



ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP23/50

SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –  
17 NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**SUMMARY:**

1. This paper supports the related commitment in the Police and Crime Plan, that the Constabulary will ensure the way it works with young people supports effective engagement, safeguards young people, prevents unnecessary criminalisation and reduces reoffending (including its triage work with Suffolk Youth Justice Service).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is asked to consider the progress made by the Constabulary, and raise issues with Chief Constable as appropriate to the PCC's role in holding the Chief Constable to account.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report covers the period January 2023 to June 2023 and provides an update to the areas reported on in a previous paper to the Panel.
- 1.2 Strategic oversight of Children and Young Persons (CYP) is shared across County Policing Command and Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management and Joint Justice Services. The portfolio holders are as follows: Superintendent (South Area) responsible for Children and Young People against the National Child Centred Policing Framework, Detective Superintendent responsible for the Safeguarding Partnership, Detective Superintendent for Child Abuse Investigations and a Chief Inspector responsible for Children in Custody. The Strategic Governance is held by the Assistant Chief Constable providing leadership and oversight. There are delivery boards for both CYP (incorporating custody) and for Child Protection.
- 1.3 This paper supports the related commitment in the Police and Crime Plan, that the Constabulary will ensure the way it works with young people supports effective engagement, safeguards young people, prevents unnecessary criminalisation and reduces reoffending (including its triage work with Suffolk Youth Justice Service).

## **2. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **2.1 The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)**

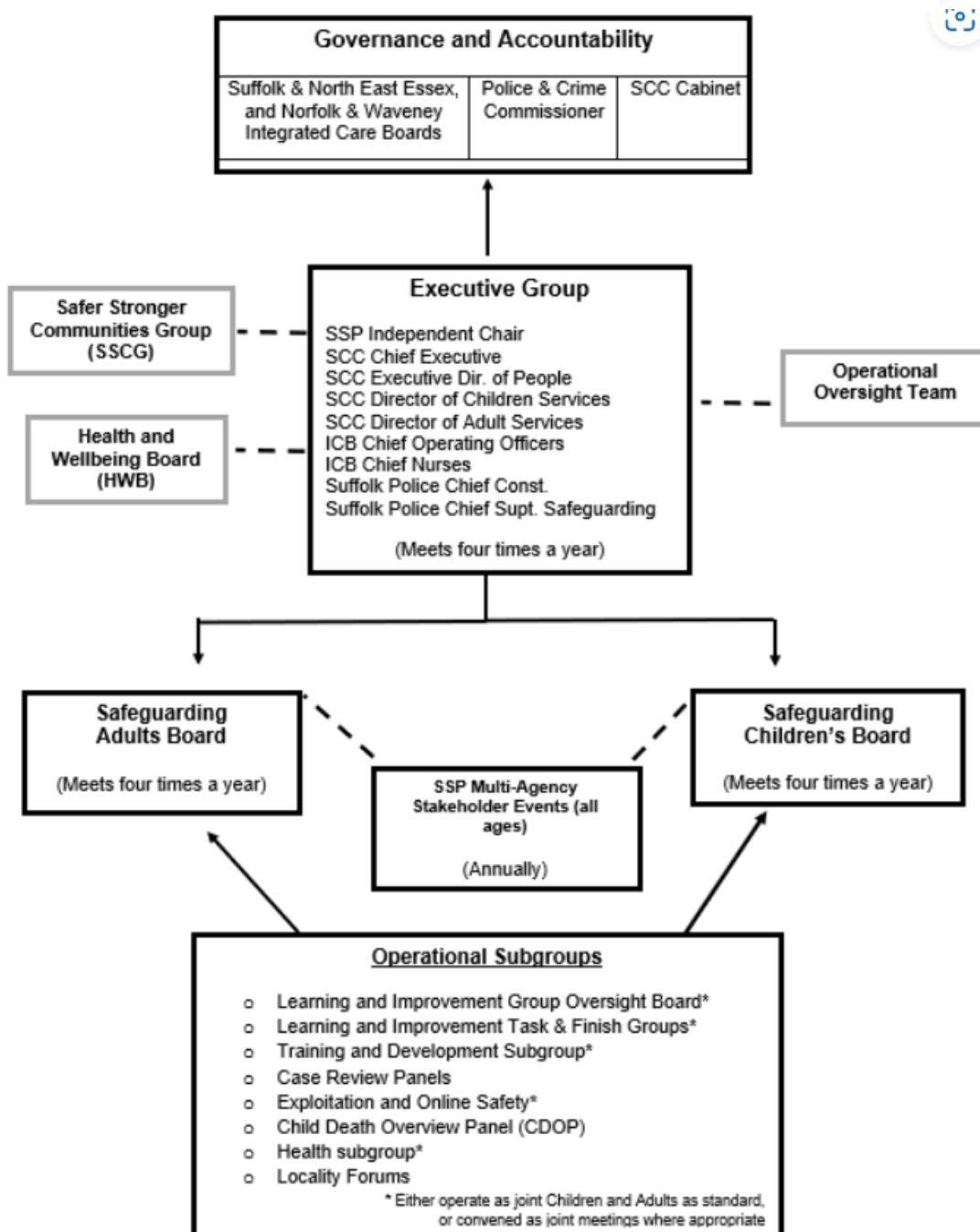
- 2.1.1 The Children's Social Work Act 2017 and Care Act 2014 provide the legal basis for the creation of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. The current arrangements came into effect in September 2019 bringing all ages safeguarding under one governance structure while complying with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements arising from Working Together 2018. The Police are one of three statutory organisations that form the partnership, along with the Local Authority and Integrated Care Board (Health).
- 2.1.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 set in legislation the local safeguarding arrangements and requires that the three statutory safeguarding partners; the Local Authority; the Police; and the Integrated Care Board co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children, including making arrangements to identify and support children at risk of harm. This legislation led to the creation of local Safeguarding Partnerships in 2019 and replaced the legislation for Local Authorities to have Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). Working together to safeguard children 2018 legislation was out for national consultation until September 2023, with Government response due November 2023, with amended version of Working Together 2023 due to be published by the end of the calendar year.
- 2.1.3 The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties; Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the Local Authority to provide services to children in need in their area and Section 47 of the same act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, places duties on key agencies. The Police, the Integrated Care Board and the Local Authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

2.1.4 The principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state that the welfare of children is paramount. A child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child.

2.1.5 The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) is led by an Independent Chair who scrutinises the Partnership to ensure that all agencies are doing all they can to keep children safe. It provides an escalation process to hold partners to account.

2.1.6 The Safeguarding Children's Board provides the strategic oversight on behalf of the Executive Group. Senior officers attend from the broader safeguarding network including, but not limited to the police, ambulance trust, Department for Work & Pensions, housing/care homes, probation, and education leaders. The Board meet quarterly.

2.1.7 Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Governance Structure:



2.1.8 There are eight (8) Operational Sub-groups. Of note are the following Sub-groups:

- **Children's Case Review Panel**

The Children's Case Review Panel is responsible for commissioning the undertaking of Local Children's Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR), on behalf of the Partnership as and when required under No Secrets (2000) and the Working together to Safeguard Children (2018).

The group undertakes reviews of cases where there is serious cause for concern as to the way in which the Partnership and other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child; and to advise on lessons that can be learnt. This relates to cases where Suffolk have been involved in the life of a child and can be chaired by other lead forces. 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. This group will oversee all action plans resulting from these case reviews.

- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

Any child death, regardless of circumstance is reviewed at the Child Death Overview Panel, excluding those babies who are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law. Information is collected on each child, allowing the panel to determine whether the death was deemed preventable, had modifiable factors that may have contributed to the death and makes recommendations to the Partnership, or other relevant bodies, promptly so that action can be taken to prevent future such deaths where possible. Where relevant, cases are referred to the Case Review Panel for further learning to be identified.

- **Exploitation and Online Safety Subgroup**

This group has evolved into two separate groups, the Online Safety Group and the Exploitation Working Group.

The Online Safety Group is currently reviewing their terms of reference to ensure clear objectives and focus on the ever increasing issues of online offences and safeguarding issues. Objective to bring key stakeholders together, including statutory partners and valuable 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners.

