

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO: AP22/23

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
13 MAY 2022**

SUBJECT: SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update in relation to the Constabulary's commitment in the Police and Crime Plan to support young people. It outlines the approach to supporting Children and Young Persons (CYP), provides key performance information and highlights areas of organisational and operational development.
2. This report looks in more detail at the Child Centred Policing Approach and how the Constabulary ensures that relationship and engagement opportunities are taken to enable Children and Young People to inform policing priorities and understand what Children and Young People identify as being important to them.
3. This report details work the Constabulary is undertaking in preventing the Criminalisation of Children and Young People. It will detail some of the work currently being undertaken with Youth Justice Services, Education and Children and Young People's Services to ensure that Children and Young People are supported and diverted from crime.
4. Partnership working across a range of agencies to ensure an effective response to key risk areas, including child exploitation, both criminal and sexual, missing children and child abuse investigations.
5. Problem Solving is increasingly being used within areas of work to tackle specific problems, thorough analysis to understand the problem, the development of a tailored response and an assessment of the effects of the response

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner is asked to consider this report and raise issues, as appropriate, with the Chief Constable.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report covers the period July 2021 to December 2021 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.

2. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE

2.1 The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) for Children

- 2.1.1 The Police are one of three statutory organisations that form the partnership, along with the Local Authority and Health.
- 2.1.2 The full Children's Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) meets quarterly. The Partnership has an Independent Chair who scrutinises the Partnership to ensure that all agencies are doing all they can to keep children safe. There are now four (4) sub-groups that meet under the Children's SSP structure, the previous sub-group of the Policy Practice and Training sub-group has been absorbed into the Learning and Improvement Subgroup.

- **Learning and Improvement Subgroup**
Supports the SSP in fulfilling its statutory duty to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve. This is achieved by monitoring a range of performance data, statutory and practice audits and quality assurance activity.
- **Case Review Panel**
The group also undertake 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. The group will also identify and manage Partnership Reviews of cases which do not meet the statutory Serious Case Review criteria but can provide valuable information about how organisations are working together and identify improvements.
- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**
Reviews all child deaths up to the age of 18, excluding those babies who are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law by collating information on each child. The panel determine whether the death was deemed preventable, had modifiable factors that may have contributed to the death and makes recommendations to the SSP, or other relevant bodies, promptly so that action can be taken to prevent future such deaths where possible.

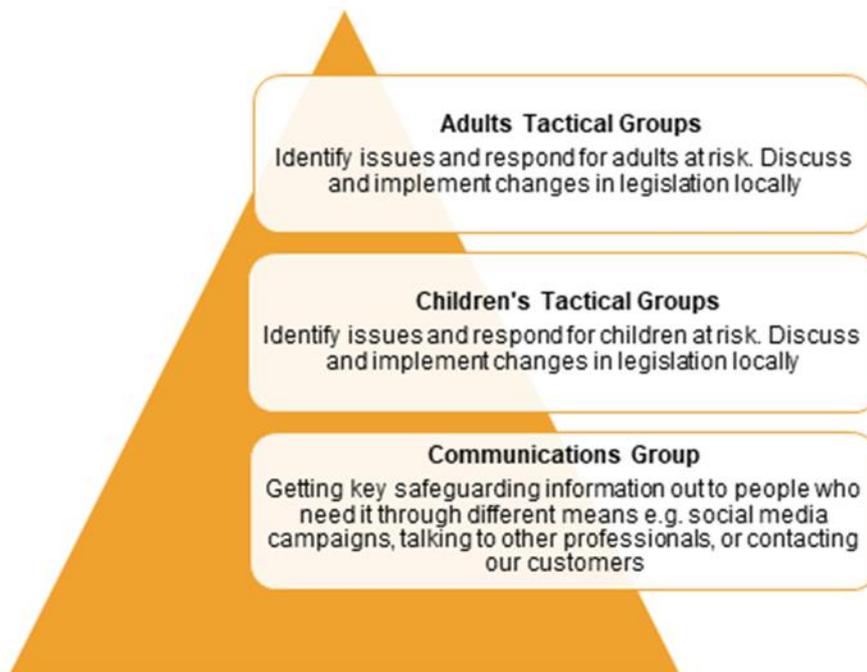
- **Exploitation and Online Safety Subgroup**

