

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London

Our ref:TP/AH12

15 December 2025

Dear Home Secretary

RE: Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation – A progress report.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this progress report.

There were four recommendations affecting police forces, for which Suffolk Constabulary has provided a formal response. This response is attached and will also be published on my website.

The Constabulary has either implemented these recommendations or is actively working towards full implementation. Their update outlines the actions completed to date and the plans in place to ensure a robust and effective response to group-based child sexual exploitation.

I will continue to monitor progress through the *Supporting Children and Young People* report, which is presented at my Accountability and Performance Panels.

Yours sincerely



Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk



Response to HMICFRS' report: [*Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation: A progress report*](#), October 2025

In October 2025, HMICFRS published the national thematic report into the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation (CSE) as a follow up to the 2023 report into the same theme. This follow-up report reviews progress against the original recommendations and issued six new recommendations aimed at ensuring group-based CSE is consistently identified, properly understood and addressed with urgency.

Of the six recommendations made in the report, four of these are for police forces. Suffolk Constabulary accepts these recommendations and the below sets out the constabulary's response to them.

Recommendation 1

By 31 March 2026, the Home Office, Department for Education and all police forces and law enforcement bodies that are yet to do so should adopt the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's (IICSA) definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation. And they should make sure they use this definition in all relevant policies, training products, procedures and guidance.

Suffolk Constabulary can confirm that it has adopted the IICSA's definition of an 'organised network', which will be used in the updated CSE strategic profile that is being created internally. The action to ensure all other policies, training products, procedures and guidance have been suitably updated and individuals made aware of the improved definition is ongoing.

Recommendation 2

By 31 March 2026, all police forces should fully adopt and use the Hydrant Programme's child sexual exploitation problem profile template as a minimum when preparing their 2025/26 child sexual exploitation problem profiles.

Suffolk Constabulary's internal Strategic Analysis team have confirmed that it will utilise the Hydrant's CSE problem profile template when completing future profiles. General guidance for strategic profiles is for these to be refreshed every three years unless any significant changes in the crime type are identified, which would require reassessment within this timeframe. Due to this HMICFRS recommendation that profiles should be updated annually, this issue has been submitted for consideration within internal governance around strategic analysis. The constabulary awaits a decision on this in the new year.

Recommendation 4

By 31 July 2026, all chief constables should use the Hydrant Programme's guidance so forces can efficiently and accurately identify child sexual exploitation and group-based child sexual exploitation in their police record management systems.

Suffolk Constabulary has already completed a number of actions in relation to making use of the Hydrant Programme's guidance to efficiently and accurately identify CSE and group-based CSE in its police record management system. This includes the following actions:

- *Reviewing the force's exploitation policy to ensure correct IICSA definitions and flagging is documented*
- *Updating relevant vulnerability training to include CSE and importance for early identification and correct indications within the record management system*
- *Ensuring correct flags are used on the record management system in relation to identified individuals*
- *Establishing an approach to intelligence reviews to ensure CSE/group-based CSE intelligence is reviewed and assessed by different teams to provide a dual approach to intelligence reviews*
- *Trialling the use of a new digital tool designed to review intelligence, identify any reports where there is suspected CSE, which has not been appropriately identified and flagged to be highlighted for manual review – a process which provides a further 'safety net' to ensure the constabulary does not miss opportunities for early identification*
- *Commissioning of additional analysis by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) to identify partnership pathways for how child exploitation is identified and managed across partnerships*
- *Establishing a process to ensure PNC (Police National Computer) markers are placed on adults or children who receive positive reasonable grounds or conclusive reasonable grounds decisions through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and ensuring that identified suspects are highlighted with flags on the record management system to indicate exploitation*
- *Ensuring Op Hydrant (CSE and group-based CSE) investigations are allocated to the Safeguarding Investigation Unit (SIU) as per policy to ensure appropriate investigation.*

Further actions are planned to take place including:

- *An evaluation of the digital tool being trialled*
- *A review of the SSP multi-agency pathway review*
- *Furthering work around PNC flags*
- *Reviewing processes used in other forces within missing person systems and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) to identify missed opportunities to identify CSE and group-based CSE*
- *Confirming effective processes for sharing between partners where immediate safeguarding has not been identified*
- *Conducting an audit of the constabulary's record management system to confirm the effective use of the flagging system.*

Recommendation 6

By 31 July 2026, all police forces should devise a strategy to implement Operation Makesafe consistently and include this in their child sexual exploitation data returns to the Hydrant Programme. This strategy should include the adoption and use of the rebranded Operation Makesafe police and partnership marketing materials.

Suffolk Constabulary has already completed a number of actions to address this recommendation, including:

- *Creating an internal intranet page detailing Operation Makesafe containing a training package for staff*
- *Use of Operation Makesafe during planned days of action (i.e. County Lines Intensification Week), with a locality inspector responsible for ownership and using Police Cadets to complete visits and other teams to assist with enforcement and educational updates to targeted organisations*
- *Control Room call taker script applied to ensure Operation Makesafe guidance is thorough*
- *Consideration of Operation Makesafe within local partnership initiative areas to target organisations presenting risks to vulnerable children*
- *Close working between Exploitation Officer and Modern Slavery Co-ordinators*

In addition, a number of actions are due to be completed, including:

- *Continuing to increase awareness of Operation Makesafe internally and with partners*
- *Expanding the use of Operation Makesafe to include the wider grey economy*
- *Implementing an effective tracker to document relevant locations/organisations and monitor activity.*