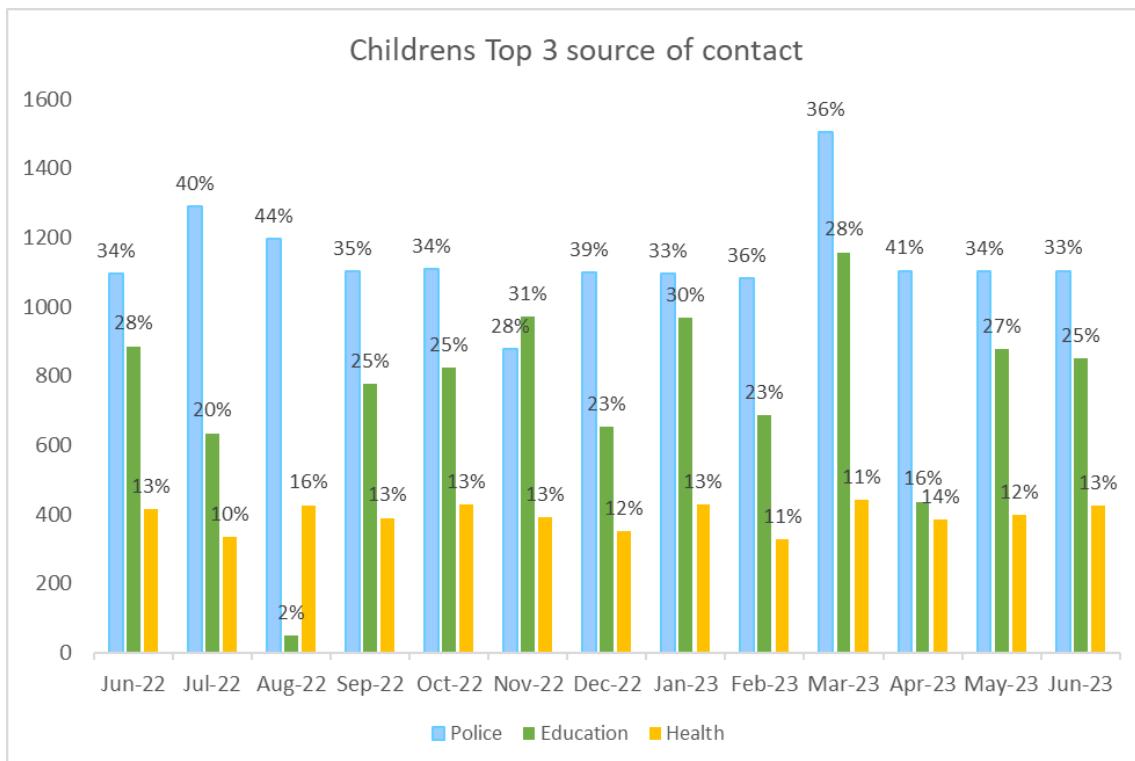
Building on previous work programme to tackle Criminal Exploitation in Suffolk, the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) is seeking further partnership funding to develop and evolve its response to this complex and the ever-changing issues of Criminal Exploitation. Independent evaluation of this programme has identified continued learning and further opportunities to inform our approach to prevent young people and vulnerable adults being drawn into criminal exploitation, support those that are involved to exit safely and robustly enforce a zero-tolerance policy against those that perpetrate crimes associated with exploitation. This would be a further three years funded partnership project.

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

2.2.1 Suffolk Constabulary has a continued daily presence in MASH, with significant numbers of staff working in the office throughout the second half of 2022 and have welcomed back partner agency colleagues allowing face-to-face interaction, robust discussion of safeguarding concerns and enriching decision making.

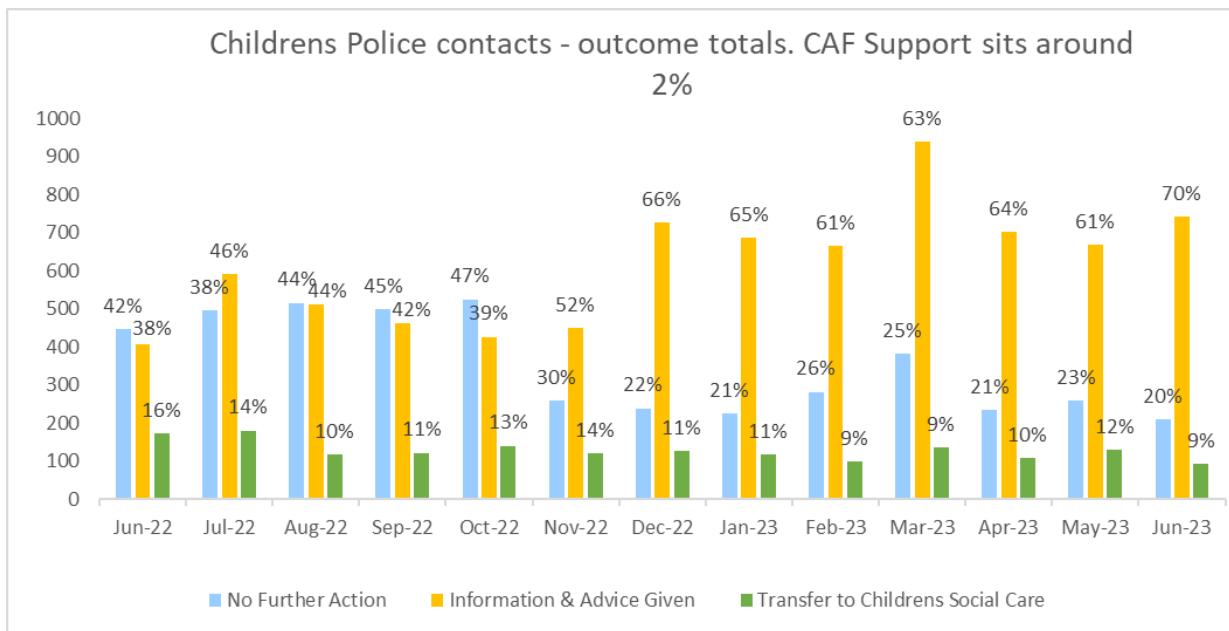
2.2.2 Suffolk Constabulary remains the largest referring agency for child safeguarding concerns to the MASH, accounting for over a third of referrals entering the MASH process. This is a reasonably static figure and is expected as police are frequently the first agency in attendance at the point of crisis. 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 determines around 50% of records sent for review do not meet the threshold for CYPS intervention. This triage process creates capacity for the most concerning cases to be identified and addressed expeditiously.

2.2.3 MASH Police continues to experience high demand which has remained largely consistent with 6698 referrals for the six months between July – December 2022 and 6986 for the six months between January and June 2023. We saw an unexplained peak in March 2023 with 1503 referrals, but has since returned to normal levels of around 1050 referrals per month.



2.2.4 In accordance with Section 47 Children's Act 1989, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to carry out an investigation when they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area 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 investigation is met, this can be conducted by Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) as a single agency, or jointly with Police if it is necessary and proportionate, or a criminal investigation is required. Acknowledging the critical decision making in S.47 cases, these are held face to face in MASH with partners.

2.2.5 The table below shows the outcome of police referrals made to Children's Social Care;



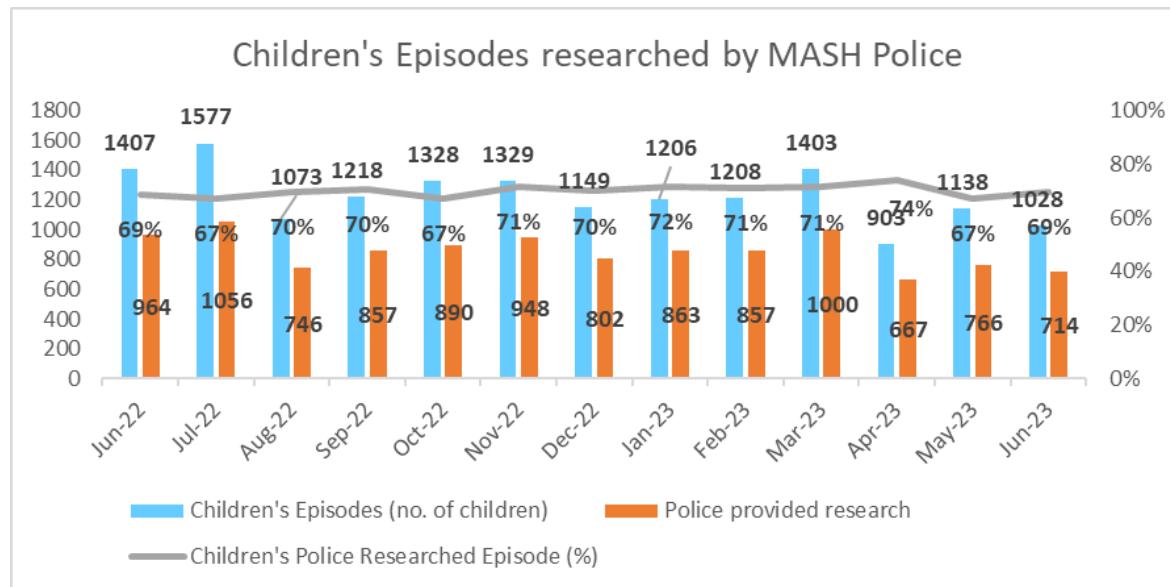
2.2.6 In excess of 98% of contacts that arrive in the MASH are resolved without the requirement for police investigation. Effective triage by skilled and experienced practitioners across all agencies allows the appropriate level of intervention to be identified. This ensures the most concerning cases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

2.2.7 After the MASH Police Decision Maker training and amended guidance for CYPs referrals that was issued in November 2022, we have been completing audits to check compliance. These audits have shown a high rate of compliance from Decision Makers which will have enhanced the safeguarding of these children. HMICFRS were complimentary of the changes that we had made.

2.2.8 The graph below illustrates the number of police referrals into the MASH shared with CYPs and those retained by police. The 'Police Blue Tray Volume' demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which do not meet the threshold for sharing with CYPs as there was no safeguarding concern meeting their criteria for intervention. The 'Children's Police Contacts' 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 'Adults Police Contacts' demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which met the threshold and were shared with Adult and Community Services (ACS) 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.

2.2.9 Police MASH also conduct significant children's episode research on behalf of partners. The graph below shows the number of research packages completed by the MASH police research team. This research is requested by MASH partner agencies to aid decision making and can include information retrieved from all police databases, relevant to the safeguarding concern. Following His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Child Protection inspection, the MASH police research team now conduct a Police National Database (PND) check in every case, which has considerably increased the time it takes to produce the research package.

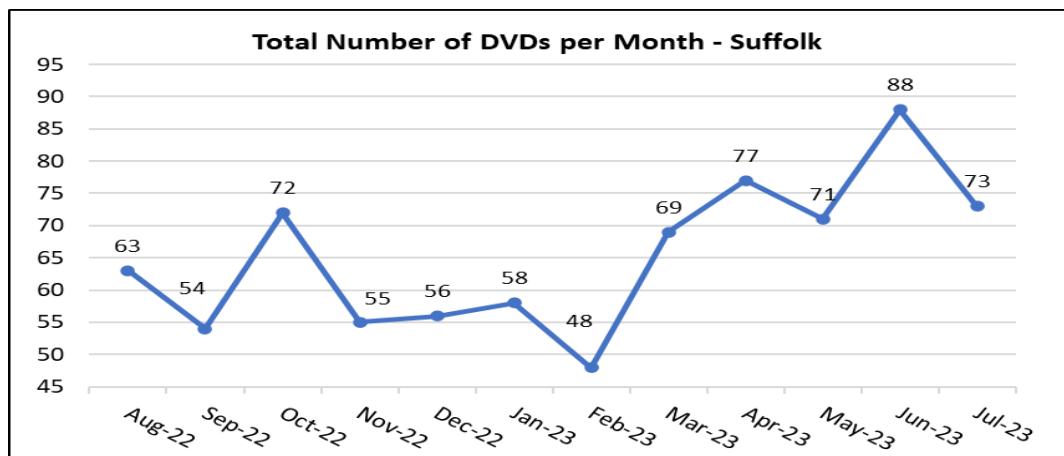
2.2.10



2.2.11 Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, DVDS) allows police information about a potential source of risk to be shared with a person potentially at risk. This empowers people to protect and safeguard themselves and their children by making an informed choice about their relationships.

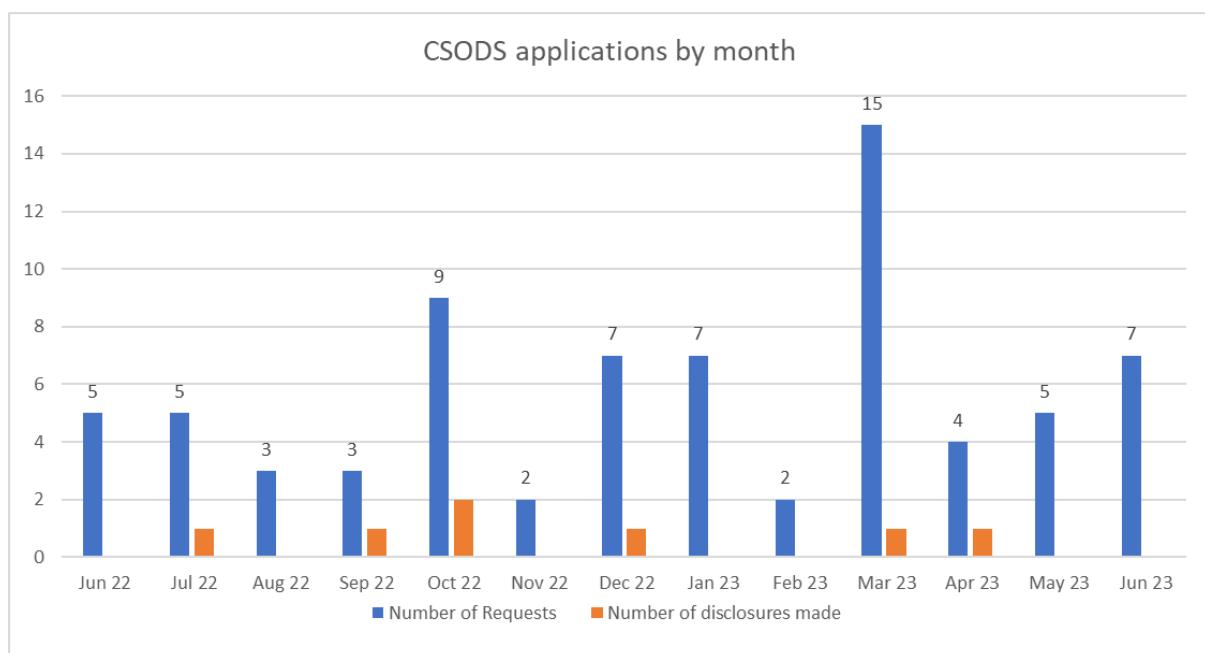
2.2.12 Clear guidance about how to make a 'Right to Ask' application is available on the Constabulary website, and we have seen an increase in these self-generated requests from members of the public. 'Right to Know' applications made by professional including police officers and staff have remained static. The MASH Detective Inspector is beginning work with the Neighbourhood & Partnerships Team (NPT) Diverse Communities Coordinator to explore additional methods to raise awareness of the scheme with harder to reach communities.

2.2.13 The graph below shows the number of DVDS applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. Not all applications result in a disclosure being made to a person potentially at risk, although safety planning advice is offered by the Domestic Abuse Coordinators in all cases where engagement is possible. The total number of DVDS requested has increased over the last 5 months, particularly in June 2023, averaging at 65 a month across the last 12 months.



2.2.14 Sarah's Law (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Process Scheme, CSODPS) allows police information about a potential source of risk to be shared with a person whose children could be in contact with a potential source of risk. This empowers parents and care givers to protect and safeguard children by making an informed choice about contact and relationships.

2.2.15 The graph below shows the number of CSODP applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. March saw a particularly high number of applications for an unknown reason, however most of the applications were not suitable for CSODP.



2.2.16 Where an application does not fit the necessary disclosure test for either DVDS or CSODPS, but information held by police is pertinent, disclosure using Common Law is considered ensuring parents and care givers are given every opportunity to make informed decisions about contact children may have with a potential source of risk.

2.2.17 The county's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) 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 Two MARAC meetings per month held in South and West Areas and 1 Meeting in the East Area. MARAC meetings are held on Teams for efficiency.