The newly established group has an all-age approach incorporating adults as well as children which promotes co-ordinated thinking and delivery of services to safeguard children, young people, adults and their families/carers; in doing so the Group recognises the broad and diverse range of safeguarding responsibilities and arrangements within the Suffolk Partnership. This method presents a positive opportunity to adopt a 'Think Family' approach to the planning and co-ordination of response to exploitation and online safety

2.1.3 As part of the SSP, Suffolk Constabulary to influence and have a direct input in setting strategic and operational direction. With strong review and audit processes in place, this enables Suffolk Constabulary to make continual improvement in relation to Children and Young People. There are established links into wider partnership working arrangements, such as Safer Stronger Communities and the sub-groups that feed into this structure.

2.1.4 The SSP has maintained the tactical groups initially developed to ensure the timely sharing of information. The groups have been integral to ensure consistent communication and working practices across the partnership. The groups consist of Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police, Health and Community Safety Partnerships.

2.1.5 The structure and information about what these tactical groups do is shown below.

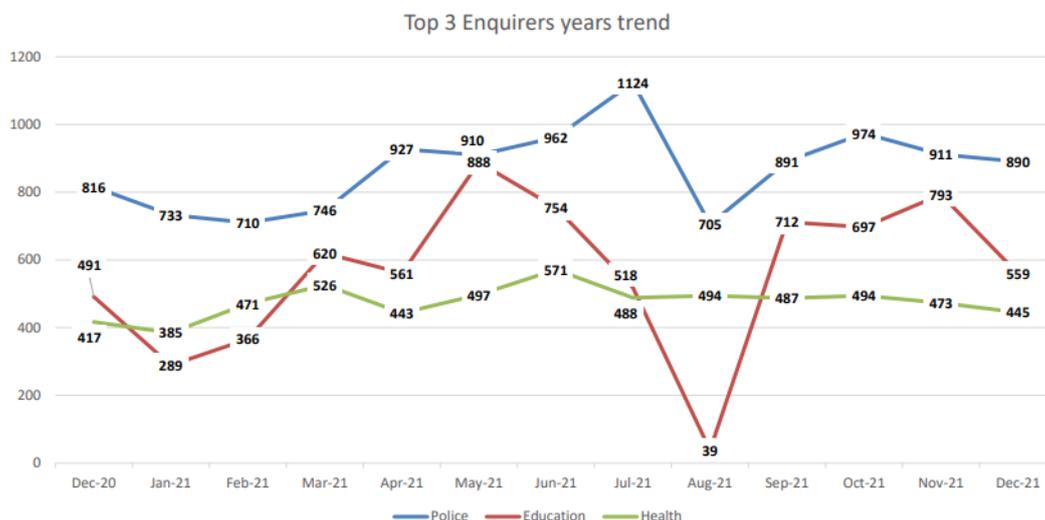


2.2 **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

2.2.1 The MASH Police team service has continued to have significant numbers of staff working in the office throughout the second half of 2021 and have maintained high levels of staff morale whilst continuing to deliver a high-quality service to the children and adults at risk and to our partners. Traditional office working maintains connectivity between colleagues and partners, and prompts spontaneous professional discussion and debate, which had been slightly reduced by teams working from home. However, the quality and delivery of service have not been greatly impacted and the MASH quickly adapted to a new way of working, aided by the introduction of MS Teams allowing greater connectivity. More recently small numbers of

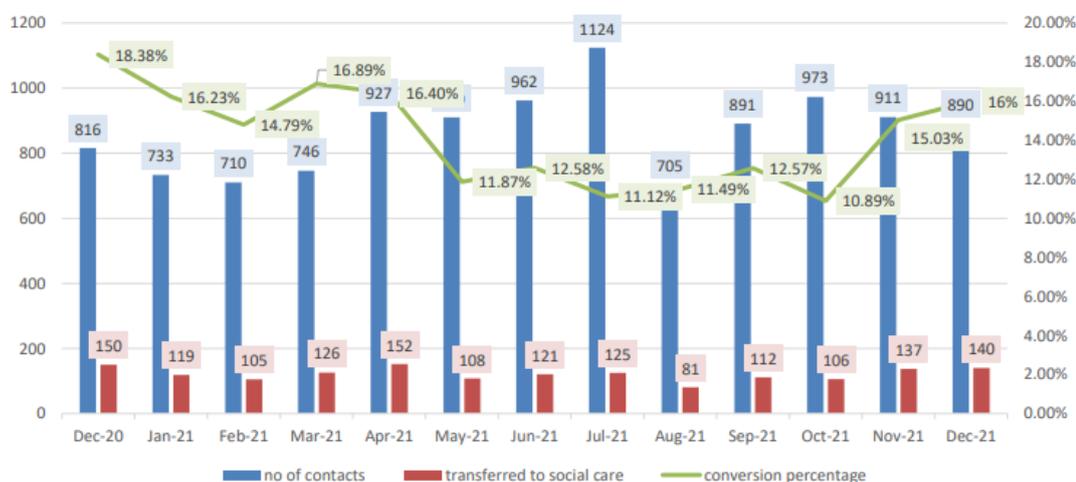
partner agency colleagues have returned to office working allowing face to face interaction and discussion once again, helping to reinforce our shared MASH identity.

