

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

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SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL – 3 SEPTEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update in relation to the Constabulary's approach to Children and Young Persons, it provides key performance information and highlights areas of organisational and operational development.
2. The period of this report covers a significant period of 'Lock Down'. This has included the 3rd Lock Down at the beginning of the period moving into the gradual easing of restrictions, including the re-opening of schools for both Primary and Secondary School.
3. This report details work the Constabulary is undertaking in preventing the Criminalisation of Children and Young People, engaging with Children and Young People to raise awareness across identified areas and work to better understand the specific needs of Children and Young People.
4. Partnership working across a range of agencies to ensure an effective response to key risk areas, including child exploitation, both criminal and sexual, missing children and child abuse investigations.
5. Problem Solving is increasingly being used within areas of work to tackle specific problems, thorough analysis to understand the problem, the development of a tailored response and an assessment of the effects of the response.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the content of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report covers the period January 2021 to July 2021 and provides an update to the areas reported on in the previous paper.
- 1.2 Strategic lead of Children and Young Persons is shared across two Superintendent roles – Detective Superintendent (Safeguarding and Crime investigation) and the Southern Area Commander (delivering policing services to children) with Chief Officer oversight by ACC Rob Jones. A Strategic Governance Board chaired by the Southern Area Commander provides leadership and oversight, supported by a Tactical Delivery Board chaired by the South Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Inspector.

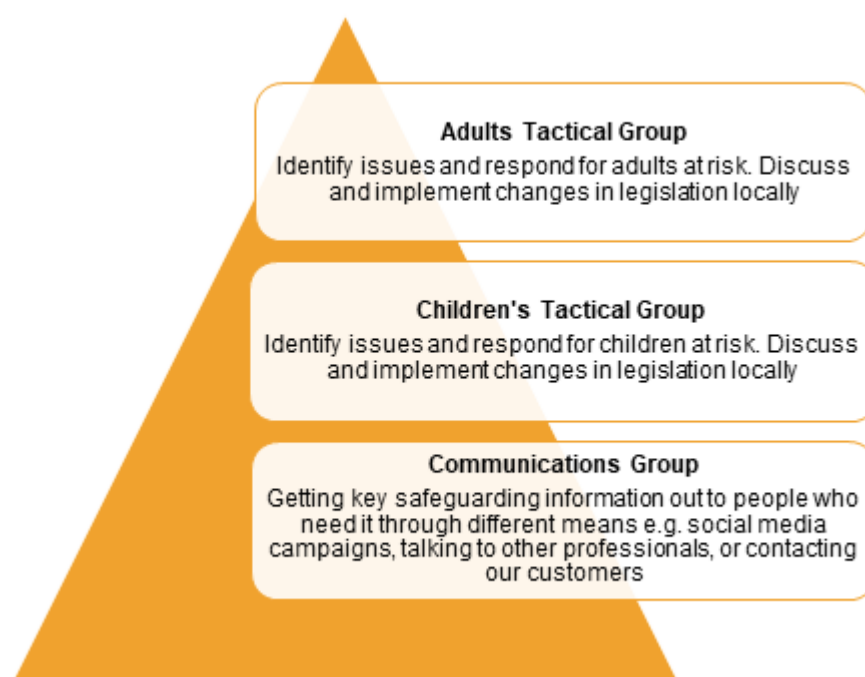
2. CHILD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) for Children

- 2.1 The Police are one of three statutory organisations that form the partnership, along with the Local Authority and Health.
- 2.2 There are five (5) sub-groups under the SSP structure:
- **Learning and Improvement Subgroup**
Supports the SSP in fulfilling its statutory duty to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Board partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve. This is achieved by monitoring a range of performance data, statutory and practice audits and quality assurance activity.
 - **Policy, Practice and Training Subgroup**
Reviews and endorsement of Policies, develops policies and procedures for Safeguarding, ensure sufficient training needs to meet needs, QA and completes training standards.
 - **Case Review Panel**
The group also undertake reviews of cases where there is serious cause for concern as to the way in which the Authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child; and to advise on lessons that can be learnt. The group will also identify and manage Partnership Reviews of cases which do not meet the statutory Serious Case Review criteria but can provide valuable information about how organisations are working together and identify improvements.
 - **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**
Reviews all child deaths up to the age of 18, excluding those babies who are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law by collating information on each child. The panel determine whether the death was deemed preventable, had modifiable factors that may have contributed to the death and makes recommendations to the SSP, or other relevant bodies, promptly so that action can be taken to prevent future such deaths where possible.
 - **Exploitation and Online Safety Subgroup**
The newly established group has an all-age approach incorporating adults as well as children which promotes co-ordinated thinking and delivery of services to safeguard children, young people, adults and their families/carers; in doing so the Group recognises the broad and diverse range of safeguarding responsibilities and arrangements within the Suffolk

