

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP18/5

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
23 FEBRUARY 2018**

**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. Legislative changes to the local arrangements for child safeguarding will take effect by mid-2019. This will involve the removal of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the creation of new child safeguarding plans under the direction of the three statutorily responsible agencies (Police, Health and Local Authority). Plans are progressing to allow for proposals to relevant executive officers and there is a potential for financial implications as a result of changing funding arrangements for the new arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

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. Suffolk has yet to be inspected under this system and as such it is anticipated to happen within the next 18 months.
- 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. Recent OFSTED and HMICFRS inspections of the Suffolk effectiveness regarding children and vulnerable people has led to favourable grading and comments from those involved in the inspections.

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 current LSCB Sub groups comprise:
 - Executive Group
 - Serious Case Review Panel
 - Child Death Overview Panel
 - Child Exploitation Strategic Group
 - Learning & Improvement Group
- 2.3 Following legislative changes as a result of the 'Wood Review' the current Suffolk Safeguarding arrangements will cease to exist by April 2019. A new version of 'Working Together' guidance has been drafted by the Home Office and consulted upon with Police and other relevant agencies. This is likely to be finalised and communicated to all by Easter 2018. Local Authorities, Health and the Police must devise and publish their plans for new local safeguarding arrangements by December 2018 and implement new arrangements by April 2019. An executive workshop was held at the beginning of January that led to the agreement of some initial guiding principles and the establishment of a working group to further develop the Suffolk response. There are likely to be significant changes to structures, membership and funding arrangements as a result of the re-shape and a detailed timeline of consultation is currently being devised for executive level review. There are no national government changes planned to the Safeguarding Adults Board guidance contained in the Care Act 2014.
- 2.4 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 two year action plan. This is now agreed by the partnership and is progressing under the following themes:

- Protecting, Supporting, Safeguarding Vulnerable Young People from Exploitation and Managing Risk
- Information and Intelligence Gathering, Sharing and Analysis
- Awareness Raising, Communications and Public Confidence
- Learning and Development of Professionals

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 2.5 Governance of the MASH continues through the MASH Strategic Board which meets on a quarterly 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.
- 2.6 The process flow of Domestic Abuse information into the MASH where it relates to the presence of or close proximity of a child to an abusive relationship has been completed. Further work commenced in August 2017, supported by SafeLives, to enhance these processes and look at a 'single front door' model for Domestic Abuse. Evaluation of the pilot is currently underway and there are practitioner workshops in February 2018 to develop findings prior to final reporting. This will allow analysis that can then inform partnership discussions regarding the potential to extend into everyday practice.
- 2.7 In the period October 2016 to September 2017 the MASH received 20,391 contacts in relation to concerns for children. This is comparable to the previous year and shows some stability of the referral rate. Approximately 40% of all referrals relating to children are generated by the police. Of the 20,391 contacts 504 cases resulted in Section 47 Children's Act procedures being commenced (where there is a concern for serious harm).
- 2.8 The 504 Section 47 cases represent those that result in joint investigations between Police and Social Care or single agency Social Care. In the previous year 758 cases met this threshold. During 2017 there has been a steady decline in the number of S47 enquiries initiated by the MASH, the reduction of S47 enquires is approximately 33%, 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 a positive impact on the number of S47s generated.

Gangs and Youth Violence Board

- 2.9 The Governance of the response to research presented to the Suffolk partnership is provided by the Gangs and Youth Violence board which includes a range of relevant partner agency representatives. The research led to the development of a detailed multi-agency strategy to tackle youth gang violence and 'County Lines' exploitation issues in Suffolk. A multi-agency operational team has been developed and a jointly funded co-ordination and management posts created and recruited to.
- 2.10 There will be further development of the operational delivery around this project throughout 2018. There are plans for greater community consultation and the deployment of detached social workers for diversion and early intervention work with the young people identified as being at risk of influence by the gangs and groups that are established in Ipswich.

Suffolk Youth Offending Service & Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 In conjunction with SYOS the Constabulary have commenced drafting a joint Protocol to reduce offending and criminalisation of children in care. The agreement once implemented will place further emphasis on early intervention, diversion and restorative justice for children in such settings in an attempt to break the offending cycle that is often seen to escalate. A first draft of the protocol will be completed by March 2018 and consultation with stakeholders will be conducted before finalisation and implementation.

