

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

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**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
1 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**SUBJECT: PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE/COMMUNITY
SAFETY - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE**

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update from the Protecting Vulnerable People and Community Safety Departments in relation to the Constabulary's approach to Children and Young Persons, identifying key performance information and areas of significant organisational/operational development or issues.
2. Increasing demand is placing greater strain on current policing resources engaged in the investigation of child abuse and safeguarding. The Joint Targeted Area Inspection Framework will require police to work even more closely with partner agencies to ensure that all agencies are contributing in line with their statutory responsibilities and secure positive inspection outcomes.
3. There are no significant financial implications to note within this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the ongoing increase in demand involving offences against children, and the likelihood for further increases based on professionals greater understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation and improved engagement with vulnerable groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Child Safeguarding continues to be an area of focus for the public sector widely and attracts extensive scrutiny from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other review bodies. The extent to which the scrutiny is co-ordinated is likely to gain greater clarity through the Joint Targeted Area Inspections framework that is due to further embed during 2017 and into 2018.
- 1.2 On a local basis the Constabulary continues to develop its approach in relation to children and young people through external engagement with other agencies by the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) and Community Safety departments in line with expected statutory arrangements and best practice.
- 1.3 Whilst there has been some investment of additional resource directly allocated to the investigation of crimes involving abuse of vulnerable child victims, there are demand challenges that will create pressures within all teams responsible for safeguarding children across the public sector.

2. CHILD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

- 2.1 The Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body with a wide remit to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Suffolk. There have been some minor changes to representation at the various board meetings. The Detective Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) represents the Constabulary at the full LSCB and at the Executive Committee Sub group, and chairs the Child Exploited Strategic Group. The Detective Chief Inspector PVP represents the Constabulary at the other sub-groups of the Board.
- 2.2 The LSCB Sub groups comprise:

Executive Group
Serious Case Review Panel
Child Death Overview Panel
Child Exploitation Strategic Group
Learning & Improvement Group
- 2.3 The core statutory duty of an LSCB is to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place across agencies to protect children from harm. There are also obligations placed on LSCBs to ensure that the welfare of children is promoted. The work of the LSCB includes:
 - The development of policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
 - Communication and awareness raising
 - Monitoring and scrutiny of safeguarding and child protection work across the county.
- 2.4 Following legislative changes as a result of the 'Wood Review' there is likely to be development of the current LSCB arrangements and responsibilities. The Children & Social Work Act received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017, and the Working Together guidance will be revised. There will be formal consultation in November 2017 by which time there will be detailed guidance on what is expected in the new

safeguarding partnerships. Local Authorities, Health and the Police will publish and consult on their plans for local safeguarding arrangements by December 2018 and implement new arrangements by April 2019. An executive workshop is planned for 9th January 2018 with an executive level audience from all agencies (including Chief Officer and Police & Crime Commissioners office representation) which will provide the opportunity to develop plans prior to publication. There are currently no national government changes planned to the Safeguarding Adults Board guidance contained in the Care Act 2014.

- 2.5 The Exploited Children Sub-Group continues to make use of the regional child sexual exploitation (CSE) Strategic Assessment and national best practice to inform a revised action plan that is currently in draft format awaiting agreement by partners. The links to online safety and to the risk of radicalisation have been made with the relevant county processes. As before, awareness raising continues as a priority for the group.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 2.6 Governance of the MASH continues through the MASH Strategic Board which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The MASH has been recognised as a model of best practice in a number of reviews, and is recognised nationally as good practice in its structure and process. The parallel tasking and coordinating process that sits alongside MASH processes focusses on children at risk of exploitation and has had a positive impact on the multi-agency management of these risks.
- 2.7 The integration of Domestic Abuse processes into the MASH has been completed. Further work commences in August 2017, supported by SafeLives, to enhance these processes and look at a 'single front door' model for Domestic Abuse. There will be evaluation of the pilot in December 2017 to allow the analysis to inform partnership discussions regarding the potential to extend into everyday practice.
- 2.8 In the period June 2016 to June 2017 the MASH received 22,404 contacts in relation to concerns for children. For the period June 2015 to June 2016 this figure was 23,266. The decrease seen is due to increased data cleansing linked to additional records created as a result of siblings. Approximately 41% of all referrals relating to children are generated by the police. Of the 22,404 contacts 655 cases resulted in Section 47 Children's Act procedures being commenced (where there is a concern for serious harm).
- 2.9 The 655 Section 47 cases represent those that result in joint investigations between Police and Social Care. In the previous year 913 cases met this threshold. During 2016 there has been a steady decline in the number of S47 enquiries initiated by the MASH, with rates now more closely comparable to the average for statistical neighbours. This reflects the ongoing work within the MASH to improve the application of S47 thresholds and to ensure decisions are reached which are child specific (rather than applied to whole sibling groups). This has had an impact on the number of S47s generated.

Gangs and Youth Violence Board

- 2.10 As an initial response to an increase in perceived gang and drug-related violence amongst young people in Ipswich, Suffolk County Council's (SCC) Public Health Department commissioned research by the University of Suffolk to provide an evidence base that established the scope and scale of the problem. The research included a literature review and a 'Rapid Assessment Exercise' within the target community and is intended to inform recommendations for the development of a multi-agency strategy to manage the issue and reduce harm.

- 2.11 The Governance of the research is provided by the Gangs and Youth Violence board which includes a range of relevant partner agency representatives and allows the research to be directed and early findings acted upon. The research is now in final draft stage and will be published in early September. The board are preparing a strategy incorporating the findings and recommendations where appropriate with a multi-agency delivery plan that will then be collectively progressed.

Suffolk Youth Offending Service & Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

- 2.12 Suffolk Youth Offending Service (SYOS) in partnership with Suffolk Constabulary have developed an award winning and academically evaluated Youth Diversion scheme. The Diversion Programme focuses on early assessment of young people aged between 10-17 who have, or are, at risk of offending and provides effective intervention to prevent criminalisation.
- 2.13 The model allows police officers the discretion to deliver a Community Resolution to a young person. After this if the young person comes to notice again and is eligible for an out of court disposal a referral is made to SYOS and an assessment completed. Contact is made with the young person and parents/carers within 48 hours of receiving the referral, and usually involves a home visit.
- 2.14 The assessment focusses on a whole family approach and allows the SYOS, with its seconded police officers, to engage quickly and effectively to understand the factors which are causing the young person's behaviour. The approach offers a greater insight into that young person's associations, family dynamics and the individual's own views. It enables the partnership an opportunity to develop a personal programme targeted towards the individual.
- 2.15 The Diversion programme includes a preventative element with a referral pathway open to all services including parents/carers. This is for children and young people aged between 8–17 who are at risk of becoming involved in offending and anti-social behaviour, and includes referrals relating to concerns about harmful sexual behaviour or those at risk of gang involvement.

3. OPERATIONAL DELIVERY & PREVENTATIVE INITIATIVES

Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children

- 3.1 Suffolk Constabulary continues to work closely with the Regional CSE Coordinator and across a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The Constabulary continues to identify opportunities to link with the Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit (ERSOU) and has been involved in proactive operations targeting perpetrators of child sexual exploitation / child sexual abuse.
- 3.2 Between June 2016 and June 2017 there were 2487 episodes of missing children. It is widely recognised by professionals and through review of high profile CSE cases that missing episodes increase the risk of sexual exploitation for the children involved. There has been a partnership wide investment in the completion of 'return to home interviews' which has seen much higher completion rates and analysis of the information has provided a richer understanding of the issues than has previously been achieved.
- 3.3 The Constabulary continues to receive referrals from Operation Hydrant. Operation Hydrant is the national coordinating response to historic allegations of child abuse linked to prominent individuals or institutions. There have also been referrals from the

National Child Abuse Panel and the Independent Enquiry into Child Abuse. The number of referrals from these origins is likely to increase.

- 3.4 The Human Trafficking & Exploitation team have been engaged in a number of complex investigations. The team continues to robustly support a complex interfamilial historic sexual abuse investigation linked to the Rotherham CSE enquiry and there is ongoing support for the NCA intensification programme in response to Modern Day Slavery.

Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

- 3.5 It should be noted that the reporting of Child Sexual Abuse has more than doubled in Suffolk in the last 3 years with recent months showing further elevated levels of recording. This is largely down to societal changes and the influence of the media to encourage victims to come forward in addition to the multi-agency working that continues to allow effective engagement with children and young people.
- 3.6 In response to the increases in demand PVP re-modelled its investigation teams to bring together the resources responding to investigations of serious sexual offences (Gemini Team) and child abuse (Child Abuse Investigation Teams) under Safeguarding Units (SGU) across the county. There are parallels in the nature of the investigations in terms of evidence collection and victim care that led to this as a preferred option. The approach provided greater resilience to those teams and an enhanced availability of specialist investigators in terms of hours/days of the week worked. This approach has settled well and has received positive feedback from partners at a strategic level.
- 3.7 The Constabulary continues to focus on those individuals making, possessing, sharing and distributing Indecent Images of Children (IIOC). The Constabulary makes effective use of technology to identify those using file sharing platforms. Between June 2016 and June 2017 the Online Investigation Team undertook enforcement action against 79 individuals linked to IIOC.
- 3.8 The indication from the National Crime Agency (NCA) is that the number of referrals to forces concerning IIOC is likely to increase. In response to this identified risk the NCA have significantly increased resources both at the national and regional level to support forces. The Constabulary also saw a marked increase in the number of referrals from other forces as Constabularies nationwide have put more resources into the identification and investigation of those distributing IIOC's. The Constabulary has introduced a dedicated Detective Sergeant to oversee the Online Investigation Team (OLIT) increasing supervision and accountability.
- 3.9 The OLIT are supported by the Cyber & Serious Crime department when conducting proactive investigations to tackle online IIOC offending. This has resulted in 79 arrests in Suffolk and across Norfolk and Suffolk this operation has resulted in 32 children being safeguarded and 3 children being protected during the past year.

Multi Agency E-Safety Crime Prevention (MESCP) Project

- 3.10 The Suffolk Constabulary and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner were successful in being awarded a grant through the Home Office Police Innovation Fund (PIF) for 2016/17 for a proof of concept Multi-Agency E-safety Crime Prevention Proposal (MESCP).
- 3.11 Primary research has been completed including a rapid evidence assessment, good practice review and evaluation of the results undertaken by appropriate academic professionals. An evaluation report has been received and has been considered

analysing the types of risk behaviours young people display when communicating in the digital space, on issues pertaining to personal e-safety, cyber bullying, sexting and associated behaviours on line.

- 3.12 The MESCP Project Board requested additional bespoke secondary data analysis work to further contribute towards developing a Proof of Concept Model Design which then provided specific information on vulnerability in relation to online safety for primary school aged children in Suffolk. Further engagement with academic and industry contacts has led to the construction of a prototype for a digital E-Safety hub that remains under development. The early presentation of this material shows great promise and would allow the partnership a method of engaging with professionals, parents and young people in a user led interactive way to give practical advice and guidance on dealing with cyber related issues. This will be presented as a full business case to the board by September 2017. If approved it is intended that funding will be sourced through external funding streams applied for by the board.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- 3.13 The Child SARC benefits from advanced equipment and provides an effective service to young victims of serious sexual abuse and support to their family or carers.
- 3.14 In the period from June 2016 to June 2017, 47 children attended the SARC. Of which, 17 children were under the age of 13. This compares to a total of 39 children for the same reporting period the preceding year. From the 47 children attending SARC in the reference period, 5 were self-referrals, and 39 referrals were from police. Awareness raising has been ongoing regarding SARC with GPs and other professionals coupled with successful multi-agency partnership working.

Children & Young Person Strategy

- 3.15 A new Children and Young Person's Strategy is being developed, and arrangements will be made to publish the strategy on the Constabulary website in due course. The strategy will be overseen by the Constabulary's Community Safety department and underpinned by an Operational Delivery Plan. Delivery against the plan will be driven by a county wide steering group, to be chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, involving police and the Youth Offending Service. The first meeting takes place in early September, initially considering progress to date with stop search and tackling youth crime and ASB.

Police Community Support Officer School Liaison SPOC Roles

- 3.16 The Constabulary benefits from three School Liaison PCSO posts. PCSO Theresa England is assigned to the South, PCSO Norman Drew assigned to the East and PCSO John Wilkins assigned to the West. The work of the Schools Liaison Officers is coordinated through the Community Safety Department and governed by standard operating procedural and partnership guidance.
- 3.17 The introduction of the role has allowed the SPOCS to establish themselves within schools, through being known and accepted by the leadership and pastoral care teams. This has been widely accepted and when working effectively it has resulted in increased engagement, delivery of safety material and the gathering of intelligence.
- 3.18 The SYOS Diversion programme is embedded within schools and is regularly used by SPOC's to refer young people to. All SPOC's are now trained in the use of Restorative Justice and able to deliver suitable interventions within the school communities. This has proven to be an invaluable method of resolving crime related issues in schools in a proportionate manner.

Volunteer Police Cadet and Emergency Services Cadet Scheme

- 3.19 The Volunteer Police Cadet and Emergency Services Cadet scheme continues to be a popular initiative that currently has 167 members across the county and a waiting list of 28 potential members. There are currently a total of 9 Cadet Units throughout the county, made up of 6 Police Cadet Units and 3 Emergency Services Cadet Units.
- 3.20 The Cadet Coordinator post was created in 2011 within the Community Safety department and moved across to form part of the Specials, Volunteers and Cadets Team in June 2016. Unit Leaders are made up of Police Officers, PCSOs, Police Staff, Special Constabulary and Police Support Volunteers.
- 3.21 There is currently 16 Police Officer/Staff Cadet Leaders who volunteer their time to support the Cadet Scheme, and 15 Specials/PSV Cadet Leaders. The number of Cadets wishing to remain part of the scheme as Volunteer Leaders upon turning 18, is rapidly increasing, with 7 successfully recruited and inducted within the last six months.
- 3.22 The group has been engaged in a wide range of initiatives and activities and attracts favourable media coverage. This year to date, multiple charity fund raising events have taken place, and representatives from all tiers of the Cadet Scheme also took part in the National Police Cadet Conference in June 2017. The introduction of the National Volunteer Police Cadet digital platform will be embedded during autumn 2017, and will be used by all Suffolk Cadet Units which will greatly assist in developing consistency within all cadet units across the county.
- 3.23 In March 2017, Cadets aged 16 and above from the Martlesham Unit enrolled onto a free qualification offered by the UK-based education charity CVQO, who offer a broad range of vocational qualifications, designed to recognise the work undertaken by young people and adult volunteers. They have now successfully achieved a BTEC Level 2 in Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community. This has now been rolled out across the county, and further enrolments are due to begin during August 2017. This piece of work is being championed by Martlesham's Police Staff Leader. CVQO are currently considering offering a qualification to our younger Cadets from the age of 13.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications to note.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 5.1 Demand relating to child protection continues to rise in keeping with national trends. It is anticipated this will continue to be the case as more hidden harm is identified and professionals become more experienced in the recognition of CSE/ CSA. The increase will provide ongoing challenges to the managers and practitioners charged with providing a service to this most vulnerable group of the community.

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