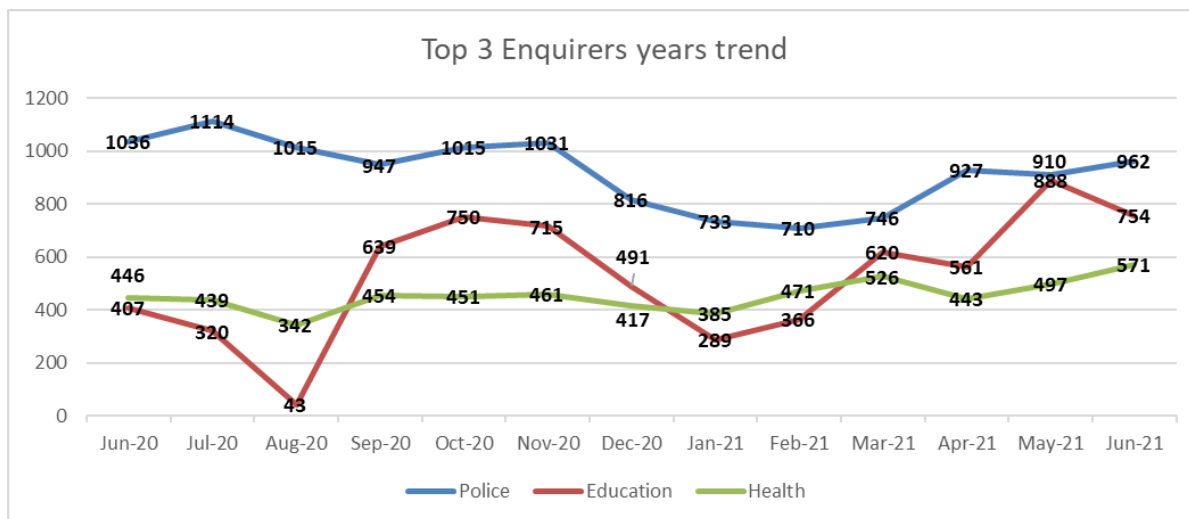
Partnership. This method presents a positive opportunity to adopt a 'Think Family' approach to the planning and co-ordination of response to exploitation and online safety.

- 2.3 As a statutory partner within SSP it allows Suffolk Constabulary to influence and have a direct input in setting strategic and operational direction. With strong review and audit processes in place, this enables Suffolk Constabulary to make continual improvement in relation to Children and Young People. There are established links into wider partnership working arrangements, such as Safer Stronger Communities and the sub-groups that feed into this structure.
- 2.4 The SSP has maintained the tactical groups initially developed to ensure the timely sharing of information. The groups have been integral to ensure consistent communication and working practices across the partnership. The groups consist of Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police, Health and Community Safety Partnerships.
- 2.5 The structure and information about what these tactical groups do is shown below.



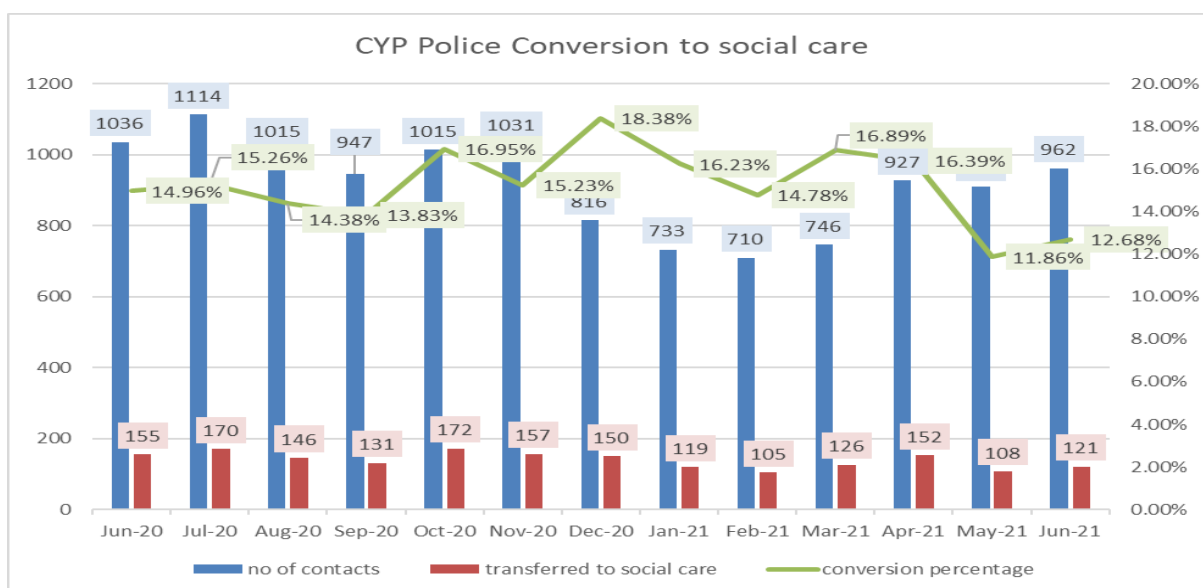
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 2.6 The MASH has continued to experience high demand although slightly down on the previous 6 months. There were 10,767 child contacts received between January and June 2021 (11460 previous period). The top referrers remain as police, education and health respectively, with predictable slight seasonal variation when schools are closed. Referrals remained consistent during the second and third National lockdowns with what would normally be expected.
- 2.7 The table below illustrates the number of contacts from the top three enquiring agencies.



2.8 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. This investigation includes an objective assessment of the child's needs, including the risk of abuse and need for protection as well as examining the family's ability to meet these needs. To agree that the threshold for this level of intervention is met, a multiagency strategy threshold discussion is held in MASH. If the threshold for a S.47 inquiry is met, this can be conducted by CYPS as a single agency, or jointly with Police if a criminal investigation is necessary and proportionate.

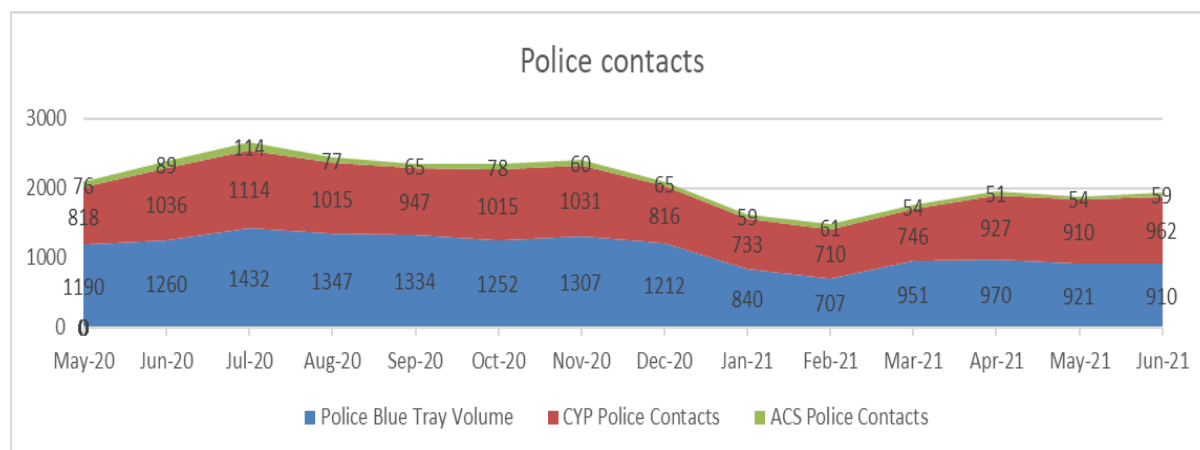
2.9 The table below illustrates the conversation rate of Police contacts to Social Care.



2.10 In excess of 98% of contacts that arrive in MASH are resolved without the requirement for police investigation. Effective triage by skilled and experienced practitioners across all agencies allows the appropriate level of intervention to be identified. This ensures the most concerning cases requiring scrutiny by Police and the Local Authority working together are passed to specialist Safeguarding Investigation Units. The demand on police officers is therefore manageable due to the extremely low conversion rate of referrals to joint S.47 investigations.

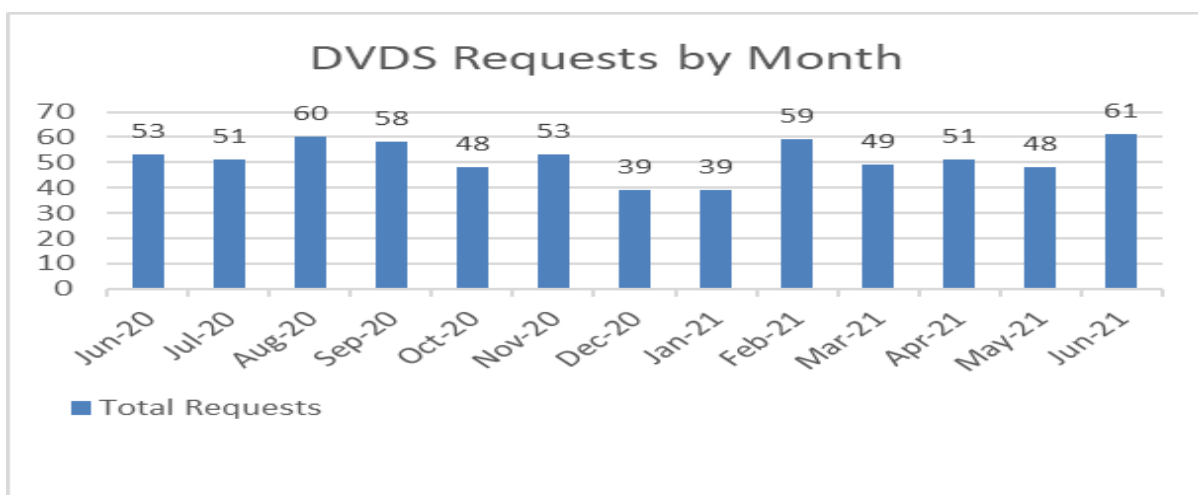
2.11 The Constabulary still remains the largest enquiring agency for child safeguarding concerns to the MASH accounting for over a third of referrals entering the MASH process. This is a reasonably static figure and is expected as police are frequently the first agency in attendance at the point of crisis. Skilled and experienced MASH police decision makers review each record to decide whether it is a safeguarding concern appropriate to share with CYPS. This initial screening and triage determine around 50% of records do not meet the threshold for CYPS intervention and creates capacity for the most concerning cases to be identified and addressed expeditiously.

2.12 The graph below illustrates the number of police referrals into the MASH shared with CYPS and those retained by police. The blue portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which did not meet the threshold for sharing with CYPS as there was no safeguarding concern meeting their criteria for intervention. The red portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which met the threshold and were shared with CYPS as a safeguarding concern. Similarly, the green portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which met the threshold and were shared with ACS (Adult and Community Services) as a safeguarding concern. As some young people remain open to CYPS services after the age of 18, it is relevant to include this figure. The blue portion has decreased slightly from the last year as MASH police no longer receive and review adult mental health referrals from officers unless there is also a safeguarding concern as well.

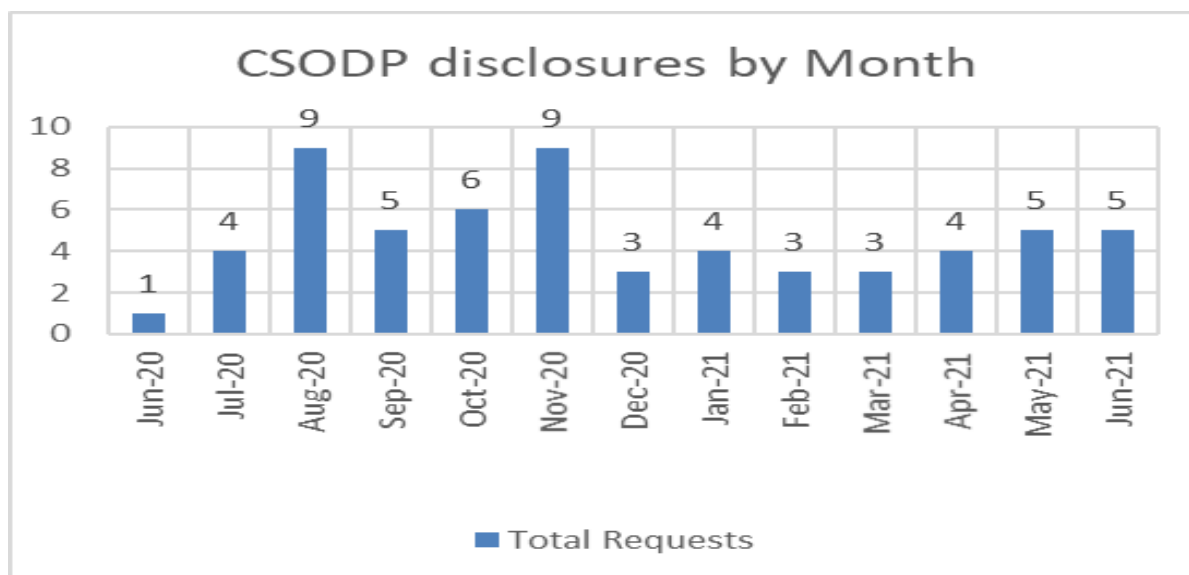


2.13 The below information in relation to disclosures is important work as this empowers adults to protect and safeguard themselves and their children by making an informed choice about relationships.

2.14 This graph shows the total amount of Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme (DVDS) applications that have been received and processed by police in MASH. Not all of the applications result in a disclosure being made to a potential victim although safety work is completed with the victim regardless. June saw an increase in these applications from all sources.



- 2.15 This graph shows the amount of Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODP) applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. These figures are all within normal parameters.



- 2.16 The Constabulary remains the largest enquiring agency for child safeguarding concerns to the MASH accounting for over a third of referrals entering the MASH process. This is a reasonably static figure and is expected as police are frequently the first agency in attendance at the point of crisis. Skilled and experienced MASH police decision makers review each record to decide whether it is a safeguarding concern appropriate to share with CYPS. This initial screening and triage determine around 50% of records do not meet the threshold for CYPS intervention and creates capacity for the most concerning cases to be identified and addressed expeditiously.
- 2.17 The county's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) continue to be attended by CYPS to address child safeguarding concerns within cases discussed. All MARAC referrals are processed through the MASH in order that any crimes being disclosed to both statutory partners and third sector agencies are identified and recorded. There are 2 MARAC meeting per month held in South and West Areas and 1 Meeting in the East Area. MARAC meetings are held on Teams for efficiency.

Suffolk MARAC Cases involving Children January-June 2021

	East	West	South	Total
No of Cases	116	330	320	766
No w Children	64	171	175	410
% w Children	55%	52%	55%	54%

Missing

- 2.18 The monthly Missing Tactical Tasking and Co-ordinating Group is a multi-agency meeting that focus and reviews children who have frequent missing episodes or are vulnerable to exploitation (although this element has been in some part replaced by the MACE). This ensures an appropriate partnership response. Information is collated from each agency in order to inform discussion and aid decision making. The top ten children who at the most risk of harm are discussed. This does not replace the strategy meeting, some children who are at risk of either criminal or sexual exploitation will now be discussed in the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting.

Child Exploitation

- 2.19 Suffolk Constabulary have been a key partner in the set- up of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting. The meetings started in May 2021. There is a dedicated Child Exploitation contact from Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary have supported this by investment in a Child Exploitation (CE) officer. The CE officer manages the actions from the MACE meeting, builds intelligence around a child, ensures that National best practice in relation to Exploitation is considered and delivers training across the Constabulary in relation to Child Exploitation.
- 2.20 The meeting consists of key stakeholders including, Police, Children and Young Persons Services, Health, Education, Community Safety Partnerships and Youth Justice Services. Children, where there are either criminal or sexual exploitation concerns, are referred into the meeting and a multi-agency approach is taken in identifying and managing the risks to the child. The child is discussed and then assessed via a scoring matrix, this allows the panel to understand whether the child is High, Medium or Low Risk of Exploitation. A decision is taken by the panel as to whether that child is adopted by MACE. A comprehensive multi-agency plan is put in place, this includes both looking at the individual and/or applying a contextual safeguarding approach to safeguarding that child. It also ensures that there is an identified lead agency so management of contact with the child is assured.
- 2.21 The case is then reviewed in the following meeting to ascertain whether the plan around the child is working or it needs to be amended. Once the risk of exploitation has reduced the child will no longer be discussed in the MACE meeting.
- 2.22 The first MACE meeting took place in June 2021 and there is a MACE meeting held in each area on a monthly basis. The meeting is in its infancy; however, a review will be conducted at the 6 and 12 month stage to assess the effectiveness.

Police Youth Engagement Team (YET)

- 2.23 Suffolk Constabulary recognise Exploitation as a critical risk factor for Children and Young People. There has been a shift in focus of the team, to not only engage children, but to actively identify and disrupt, both criminal and sexual exploitation. They proactively engage with a child/young person to gain information and intelligence to enable proactive policing.

- 2.24 The YET continue to work with Youth Justice Service and CYPS and have built close working relationships with Residential Children's Care providers, primarily in the Ipswich area. The Police Based Vulnerability Assessment Tracker has been reviewed and amended to include more accurate indicators for assessing vulnerability and exploitation. The children who appear on it are assessed for risk, but key risk indicators are reviewed separately to aid early intervention. Children who hit the relevant criteria are subject to Op Strobe or referred into the MACE. The police-based Vulnerability Assessment Tracker has been reviewed and amended to ensure identification of those who are most at risk of exploitation. The YET work with the child and family. The information gathered that identifies those committing exploitation is referred into the Area Tasking meeting and the child, dependent on the risk levels may be referred into the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting (MACE).
- 2.25 Op Strobe was initially created to raise the profile of frequently missing person. However, over time its effectiveness decreased. Op Strobe has been re-invigorated across the three Areas. It is separated into two cohorts, those that have been adopted by the MACE panel and this that have been identified through the YET as believed at risk of exploitation, but where there is currently insufficient intelligence to refer to MACE. Strobe raises the profile with officers to increase intelligence and intervention for those subject to this operation.

Child A (MACE/YET)

- 2.26 This is an example of how the YET is a vital part in the partnership response to Exploitation. Child A is in Children's Residential Care, placed by the Local Authority. Child A has complex needs. The YET have a good relationship with the Care Home and regularly visit. They have formed a relationship with Child A and have learned that he is being exploited by his peer group. Recognised as a victim of exploitation a crime was recorded, this is currently under investigation. The exploitation that was previously unknown to Children's Social Care was heard in the MACE panel and a comprehensive plan put in place around Child A.

YET/MACE – Response to Exploitation

- 2.27 The YET identified a group of 12 to 14 year old children who had been victims of assaults in the Felixstowe area. This cohort of children were not previously known to police and CYPS. The team worked closely with the identified children and gathered information around a group of older teenagers who were exploiting the children for a drug dealing network. From the intelligence gathered this has become a Suffolk Policing Proactive Operation and two of the children have been referred into MACE meeting and a comprehensive multi-agency response has been activated.

Suffolk Youth Offending Service and Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

- 2.28 This period has continued to maintain improvements with Youth Justice Service. The decriminalisation of Young People remains a strategic priority for Children and Young Persons and work continues to develop in this area. This includes ensuring that Children and Young people are referred into non-crime diversion into YJS. Numbers, although improved, remain lower than anticipated. Reasons for lower than expected referral numbers have identified the referral process as a barrier. The referral pathway is being reviewed and streamlined.
- 2.29 A focus remains on ensuring that Children are not unnecessarily arrested or remain in custody for extended periods. There has been a slight decrease on the number of children that have been arrested and detention authorised in custody, from 326 from July 2020 to December 2020 and 317 in the current period of January 2021 to June 2021.

- 2.30 The average hours that a child has been kept in custody remains consistent throughout this reporting period. The arrest of a child is not taken lightly, and officers will, where they are able, use interview under caution. Following training, custody officers will question the necessity to arrest and the Custody Inspector will take the age of the child into account when conducting the PACE review.
- 2.31 There has also been further training around the Concordant of Children in Custody, where any children remanded into custody overnight should be remanded into local authority care, under certain circumstances that will include the requirement for secure accommodation where necessary. During this reporting period only 6 children were remanded to court overnight. This is the same as the previous reporting period. Each case is reviewed in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure that each agency carried out its duty accordingly.
- 2.32 Suffolk Constabulary recognises that BAME Children are overrepresented within the Criminal Justice System. A BAME child is 2x more likely to be arrested than a white child. A BAME is more likely to be a first time entrant into the Criminal Justice System. There is work being undertaken by YJS and Suffolk Constabulary to understand reasons and identify and implement measures to reduce disproportionality.

Police (PENY) referrals	Total Last 6 Months
Youth Conditional Caution	22
Youth Caution	31
Diversion Crime	110
Community Resolution	55
No Outcome	25
Total:	243

Missing Children

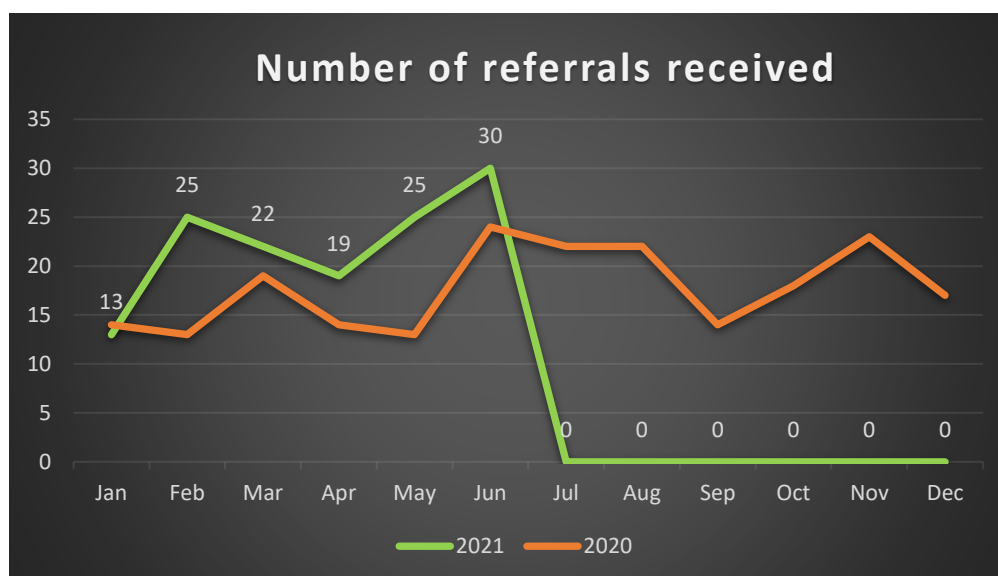
- 3.1 Between 1st January 2021 and 30th June 2021 there were 2157 recorded missing reports for both adult and children. The reports related to 749 different persons, 349 of which were children.
- 3.2 The figures show that there has been a slight decrease in missing episodes when measured against the previous reporting period. There has been a decrease in the number of individuals that have been reported missing:
- Three (3) missing person advisors have been recruited to impact on high risk high demand missing issues across the organisation, placing a dedicated resource in each area with a specific remit to reduce risk and lower demand in regard to missing. They attend relevant strategy meetings and work with Children's Residential Care Homes on safety planning.
 - The South Area are currently trialling the Philomena Protocol, this is where Children's Care Providers are requested to gather vital information about that child to pass to police to enable the child to be located quickly.
 - All Return Home Interviews (672) conducted by the Local Authority are reviewed by the Missing Persons Advisors to ensure that any relevant intelligence that could assist in future Safeguarding if the child are recorded on police systems.

Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

- 3.3 For the period 1st January 2021 to 30th June 2021 there were 661 investigations with the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) keyword in Suffolk, down from 771 investigations from the previous reporting period (1st July 2020-31st December 2020); a decrease of 60.
- 3.4 However, during the period January 2021 to June 2021 ICAIT received 134 new referrals from the NCA and other LEA's, each of which accounts for a new investigation. For the previous reporting period ICAIT received 97 referrals, an increase of 37 referrals (an average of 6 more per month). The volume follows the same trajectory of an overall increase in referrals, compared to the same period last year, and mirrors the upturn in demand nationally and locally. It is likely that COVID has influenced the levels and types of referrals received, with periods of lockdown seemingly triggering an uplift in referrals.