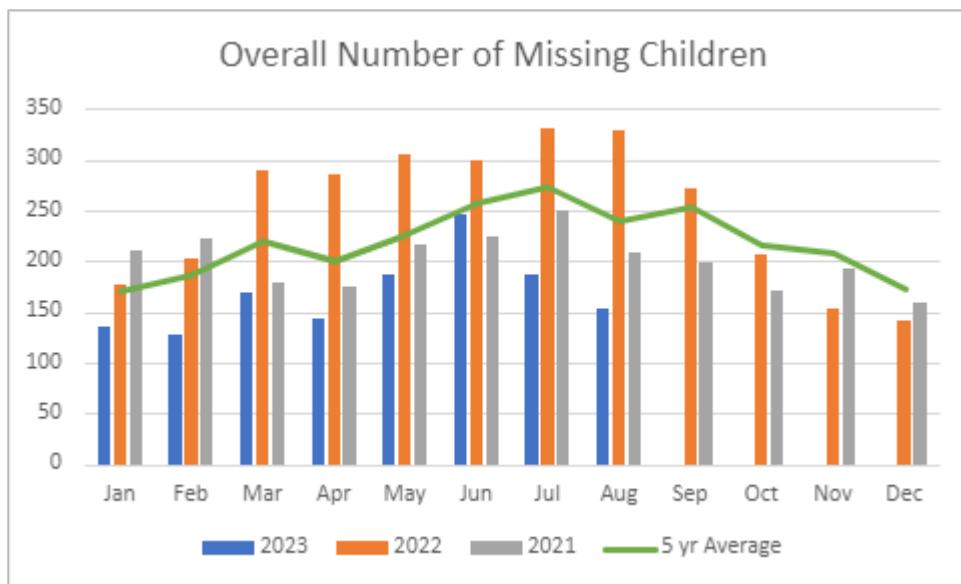
2.2.18 Suffolk MARAC is subject of review by the Improvement Sub-group, reporting to the MARAC Steering Group. Information gathering from other forces who have made changes to their MARAC is currently underway.

Suffolk MARAC Cases involving Children January 2023 - June 2023

	Total No of MARAC cases heard		Number of repeat Cases		Total Number of Children linked to heard MARAC Cases	
	Jul- Dec 2022	Jan - Jun 2023	Jul- Dec 2022	Jan - Jun 2023	Jul- Dec 2022	Jan - Jun 2023
<b>South</b>	262	207	64	40	320	265
<b>West</b>	186	212	43	38	216	277
<b>EAST</b>	125	160	25	27	134	188
<b>TOTAL</b>	573	579	132	105	670	730

2.3 **Missing Children**

- 2.3.1 Missing Children continue to place a significant demand on Suffolk Constabulary, particularly those children who reside within a care home setting and/or are vulnerable to exploitation. The monthly Missing Tactical and Tasking Co-Ordination Group (TCG), is jointly chaired by a Children Young Persons Service (CYPS) manager and a Detective Chief Inspector, it meets to ensure a partnership response to those children who are frequently missing. If a child is identified at risk of exploitation, they are referred into the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel.
- 2.3.2 The three missing persons advisors based on each area have built key relationships in Children's Care Home settings and with Children and Young Persons Services. The advisors perform a key role in identifying those children at greatest risk and feeding them into the Multi-Agency Missing Children's TCG.
- 2.3.3 To aid the contextual safeguarding of missing children Suffolk Constabulary have developed a Routes to Intervention document to permit a bespoke approach to providing multi-agency intervention.
- 2.3.4 Between January 2023 and June 2023, 451 children (under 18) accounted for 1024 individual missing reports. The Southern Area Command has the greatest number of repeated missing children, and highest number of children reported missing from care.
- 2.3.5 The overall number of missing children continues to drop significantly owing to several measures that have been put in place to tackle repeat missing children from care, training and partnership working through the missing person coordinators.
- 2.3.6 The graph below evidences the reduction in missing children.



Total number of child missing reports during this period:

- South Area – 467 of which 206 related to children in care
- West Area – 266 of which 87 related to children in care
- East Area – 291 of which 210 related to children in care

2.3.7 The Philomena Protocol continues to be championed with partner agencies and the Crime, Safeguarding & Incident Management Chief Superintendent has contacted senior leads within partner agencies to re-invigorate the concept and this has been further complimented by the missing person advisors providing training to residential settings providers. Favourable comments were made on the progress of the Philomena Protocol by the HMICFRS Inspectors during the recent Nation Child Protection Inspection in July 2023.

2.3.8 Monthly Return Home Interview (RHIs) figures continue to be submitted to CYPS with a full breakdown of outstanding interviews, including the names of each child and the number of missing episodes. This enhanced level of data scrutiny continues to see steady decrease in the number of outstanding RHIs. It is apparent that there is a lack of reporting of incidents that are disclosed within the RHI's, and work is being undertaken with partners to establish an agreeable pathway for these to be recorded in a more timely manner and be subject to both CYPS and Police MASH review to garner appropriate support and maximise investigative opportunities.

2.3.9 In June 2023, Suffolk Constabulary began an audit system with Norfolk Constabulary to review missing person investigations. This process provides an additional degree of independence and has highlighted some trends and challenges which are now being addressed.

2.3.10 Missing children is an area that has seen significant progress. Over the course of the past year, positive developments have been made in the Philomena Protocol, the introduction of Fast Action Response Plans for our most frequent repeat missing children, increase use of child abduction warning notices and training to address the quality of investigations, inappropriate reporting and a revised policy which works alongside the existing College of Policing guidelines.

#### 2.4 Child Exploitation

2.4.1 Suffolk Constabulary have now implemented a composite Child Exploitation policy to ensure that Children who have been identified as victims of either Sexual and Criminal Exploitation

are effectively safeguarded and those who perpetrate these offences are held to account. This policy replaces the previous Child Sexual Exploitation (only) Policy. A key element of our new policy is the requirement for Criminal Investigation Department (CID) ownership and/or oversight of child criminal exploitation cases and Safeguarding Investigation Unit ownership and/or oversight of Child Sexual Exploitation cases. Evaluation of the implementation of this policy was completed in June 2023, which identified an improvement in standards and consistency of investigations into child exploitation. It identified investigations are now subject to regular detective reviews with wider safeguarding considerations and improved partnership working.

Further work is required around application for civil orders which provide wider protective measures.

- 2.4.2 The Constabulary continues to operate a child exploitation sub-group meeting to oversee further improvements in our response to exploitation. This sub-group is chaired by the Detective Superintendent lead for safeguarding and progress is monitored via the Constabulary Child Protection Delivery Board.
- 2.4.3 Partnership Exploitation Officer, funded under the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSPB), has been intrinsic in delivering additional training around exploitation both internally to police colleagues and also jointly to partners. This has improved awareness around risks and indicators for all practitioners to increase information sharing and identify opportunities for early intervention. Independent evaluation (SODA) have been completed to identify key learning.
- 2.4.4 Suffolk Constabulary works closely with their Safeguarding partners within multi agency risk management meetings to plan safeguarding activity to reduce risk and harm to children. As part of the recommendation for HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI), a review of key partnership-based risk management meetings inclusive of the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel meeting, missing tactical co-ordination group meeting and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process was conducted. The review ensured an increased participation of education and voluntary sector organisations participating and increasing support available for children and parents. Work continues in relation to full review of MARAC. All meetings provide key opportunities for partners to identify emerging risks and provide suitable early intervention.
- 2.4.5 The Constabulary Strategic, Business and Operational Services Department (SBOS) has created a Criminal Exploitation Profile, which is under review with partners to identify data shared, how this can be effectively utilised to identify emerging issues and how this will direct activities, both internally within the Constabulary, but also wider with partners.

## 2.5 **Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation Panel (MACE)**

- 2.5.1 MACE Panels are held in each Policing Command Area and attendees include Local Policing Inspectors, Children Young Peoples Services (CYPS), Health, Education, representatives from the Community Safety Partnerships, Youth Justice Services, and local Housing providers. Referrals into MACE can be made by police and partners, for young people between the ages of 10 - 24 years old who have been identified as being involved in, or at risk of exploitation. Information and intelligence from all meeting attendees are discussed and is scored against a Vulnerability Assessment Tracker (VAT). The information and the VAT score support decision making to determine whether the child is adopted by the Panel.
- 2.5.2 A new Terms of reference (Tor) has been developed jointly between Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Childrens Young People Services (CYPS). This was agreed and implemented countywide prior to the HMICFRS reinspection. The ToR outlines an agreed list of standing attendees for

MACE, directs that the Home Office Toolkit should be utilised when making decisions and agreeing actions and allows consistency in decision making from all three chairs.

2.5.3 Local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) continue to allocate a small budget which support disruption / diversion adopting a 'Places, Spaces, Faces' approach. Borough and District partners continue to play an active part in MACE and are now represented at MACE meetings, thereby contributing to work directly addressing issues in specific areas or for individual interventions as discussed at MACE Panels.

2.5.4 The MACE Panel has had the following referrals from January 2023 to June 2023

MONTH	NEW Pre MACE Referrals		Referrals <u>not</u> adopted to MACE		Referrals adopted to MACE	
	8	West - 3 South - 5 East - 0	5	West -2 South - 3 East - 0	3	West - 1 South - 2 East - 0
January	19	West -2 South - 12 East - 5	10	West - 0 South - 8 East - 2	9	West - 2 South - 4 East - 3
February	14	West - 4 South - 7 East - 3	7	West - 2 South - 3 East - 2	7	West - 2 South - 4 East - 1
March	11	West - 2 South - 8 East - 1	5	West - 1 South - 3 East - 1	6	West - 1 South - 5 East - 0
April	10	West - 3 South - 6 East - 1	3	West - 1 South - 2 East - 0	7	West - 2 South - 4 East - 1
May	10	West - 5 South - 5 East - 0	2	West - 1 South - 1 East - 0	8	West - 4 South - 4 East - 0
June						

2.5.5 Multi- Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Example;

Child A was referred to and adopted to the Multi Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel in January 2023. He was referred via his school, due to concerns around him which included his associates, arriving to school late, having two mobile phones with him and other changes in behaviour. This prompted them to make contact with child A's family who in turn reported their own concerns which included child A staying out until late, smelling of cannabis when he returned home, coming home with unexplained new items of clothing and a new bike along with drug paraphernalia being found in his bedroom.

Following child A's adoption to MACE, the Criminal Exploitation Hubs (CE Hubs) attended his school and engaged with his group of friends. In addition to this, one of the CE Hubs workers contacted the family and began providing his parents with support around the Exploitation Toolkit. Another of the CE Hubs youth workers began taking child A to the gym along with a couple of his associates in order to assess the dynamic between them all and use this time to help with educating the young people around gang culture and possible exploitation.

MACE Panel also made contact with St Giles Trust and asked them to attend the school in order to partake in school assemblies and provide further education.

Child A has an allocated Social Worker who regularly meets with him and his parents and feed all relevant information into MACE by personally attending each monthly meeting where Child A is discussed and providing an update to the panel.

Ipswich Borough Council confirmed that the family home is one of their properties and they provided an update to the Panel in relation to any complaints or concerns they have received around the address or its occupants.

The police Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT) are also part of the MACE Panel and take all police actions from each meeting, regularly feeding back into the panel to assist with forming new plans of action in order to remain fluid with any additional concerns. CEGT made contact with the family, discussing their concerns and advising them to report child A as missing if he did not return home at an agreed curfew and they did not know where he was. CEGT also submitted a Diversion Referral to Youth Justice Services (YJS) in order for further education and disruption/diversion around possible exploitation.

All of these interactions from all partner agencies are fed back into MACE on a regular basis and then discussed during the monthly meetings. Concerns have continued around child A and his possible exploitation by others to sell drugs and he has been further arrested by CEGT on two separate occasions for being in possession of cannabis with the intent to supply it. However, this has given police the opportunity to place restrictive bail conditions on child A, including areas not to attend and a curfew time, which also helps disrupt any exploitation activities.

Child A's Social Worker has assisted with him being offered a place at a Construction College as well as helping him with employment applications. This has led to him having interviews with two national food outlets and, although no firm offers have been made as yet, this will help child A fill his time, giving less opportunities for others to exploit him. Although there are still concerns around child A, the above shows how all partner agencies are pulling together via the MACE system in order to try and disrupt any possible exploitation.

## 2.6 **Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT)**

- 2.6.1 The CEGT continue to work with voluntary and statutory partners predominantly through the MACE framework, conducting investigations to identify perpetrators of exploitation and ensure victims are appropriately safeguarded.
- 2.6.2 They are currently linked in with the Child Exploitation (CE) Hubs and the Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS), regularly conducting joint patrols in known exploitation and crime hotspots. They have formed a relationship with 4YP and are supporting ITFC in the development of a diversion programme specifically for children linked to Gangs and Serious Youth Violence.
- 2.6.3 The Team are working at a reduced establishment owing to officers moving on to other teams and promotion, they still however continue to have an exceptional high level of productivity having recorded over 160 investigations connected directly to exploitation concerns and children during this reporting period.
- 2.6.4 Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT) Example A;

Child A is a 13-year-old female who is living in care. She has complex needs and her behaviour meant she was putting herself in high-risk situations on a nearly daily basis. She was being reported missing by care staff almost daily. She was known to be using drugs and consuming alcohol and several used pregnancy test kits found within her bedroom would suggest that she was sexually active. Staff and local authority were struggling to deal with her behaviours and the 17 reported missing reports (there were many other reports which did not make Compact due to child A being located by police before the record was created). In addition to the hours spent by officers making enquiries, this was clearly having a negative impact on child A's safeguarding.

The Team bridged the gaps between police and partner agencies, in addition to supporting other partnership agencies to work more collaboratively. They built a positive relationship with child A but also dealt with her robustly when required, this included arresting her on a couple of occasions, this helped to show child A that there were consequences to her negative actions.

By working with partners and applying the correct amount of pressure when required, additional staff training was provided, a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DOLS) was applied for and granted, which resulted in child A being moved to a more appropriate placement with appropriately trained staff.

All of this good work has culminated in child A not being reported missing for a month and only once in the last 6 weeks. This has greatly reduced the risks around child A and freed up numerous policing hours.

#### 2.6.5 Child Exploitation and Gangs Team (CEGT) Example B;

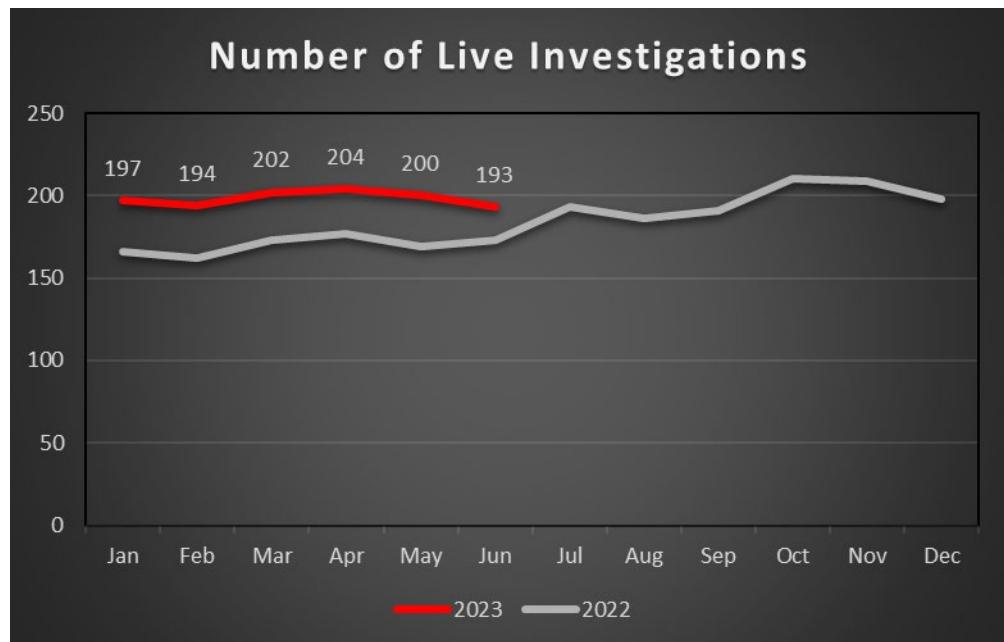
Child B has recently turned 16 but whilst still 15, she began to be reported missing on a very regular basis. Intel suggested she was using drugs and alcohol and it was not known where she was spending most of her missing periods. The Team worked closely with partners to gather information and by making enquiries with those around Child B (parents, Social Worker, school, friends, other family members) were able to build a picture around who she was spending time with and where she was going.

It was identified that she had an older boyfriend who lived alone, and was keeping child B at his address when she was being reported missing. The CEGT issued a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) to the male, but he continued to spend time with Child B whilst she was reported missing. The team slowly built a relationship with Child B to gain some trust and as a result of this, they were able to call her during a missing episode and locate her, with the male. The male was arrested on suspicion of child abduction and Child B was taken to a place of safety where she provided full details of the relationship. The male was charged and remanded for child abduction and child related sexual offences. He was remanded into custody at court, where he currently remains awaiting trial. This has given Child B time and space and allowed Social Services and family to help safeguard her.

#### 2.7 Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

- 2.7.1 Since the COVID pandemic in 2020 there continues to be a year on year rise in sexual predators exploiting children online. This is a rise felt nationally with the Internet Watch Foundation announcing that 2022 was a record-breaking year for them. There has been an increase in the number of primary school children exposed to online abuse due to the availability of technology, with parents often unaware of the dangers they face. Overall demand in Suffolk rose by 11.3% in 2022, with 2023 already set to exceed this.
- 2.7.2 The first half of 2023 has seen an increase of 16.7% in live investigations in comparison to 2022. On average, each Officer has a workload of around 41 live investigations. Despite the unrelenting rise in online offending there has been an increase in the number of suspects arrested and cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision. Despite the Constabulary having a relatively small team in comparison to larger forces there has been a healthy number of suspects charged and convicted during 2023.