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 (CSE)/child sexual abuse (CSA).
- 3.2 Between June 2017 and June 2018 there were 2820 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 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

seems to have plateaued but the panel is gaining widespread media coverage that could lead to a further increase in similar reports.

Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 January 2017 and January 2018 the Online Investigation Team undertook enforcement action against 121 individuals linked to IIOC.
- 3.6 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. This role has now embedded and is providing greater resilience and scrutiny to the team performance.
- 3.7 The OLIT are supported by the Cyber & Serious Crime department when conducting proactive investigations to tackle online IIOC offending. This has resulted in 89 arrests in Suffolk and across Norfolk and Suffolk this operation has resulted in 67 children being safeguarded and 1 child being protected during the past year.

Multi Agency E-Safety Crime Prevention (MESCP) Project

- 3.8 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). Primary research was completed including a rapid evidence assessment, good practice review and evaluation of the results undertaken by academic professionals. An evaluation report was received and 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.
- 3.9 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. A prototype digital hub was developed and considered by the group but further market research identified that free online provisions such as thinkuknow.co.uk adequately provided the services sought for the target groups. As a result it was decided that a local hub will not go into full production but the partnership will use the available resources for marketing and awareness campaigns across the county.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 In the period from January 2017 to January 2018, 41 children attended the SARC. Of which, 11 children were under the age of 13. This compares to a total of 43 children for the same reporting period the preceding year. From the 41 children attending SARC in the reference period, 2 were self-referrals, and 28 referrals were from police. Awareness raising has been ongoing regarding SARC with GPs and other professionals coupled with successful multi-agency partnership working.

Police Community Support Officer School Liaison SPOC Roles and Community Safety Activities

- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 The SYOS Diversion programme is embedded within schools and is regularly used by SPOCs to refer young people to. All SPOCs 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.
- 3.15 The liaison posts are heavily involved in initiatives around youth and knife crime and have delivered presentations to 'Crucial Crew' schools and deployed operationally in support of the Constabulary Operation Sceptre.

Volunteer Police Cadet and Emergency Services Cadet Scheme

- 3.16 The Volunteer Police Cadet and Emergency Services Cadet scheme continues to be a popular initiative that currently has 169 members across the county and a waiting list of 27 potential new recruits. There are currently 8 active Cadet Units throughout the county, made up of 5 Police Cadet Units and 3 Emergency Services Cadet Units.
- 3.17 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. Cadet Unit Leaders are made up of Police Officers, PCSOs, Police Staff, Special Constabulary and Police Support Volunteers.
- 3.18 There are currently 18 Police Officer/Staff Cadet Leaders who volunteer their time to support the Cadet Scheme, and 18 Specials/PSV Cadet Leaders, 8 of these being ex Cadets who have returned to the Scheme as Volunteers, wishing to give something back to a scheme which for themselves provided a safe and fun environment to develop as a young person.
- 3.19 The group continues to engage in a wide range of initiatives and activities locally and countywide, and the scheme is increasingly being recognised both internally and externally. The Suffolk Cadets will continue to support local charity fund raising and community engagement events throughout 2018, and our representatives will assist

the National Volunteer Police Cadet team in shaping the future of the Volunteer Police Cadet scheme. The National Volunteer Police Cadet digital platform has now been introduced within Suffolk at no cost to the organisation, and will be used by all Suffolk Cadet Units to assist in developing consistency within all cadet units across the county and to reduce associated administration for Unit Leaders.

- 3.20 Enrolments are continuing onto the free qualification, BTEC Level 2 in Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community, available to all of our Cadets aged 16 and over, thus ensuring the educational value of the scheme. Suffolk has been one of the leading forces in rolling out two training programmes offered by the National VPC team, the first being accredited Social Action Training for Senior Cadets, which empowers cadets to lead social action and encourages them to identify local issues and lead others in planning and delivering a response to improve their local communities. The second is Adult Volunteer Training which has been designed to deliver relevant training on leadership principles and techniques to VPC adult leaders.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are potential financial implications regarding the restructure of local safeguarding arrangements. These will be discussed by the working group and proposals made to chief officers/ executives to finalise agreement in advance of commencement of the new arrangements.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 5.1 Demand relating to child protection and CSE 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 – Objectives 2 and 3.
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
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes