in relation to online safety for primary school aged children in Suffolk.

E-Safety

- 1.23 The Constabulary participated in a county wide conference in January 2017 with a focus on understanding how technology is, and can be, misused in a school environment e.g. cyber bullying, trolling, revenge porn sharing a number of case studies from Suffolk schools demonstrating the impact on children and young people. The networking event included the opportunity for those within the Criminal Justice system to share best practice in responding to these types of crimes.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- 1.23 The Child SARC benefits from advanced equipment and provides an effective service to young victims of serious sexual abuse and support to their family or carers.
- 1.24 In the period from December 2015 to December 2016 74 children attended the SARC. Of those, 22 children were under the age of 13 and 52 were within the 13 to 17 year old age range. This compares to a total of 59 for the same reporting period the preceding year. From the 74 children attending SARC 2015/2016, 5 were self-referrals, 3 from Norfolk SARC and 66 referrals from police. Awareness raising has been ongoing regarding SARC with GPs and other professionals coupled with successful multi agency partnership working.

Online Investigation

- 1.25 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.
- 1.26 Between December 2015 and December 2016 the Online Investigation Team undertook enforcement action against 89 individuals linked to IIOC.
- 1.27 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. The Constabulary also saw a marked increase in the number of referrals from other forces as Constabularies nationwide have put more resources into the identification and investigation of those distributing IIOC's. The Constabulary

is introducing a dedicated Detective Sergeant to oversee the Online Investigation Team (OLIT) increasing supervision and accountability.

- 1.28 The OLIT are supported by the Cyber & Serious Crime department on a proactive investigation to tackle online IIOC offending. This has resulted in 89 arrests in Suffolk, 29 of which were during 2016. Across Norfolk and Suffolk this operation has resulted in 57 children being safeguarded and 9 children being protected during the past year.

Children and Young Person's Strategy

- 1.29 The new Children and Young Person's Strategy is in draft and currently in consultation. Once finalised the strategy will be overseen by the Constabulary's Community Safety department and underpinned by an Operational Delivery Plan.

School Liaison PCSOs

- 1.30 The Constabulary now benefits from three School Liaison PCSO posts. PCSO Theresa England is assigned to the South, PCSO Norman Drew assigned to the East and PCSO John Wilkins assigned to the West. The work of the Schools Liaison Officers is being coordinated through the Community Safety Department and governed by standard operating procedural and partnership guidance¹. An official launch is planned during February 2017.

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.

¹ Liaison between schools and other educational settings – Suffolk County Council & Suffolk Constabulary. Operating Guidance for School Liaison Officers

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
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