2.7.3 Volume of investigations during this reporting period:



	2023	2022
Jan	197	166
Feb	194	162
Mar	202	173
Apr	204	177
May	200	169
Jun	193	173

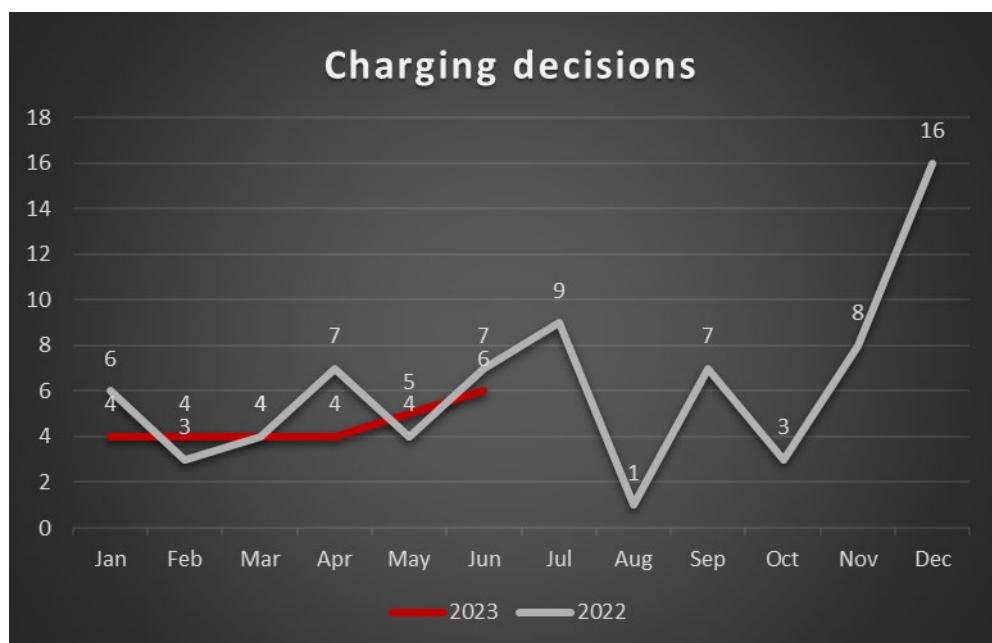
2.7.4 Suspects arrested during this period;



	2023	2022
Jan	8	4
Feb	10	4
Mar	8	4
Apr	7	0
May	5	0
Jun	2	1

2.7.5 Despite the sharp increase in live investigations, Suffolk Constabulary, in comparison to our most similar Force groups is in a very strong position with only a small number of investigations where the risk is unknown. Referrals from partner agencies are recorded on the system as soon as they are received, then the Internet Child Abuse Investigation Team (ICAIT) Detective Sergeant risk assesses them before seeking information from partner agencies in the MASH. If early checks indicate the suspect has immediate access to children, the team consult with staff from children's services to ensure they are fully prepared before attending the address so that safeguarding can be planned. The team are reactive to unknown risk by executing timely enforcement which is evident in the consistent number of suspects arrested, interviewed, and charged.

2.7.6 CPS charging decisions during this period;



	2023	2022
Jan	4	6
Feb	4	3
Mar	4	4
Apr	4	7
May	5	4
Jun	6	7

2.7.7 ICAIT was subject of a full review in 2021 with a recommended uplift of 4 additional members of staff to be implemented to assist with the increase in demand. Staff have now been recruited into these posts which has provided greater consistency in the evidential packages produced, as there is now a member of staff dedicated to the research and intelligence

development function. This has also reduced the time it takes to produce these packages as the team are no longer reliant on other departments to assist. The team are working towards providing grading for all Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) investigations in the County, preventing untrained Officers from viewing IIOC and the subsequent welfare issues this can cause.

- 2.7.8 The ICAIT uplift has also contributed to the Constabulary better utilising the child abuse image database (CAID). A new process has been adopted whereby uploading of images to CAID forms part of the supervisor's finalisation checks meaning the investigation cannot be closed until the supervisor ratifies that the upload has been completed. This new process has significantly increased the Constabulary's contribution to CAID.
- 2.7.9 Two Officers have recently been trained in CAID facial mapping which will place greater emphasis on victim ID in investigations. The school uniform database is also now being routinely used.
- 2.7.10 In January 2023 a new digital triage tool 'CYACOMB' was introduced which has significantly decreased the number of computer and hardware submissions as it identifies indecent images of children (IIOC) in just three minutes. This enhanced capability has reduced the median length of investigations.
- 2.7.11 Digital media investigators (DMI's) continue to support ICAIT Officers by regularly attending scenes where either high-risk offender are likely to hold devices, or any scenes where there is advanced technical set up which requires support. DMI's have equipment which can locate hidden devices which has resulted in some great successes at recent enforcement.
- 2.7.12 Online offending amongst youth's has also seen a sharp increase with self-produced sexual imagery regularly shared. Due to this increase the Constabulary has produced a detailed standard operating procedure (SOP) for Youth Produced Sexual Imagery which provides the workforce with clear guidance around how to investigate these types of offences and safeguarding considerations for all children affected.

## 2.8 **Schools Liaison and CYP Engagement**

- 2.8.1 During this reporting period Schools Liaison Officers (SLO) and Children and Young Persons (CYP) Officers have continued to deliver inputs in educational settings. They continue to be pivotal in building trust and relationships with Children and Young People and support frontline policing and safeguarding teams with intelligence building, securing evidence and safeguarding young people.
- 2.8.2 They continue to support local and national police operations such Hate Crime Awareness Week, Prevent awareness, County Lines Intensification Week, Safer Internet Day, Sexual Abuse, Op Sceptre (Knife Crime) and Crucial Crew.
- 2.8.3 The educational packages delivered by the School Liaison Officers and CYP Officers are developed by the school's team in conjunction with Suffolk County Council to ensure they align to PHSE/RSHE syllabus, they have also started to align the packages with NCA guidance specifically in relation to Internet Safety.

2.8.4 Education Delivery in this period;

Primary School		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	18	732
County Lines	18	360
Healthy Relationships	20	721
Knife Crime	30	3641
Internet Safety	74	4232
Other Approved input	0	0
Other engagement	51	3522
<b>Totals</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>13208</b>

Secondary School		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	19	2798
County Lines	11	902
Healthy Relationships	39	3978
Knife Crime	30	5952
Internet Safety	25	3526
Other Approved input	0	0
Other engagement	35	5487
<b>Totals</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>22643</b>

Raedwald Trust		
	Inputs	No. of young people
Exploitation	4	8
County Lines	4	18
Healthy Relationships	4	16
Knife Crime	11	24
Internet Safety	7	20
Other Approved input	6	22
Other engagement	29	39
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>147</b>

16 +		
	Input	No. of young people
Consent	28	374
County Lines	10	1584
Digital Footprint	10	205
Domestic Abuse	0	0
Drugs	37	1014

Exploitation	12	162
Hate Crime	0	0
Knife Crime	46	1547
Sexting & Revenge Porn	4	102
Other engagement	78	4215
<b>Totals</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>9203</b>

\*Other includes, but not limited to, mini-Police sessions, recruitment fairs & Spiking inputs

2.8.5 The CYP/SLO's are working at a reduced establishment as we move into the summer period, this is owing to some resignations and officers moving into different roles. The delivery into education settings will be maintained albeit at a slightly reduced level, the delivery will be supported by Community Engagement officers within the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

#### 2.9 Suffolk Youth Justice Service and Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

2.9.1 Suffolk Police are an integral partner of Suffolk Youth Justice Service (SYJS), preventing young people from being unnecessarily criminalised with a focus on reducing the number of first-time entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system.

2.9.2 The previously discussed joint decision-making panels were due to be launched in early 2023 but owing to some significant resource challenges within SYJS they have been pushed back until July 2023. Suffolk Constabulary resources are poised to implement and ensure the success of the panels, with their focus being on early intervention and diversion to reduce our FTE numbers.

2.9.3 In February 2023 to reduce FTE numbers and ensure consistency in decision making Suffolk Constabulary withdrew the option of a Community Resolution (CR) as an initial disposal option for a child U/18. The previous model allowed for an officer to issue a CR without prior consultation with SYJS. The new process means that any U18 who commits an offence and the OIC believe they may be eligible for a CR will now be referred to SYJS so that a full assessment can be conducted and the most appropriate disposal and other diversionary and early intervention avenues that would not typically be available to frontline officers.