2.2.2 The MASH has continued to experience high demand which has increased from 10,767 child Contacts (referrals) between January and June 2021, to 11,694 between July and December 2021. The top referrers remain as police, education, and health respectively, with predictable slight seasonal variation when schools are closed, which can clearly be seen in the graph below.



2.2.3 In accordance with Section 47 of the 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.

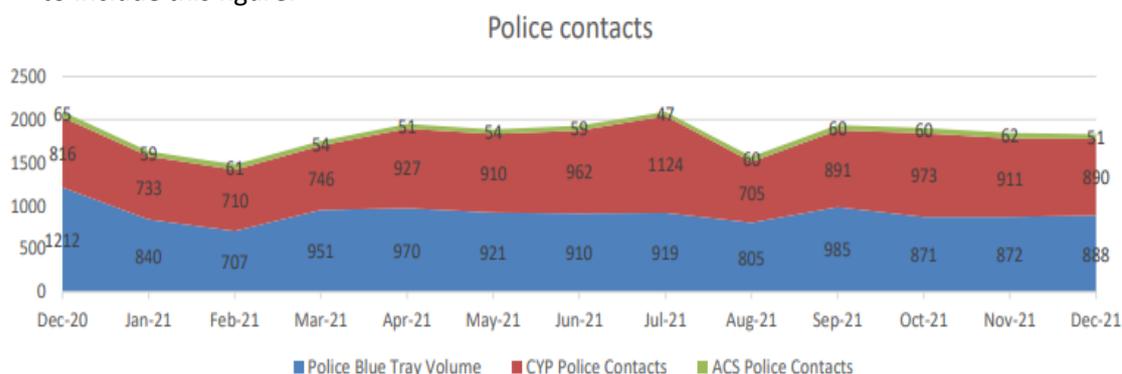
2.2.4 The table below illustrates the conversation rate of Police Contacts made to Social Care, which is similar to Contacts received from other referring agencies.



2.2.5 In excess of 98% of Contacts that arrive in MASH are resolved without the requirement for police investigation. Effective triage by skilled and experienced practitioners across all agencies allows the appropriate level of intervention to be identified. This ensures the most concerning cases requiring scrutiny through joint working of 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 Contacts to Joint Agency S.47 investigations.

2.2.6 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.

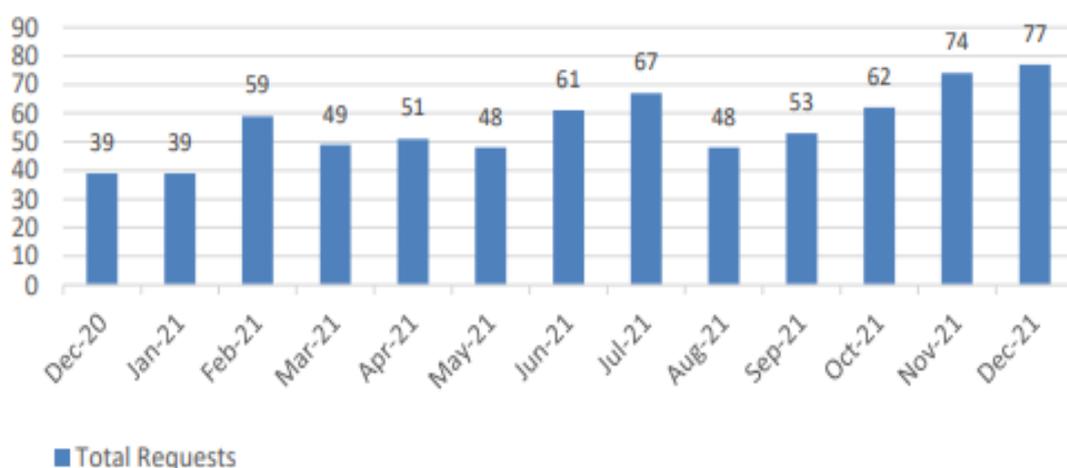
2.2.7 The graph below illustrates the number of police referrals into the MASH shared with CYPS and those retained by police. The blue portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which do not meet the threshold for sharing with CYPS as there was no safeguarding concern meeting their criteria for intervention. The red portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which met the threshold and were shared with CYPS as a safeguarding concern. Similarly, the green portion demonstrates the number of police records sent to MASH police to review which met the threshold and were shared with 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.



2.2.8 The Clare’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, DVDS) and Sarah’s Law Scheme (Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme, CSODP) can allow 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.

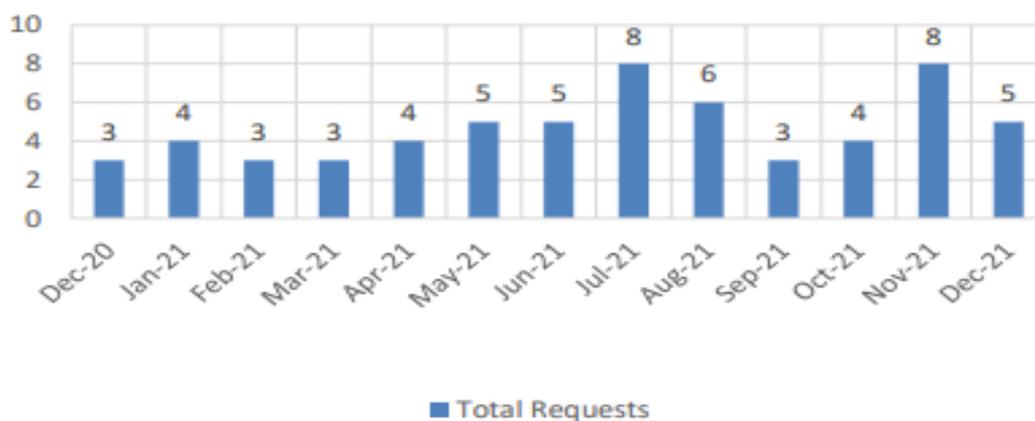
2.2.9 The graph below shows the number of DVDS applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. Not all applications result in a disclosure being made to a person potentially at risk, although safety planning advice is offered in all cases where engagement is possible. November and December 2021 saw an increase in these applications from all sources. The explanation for this has not been determined, however around this time the Constabulary supported the White Ribbon Campaign, highlighting the scheme and publicising the on-line application route through the website.

DVDS Requests by Month

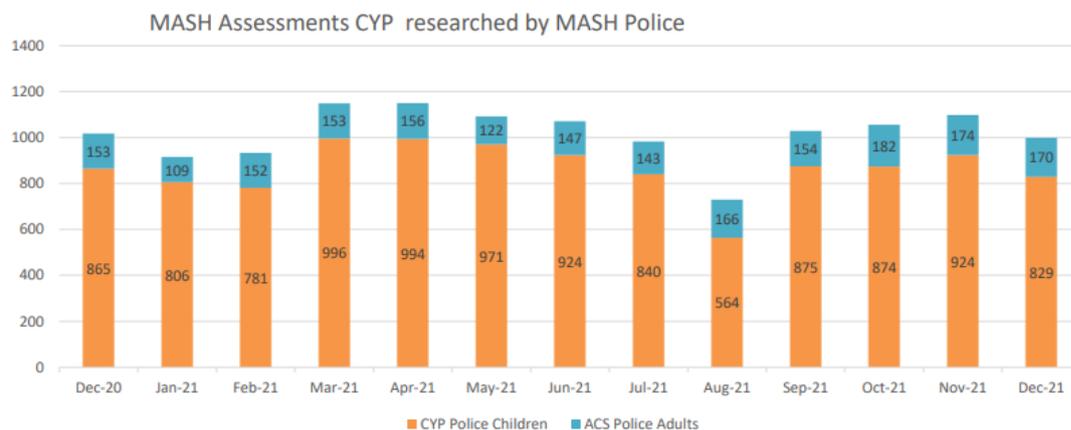


2.2.10 The graph below shows the number of CSODP applications that have been received and processed by MASH police. These figures are all within expected parameters.

CSODP disclosures by Month



2.2.11 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 data bases, relevant to the safeguarding concern.



2.2.12 The county’s Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) continue to be attended by CYPS to address child safeguarding concerns within cases discussed. All MARAC referrals are processed through the MASH in order that any crimes being disclosed to both statutory partners and third sector agencies are identified and recorded. There are 2 MARAC meeting per month held in South and West Areas and 1 Meeting in the East Area. MARAC meetings are held on Teams for efficiency.

Suffolk MARAC Cases involving Children July-December 2021

	No. of MARAC cases heard	No. of cases heard with children linked	Total no. of children linked to heard MARAC cases
Southern	584	325	683
Western	616	321	663
Northern	243	140	297
Total	1443	786	1643

2.3 Missing Children

2.3.1 Missing Children has remained a source of significant demand for 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, chaired by a Children Young Persons Service (CYPS) manager meets to ensure a partnership response to those children who are frequently missing or believed to be at risk of exploitation. If a child is identified at risk of exploitation, they are referred into the Multi- Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel.

2.3.2 Between June 2021 and December 2021 there have been 1436 reported missing children between 0 to 18 years old. There have been 421 individual missing children and 1 child was reported missing on 51 separate occasions. Children and Young Persons Services (Suffolk County Council) have completed 472 Return Home Interviews

The breakdown of missing children per area is as follows:
 South Area – 682
 West Area – 375
 East Area – 377

- 2.3.3 The three missing persons advisors based on each area are now embedded and working well across the three areas and have built key relationships in Children’s Care Home setting and with Children and Young Persons Services.
- 2.3.4 The Philomena Protocol was successfully implemented in the South Area and is now being implemented in the East and West. The protocol requires care homes to conduct initial enquiries in relation to the missing child and provide the information to police when reporting the child missing. This should result in a reduction in demand on policing services.
- 2.3.5 The Return Home Interviews are provided to the police from Children and Young Persons Services. These are reviewed by the Missing Person Advisors to capture intelligence that can be used to Safeguard the child for future missing episodes.
- 2.3.6 There is now an audit process in place for Missing reports, with a focus on those Children under the age of 18 years old. This is reviewed in the Missing Persons Delivery Board.

2.4 Child Exploitation

- 2.4.1 Suffolk Constabulary have been a key partner in the formation of the Multi-Agency Criminal Exploitation (MACE) Panel meeting. The meetings (which started in May 2021) are now fully embedded across each Command Area. The meeting consists of key stakeholders including, Police, Children and Young Persons Services, Health, Education, Community Safety Partnerships and Youth Justice Services. Children and young Persons between the ages of 10 to 25 can be referred into the MACE, where there are either criminal or sexual exploitation concern. A multi-agency approach is taken in identifying and managing the risks to the child or young person. The child or young person is discussed and assessed via a scoring matrix, this allows the panel to understand whether the child is High, Medium or Low Risk of Exploitation. A decision is taken by the panel as to whether that child/young person is adopted by MACE. A comprehensive multi-agency plan is put in place, this includes both looking at the individual and/or applying a contextual safeguarding approach to safeguarding that child/young person. It also ensures that there is an identified lead agency so management of contact with the child/Young Person is assured.
- 2.4.2 The case is reviewed at a subsequent meeting, and it is established whether the risk to the child/young person has been reduced or is being managed sufficiently to allow them to be removed from the cohort.
- 2.4.3 In the 6 months since the inception of the MACE, the following numbers of children/young people who have been referred into MACE and adopted onto the panel.

	North	South	West	Total
No of referrals	15	45	49	109
Presented to MACE	12	22	22	56
Adopted by MACE	7	13	15	35

* Youth Justice data for their areas of North, South and West

- 2.4.4 There is a dedicated Child Exploitation contact from Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary have supported this by investment in a Child Exploitation (CE) officer. The CE officer manages the actions from the MACE meeting, builds intelligence around a child, ensures that National best practice in relation to Exploitation is considered and delivers training across the Constabulary in relation to Criminal Exploitation.