2020		2021	
Quarter	Avg Referrals	Quarter	Avg Referrals
Q1	15.3	Q1	20.0
Q2	17.0	Q2	24.7
Q3	19.3	Q3	TBC
Q4	19.3	Q4	TBC

- 3.5 Chart 1 – Number of Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) Investigations



	2021	2020
Jan	13	14
Feb	25	13
Mar	22	19
Apr	19	14
May	25	13
Jun	30	24

- 3.6 During the first 6 months of 2021, the continued increase in demand has seen the average workload rise to 35.6 investigations per FTE. ICAIT has been subject to a full process review at the beginning of the year and the outcome is currently awaited, but will likely involve a change to working practices and engage support from other areas of the constabulary, as well as an uplift in staffing.
- 3.7 ICAIT are supported by the Area Based Scorpion Teams who assist with the execution of the ICAIT warrants in addition to their other commitments. They receive bespoke briefings from the ICAIT team prior to the execution to ensure the relevant digital devices are seized and to understand the extent of any search required.

Schools Liaison and CYP engagement

- 3.8 School visits have continued to be severely restricted during the period as a result of COVID-19. However, the SLO's across the three areas have adapted to the on-line delivery and created bespoke inputs across a number of areas'. Focusing on Op Sceptre (Knife Crime) and County Line Intensification Week. They have also delivered Crucial Crew inputs in the South Area and transition to High School inputs. This is in addition to being a visible presence in schools.

Chart showing School Liaison Officer Inputs

	West	East	South	TOTAL
County Lines	5	5	22	32
Online Safety	4	7	40	51
Knife Crime	2	0	28	30
Relationships	2	4	18	24
Transition	0	0	25	25
TOTAL	13	16	133	

- 3.9 Three Children's and Young Persons Officers have been recruited into the Partnership Teams, one for each Area Command. The officers are to engage and build relationships with 16 – 24 year olds by engaging with Colleges and Higher Education facilities. They will have identified other spaces used by this cohort of Children. Specific packages for this older cohort are currently being designed and will be delivered before the next reporting period.
- 3.10 A recent Rules of Engagement event took place involving 8 Suffolk Police Officers and 8 Young People from BAME background, primarily from the Ipswich area. This was initially focused around disproportionality around Stop and Search but also worked to understand why there is often a negative perception of police and how to change those perceptions. The feedback from the session was positive.

4. OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHT REPORT

- 4.1 Operation Culworth was closed as an active Operation in April 2021. The successes and methodology of Culworth were reported in the previous paper and suffice to say, all three objectives were met. There has been an evaluation paper completed along with a series of recommendations to ensure embedded good practice going forward. These will be taken

through the Exploitation subgroup, that is attended by the CPC Chief Superintendent, and is governed through Safer Stronger Communities. Close monitoring of Missing Reports and early identification of similar patterns should be identified through the MACE meeting and analysis. This should enable early intervention from the partnership that should negate the need for another Op Culworth.

- 4.2 **Hope Awards** - The First Hope Awards have taken place. This was developed by a PCSO who wanted to celebrate the achievements and resilience of Young People in Suffolk. The focus is Diversity, Teamwork and Determination. A nomination was submitted for a young person and this was considered by a judging panel. Each nomination was recognised with a certificate and winners received their awards in person. The participation of schools was really encouraging, and the Hope Awards will be run again in the next financial year.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No financial implications are highlighted in this period.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 The impact of COVID 19 and subsequent lockdowns is currently unknown, however it is anticipated that there will be both short- and longer-term issues on Children and Young Persons. It is not yet known how these will present. However, this will undoubtedly be impacted by a return to some form of austerity. The next period reporting should give a greater insight of what some of the short-term issues are likely to be, as, unless there is another lockdown, this will be the first six months without lockdown that can significantly affect reporting patterns. These will be monitored through as a partnership across all areas that affect Children and Young Persons and when concerns are identified, measures put in place to address.