2.9.4 Non-Crime Diversion continues to be offered to Suffolk Police with a new referral process whereby YJS Police Officers assess suitability prior to a formal referral to increase the likelihood of acceptance. If the non-crime diversion is not suitable, YJS police officers will seek to identify alternatives programmes such as the turnaround programme.

2.9.5 A training package is being developed to upskill all officers in the use of outcome 22, again in an effort to reduce the number of first-time entrants and appropriately divert young people from a criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity. The training will be delivered to officers in the County Policing Command (CPC) and the Suffolk Crime Safeguarding & Incident Management Command (CSIM) after the summer period.

2.9.6 Referrals to Youth Justice Service (known as Youth Offending Teams) and outcomes. At the time of publication data for YJS West was not available:

YJS EAST	Jan – June 23	YJS SOUTH	Jan – June 23
Youth Conditional Caution	2	Youth Conditional Caution	4
Youth Caution	5	Youth Caution	9
Outcome 22 (Diversion)	29	Outcome 22 (Diversion)	39

Community Resolution*	59	Community Resolution*	53*
No Further Action	22	No Further Action	1
Charge	2	Charge	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>

\* The Community Resolution process was changed in February 2023 with authority to issue them removed from Police and passed to Youth Justice to enhance disposal options and reduce early criminalisation

2.9.7 Youth Justice Service (YJS) Example (Child A);

Referral received for an offence of Assault for a 12-year-old boy whose behaviour was resulting in frequent police attendance at both his home and school. Following an assessment a decision was made to issue him with a Diversion. As a result of this he was allocated a practitioner, received an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which has helped school understand his needs, frequent support network meetings were put in place, he also undertook victim awareness work. As a result of this early intervention, he was prevented from becoming an FTE, calls to school and home have dropped off and he continues to receive support from an educational psychologist, mental health worker and sees his practitioner once every two weeks.

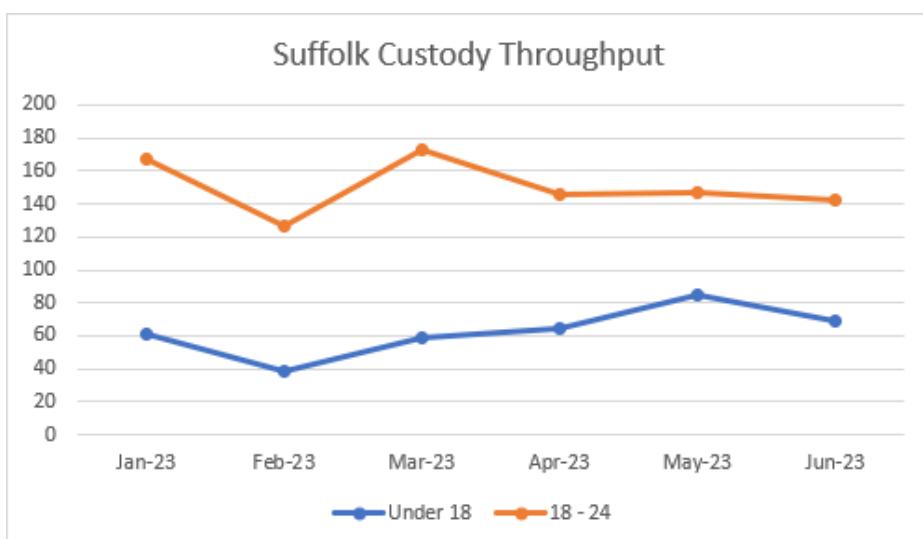
2.10 **Young People in Custody**

2.10.1 There are in the region of 26,000-27,000 persons arrested across Norfolk and Suffolk in an average 12-month period.

2.10.2 It is widely accepted that custody should not be a place for juveniles, however, when dealing with matters on a case by case basis if the legislative criteria for arrest necessities have been met, and other options have been either tried and failed, or considered and negated, then custody can be considered for juveniles.

2.10.3 The data below shows all Suffolk arrests for persons detained at all of the Police Investigation Centre's in Norfolk and Suffolk. The throughput data is relatively unremarkable, and relatively consistent. It must be noted however that nationally, Norfolk and Suffolk have the lowest number of juvenile throughput compared to any other force.

2.10.4 Suffolk custody throughput:



Age	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Under 18 (% against all Suffolk arrests)	61 (7%)	38 (5%)	59 (7%)	64 (7%)	85 (10%)	69 (8%)	376 (7%)
18 – 24 (% against all Suffolk arrests)	167 (20%)	126 (16%)	173 (21%)	146 (17%)	147 (17%)	142 (16%)	901 (18%)
<b>Total (% against all Suffolk arrests)</b>	<b>228 (26%)</b>	<b>164 (21%)</b>	<b>232 (28%)</b>	<b>210 (25%)</b>	<b>232 (27%)</b>	<b>211 (23%)</b>	<b>1277 (25%)</b>
<b>Total Suffolk arrest overall:</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>5061</b>

Custody throughput is monitored through a number of processes within Suffolk Constabulary, including the Children and Young Persons Delivery Group, which specifically considers children and young people.

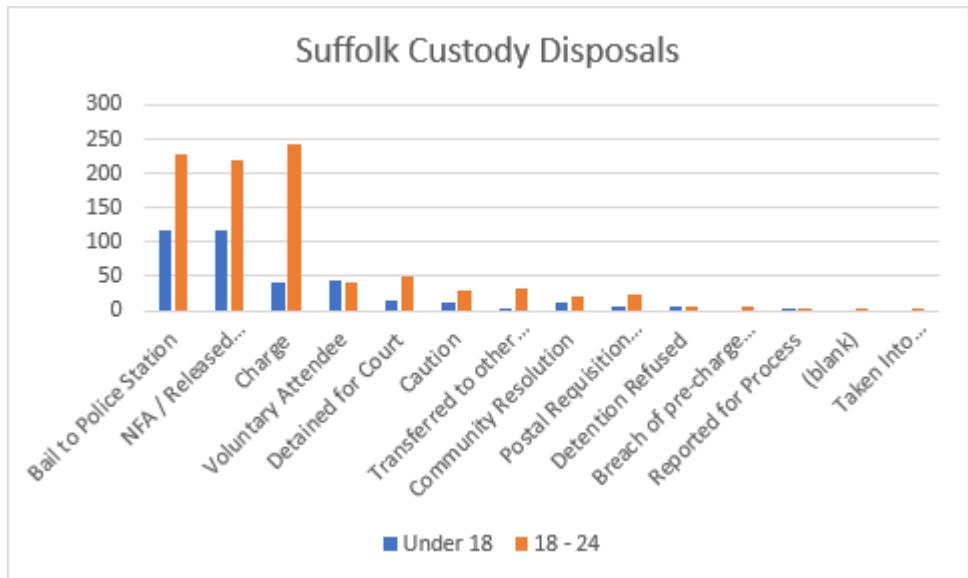
#### 2.10.5 Remands

Each juvenile remanded into custody after being charged for new offences is reviewed as part of the Safeguarding Children in Police Custody panel, which is attended by partners from Social Services and Youth Justice Services. Legislation requires juveniles who have been charged for offences and had bail refused to be moved into the care of the Local Authority; unless the custody officer justifies continued detention in custody; for example; the local authority cannot provide the accommodation required, or moving the child would interrupt a period of rest prior to attendance at court.

On 01/06/2023 new guidance and training was provided to all custody staff surrounding the correct processes to follow post charge/remand for a juvenile – for offences [excluding non-PACE Act matters such as warrants or breach of bails.] It was recognised that a knowledge gap existed across the organisation in relation to the threat assessment and criteria required for requesting secure/non-secure accommodation, resulting in an unnecessarily high number of secure bed requests being made. Local Authorities are not obliged to provide secure accommodation, and as such Suffolk do not have such a facility, meaning incorrect requests for secure accommodation resulted in juveniles remaining in custody overnight. January to the end of June saw 44 juveniles remanded for PACE matters across Norfolk and Suffolk, 33 of which were in the period before the guidance was circulated, and 21% of those requests (7) were for non-secure accommodation. In the month after the guidance was circulated, of the 11 juvenile remand, 27% (3) were for non-secure accommodation; with further improvements in July (43%).

Suffolk have a limited number of PACE carers, and as such of all of the juveniles remanded January to June – only one was removed to non-secure accommodation. Suffolk Social Services have since recruited 4 further PACE carers providing 24/7 365 coverage from October 2023. From this date it is anticipated that the number of juveniles moved to non-secure accommodation will increase as a result of the additional PACE carers.

#### 2.10.6 The following disposal methods can be attributed to young person's attending custody;



Disposal Type	Under 18	18 - 24	Total
Bail to Police Station	116	229	345
NFA / Released without Charge	117	219	336
Charge	41	242	283
Voluntary Attendee	45	40	85
Detained for Court	16	51	67
Caution	12	29	41
Transferred to other lawful authority	4	33	37
Community Resolution	12	20	32
Postal Requisition (applied from case)	5	25	30
Detention Refused	6	5	11
Breach of pre-charge bail arrest - Admin disposal		5	5
Reported for Process	2	1	3
(blank)		1	1
Taken Into Consideration (TIC)		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>1277</b>

#### 2.10.7 Mental Health

3 detainees aged under 24 had a formal Mental Health Act assessment between January and June 2023. 1 was under the age of 18, and 2 were aged 18-24. Of the 3 assessed under the Mental Health Act whilst in custody; only one (18-24 years) was recommended for detention under the Mental Health Act.

Mental Health	Under 18	18 - 24	Total
Number of MHA assessments	1	2	3

Of those who were not detained; the under 18 year old waited 2 hours and 27 minutes for the Mental Health Assessment after it was first called; the 18-24 year old waited 7 hours 12 minutes for the assessment.

The 18-24 year old that was recommended for detention waited 2 hours 35 minutes for the assessment after it had been called. The total time of detention until released to a Mental Health Facility was 29 hours 35 minutes.

Each detained person, regardless of age, who is assessed under the Mental Health Act whilst in custody and recommended for detention under either s.2 or s.3 of the Act, is reviewed as part of the joint escalation process, which requires initial oversight from the custody officer, the Inspector [ordinarily the Custody Bronze Inspector], the Duty Superintendent / Chief Superintendent and ratification from the Force Executive; and continuous liaison with Social Services [AMHP's] and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust [NSFT] to expedite the release of the detained person.

Norfolk and Suffolk, more than any other force nationwide often experience long periods of detention of detained persons requiring admission to Mental Health facilities under the Mental Health Act due to complications with bed allocation and availability within the NSFT.

#### 2.10.8 Mental Health Liaison and Diversion (L&D)

Every detained person attending custody has an opportunity to engage with Liaison and Diversion (provided by the NHS). The role is to provide support and guidance with a view to reducing re-offending rates. Originally intended to support individuals with mental health problems, the service has extended to offer support options for drug/alcohol abuse, employment concerns, gambling addictions, financial problems, and anger management. This service offers a great opportunity for all detainees to look for a better future post custody. Every juvenile that comes into custody [during working hours of L&D] will be seen by the service. Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have been working closely with L&D this year, and are piloting the use of 'Nudge Theory', a multi-pronged approach to installing suggestive signage in pertinent places following the route of an arrested person; highlighting the benefits of L&D to encourage more detained persons to voluntary take up the offer of support both in, and outside of custody to try and address the area of concern leading to criminality and to break the cycle of offending. Phase 1 of the project is set to go live in September 2023, with independent research from the UEA who will be undertaking a randomised control study, to determine whether the signage promoting L&D in the Police Investigation Centres (PIC's) has resulted in an uptake for service offers.

#### 2.10.9 Legal Advice for Juveniles

Every person arrested and detained in custody has the right to free and independent legal advice, which is an open, and ongoing choice whilst detained. Like many other forces nationwide, Norfolk and Suffolk have adopted 'opt out' service for legal advice for juveniles (under 18) in custody, meaning for all juveniles in custody a solicitor will be assigned to them, unless they provide significant justification for not wanting legal advice. This process has been in place in many other forces and recognised as best practice, leading to better outcomes.

### 2.11 Cadet Scheme

2.11.1 There are currently 161 Cadets with 33 on the waiting list.

2.11.2 There are eight cadet units across the county. Of the three joint with the Fire Service, Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds have currently ceased running Fire sessions due to lack of fire leaders. This is a temporary measure until the end of the year when it is hoped to recruit further Fire Leaders. The third Joint Haverhill Unit continues to flourish and is being run solely by Fire due to a lack of Police Leaders. We have had success in recruiting three new Police Cadet Leaders due to the recently introduced incentives which include, out of pocket travel

expenses, half time back for hours volunteered and skills development opportunities.—The impact of the CPC Operating Model along with the withdrawal of Community Engagement Officers (CEO's) has raised concerns over the future resilience of the Cadet Scheme in Suffolk. This is currently under review. The review aims to focus on sustainability, consistency, and resourcing and to ensure a fair access to the scheme across the county with the viability of investment versus demand.

#### 2.11.3 Key Headlines:

- Cadets are no longer required to undergo police vetting;
- The National Safeguarding Standards are now being followed by Suffolk and a national audit has scored Suffolk as 'good';
- Changes to the County Policing Command (CPC) operating model could impact officers and staff availability to run sessions;
- An annual protected training day for all leaders has now been agreed to ensure consistency in safeguarding training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all leaders;
- The National Volunteer Police Cadets (NVPC) are considering mandatory monthly PND checks for all leaders;
- A pathway for referrals from the Youth Justice Service into Cadets has been agreed to support identifying vulnerable children and young people who may benefit from the scheme;
- A pathway for referrals from the Suffolk Refugees Support has now been created to offer appropriate placements to young refugees and asylum seekers.
- Regular Fire/Police Cadet strategic meetings are now in place;
- Recruitment of volunteers to lead the units continues to be an area of concern but new incentives are being used to aid internal recruitment;
- There is a current external recruitment campaign.

2.11.4 Recruitment of leaders remains a focus and currently an incentive and recruitment campaign has been launched.

2.11.5 Risks to the Cadet scheme remain the same as previously, being the lack of consistent volunteer leaders. The possibility of mandatory Police National Database (PND) checks on all leaders will impact on Vetting resources as well as the goodwill of volunteer leaders along with the withdrawal of the CEO role which may impact on officer's availability to attend meetings.

2.11.6 Numerous community engagement events were supported by our Cadets over this period, including the Suffolk Show, various county dog days, Family Day, various town carnivals, litter picks, fun runs, GB cycle race, race for life events across Suffolk, clearing gardens at elderly residential homes, and crime prevention leaflet drops.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Children and Young Persons Strategy and resulting activity continues to reflect the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Strategy and action plan. It is recommended that this should continue to be the case when the current Strategy is renewed in 2023. The national strategy continues to capture key thematic areas for delivery and drives consistency and learning across borders, drawing on regional support and learning.

3.2 Non-Crime diversion is not a statutory function of the Youth Justice Service and is currently provided in addition to its core responsibilities. Due to financial constraints police are currently the only agency referring into this provision and consideration should be given

regarding the long-term viability and availability of non-crime provision with the Youth Justice Service, and alternative services and funding should it no longer be sustainable. This work is key to support national priorities regarding the decriminalisation and diversion of children.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The current funding arrangement for the Youth Justice Service PCSOs will expire in March 2024 and be due for review. There are currently 2.0 FTE, which are funded jointly by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary.
- 4.2 The current financial contribution made by the constabulary to the Youth Justice Service is expected to continue increasing each year in line with inflation, which will be above historical average at the next point of review (23/24). This contribution is a statutory requirement.

#### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 5.1 As per the previous two reporting periods, serious youth violence continues to be a national and local concern. The constabulary has made good progress with partners in its response to gangs, but this area should continue to be monitored robustly by the force and partners to identify in advance any trends through existing strategic and tactical boards. Opportunities for funding and diversion should be considered as part of early identification of risk, prevention, and diversion where provision gaps are identified and in support of MACE Panels which are likely to see a growth in activity.

#### **6. CHIEF OFFICER CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This paper demonstrates the Constabulary commitment to work with partners to safeguard children and young people from harm, prevent their entry into the criminal justice system and provide awareness and education around dangers posed to children and young people.
- 6.2 The children and young people portfolio crosses over into all areas of policing, as a result there are a number of governance boards providing strategic direction, accountability, and risk management.
- 6.3 We are closely working with partners discharging our safeguarding responsibilities, through both the Safeguarding Partnership and the Safer Stronger Communities Board, ensuring that we are focussing on priorities, making child centred decisions, listening to the voice of the child, and learning from case reviews and audits.
- 6.4 Continuing challenges remain in some areas of partnership service provision and resource. These are well recognised and understood, with adjustments made to accountability and escalation processes to ensure clear governance and activity, alongside audit and review to ensure for learning and continual improvement.