- 2.4.5 A review of the MACE Panel meeting was requested and was completed by the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC), where areas for improvement were identified and National good practice was shared to ensure the Suffolk MACE meeting is as effective as possible.

MACE Example – Child A

- 2.4.6 Child A was known to be frequenting a hotspot for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and drug related concerns, associating with older peers known to services to be involved in an Urban Street Gang and drug dealing. Child A had been given high end clothing and trainers as ‘gifts’. Child A was demonstrating aggressive behaviours in school, a recent change.

Actions put forward by MACE included:

- District Council supported Child A with transport to and from school;
- Child enrolled in after school and holiday activities and clubs for A to positively use spare time;
- Local youth outreach charity engaged with A;
- Criminal Exploitation Hubs workers spent time at hotspot location, engaging with Young Persons present;
- Police patrols increased in hotspot area to engage with YP and reassure community and establish whether any criminal offences could be proven;
- CE Hubs and District Council arranged an event at hotspot location to positively engage community;
- MACE Team engaged A’s parents to support their knowledge of exploitation.

Outcome: Child A engaged in positive activities, associating with peers of a similar age, appropriately supervised. Behaviour in school more positive, risk of exploitation reduced.

2.5 Police Youth Engagement Team

- 2.5.1 The Police Youth Engagement Team have recently been renamed the Child Exploitation and Gangs Team. This is to provide clarity to the role they do in relation to the engagement, identification and disruption that is completed in relation to Children and Young People who are at risk of being exploited or becoming involved in gangs.

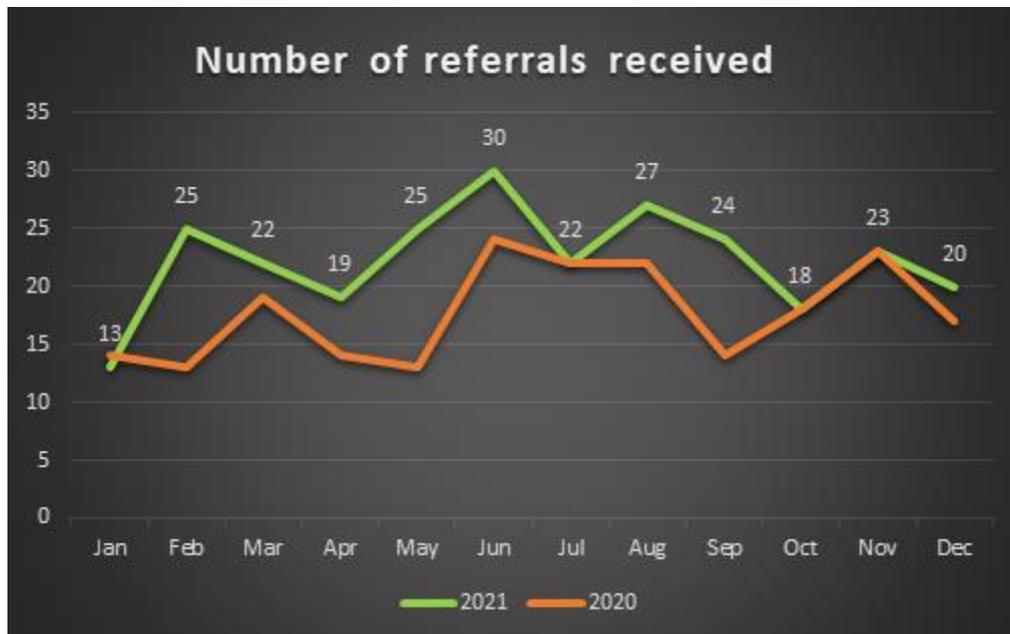
- 2.5.2 The team are now deployed primarily in uniform, to build trust and confidence with Children and Young People and work closely with the Criminal Exploitation hubs. They will proactively target hotspots where Children/Young People are known to be at risk of exploitation.

- 2.5.3 Part of the role is to work with a child who is believed being exploited and conduct investigation to be able to effectively disrupt those exploiting children and making appropriate referrals for children either through the MACE meeting or into 3rd Sector agencies where children can obtain the right support to divert them from becoming entrenched in gangs and/or drugs.

2.6 Child Sexual Abuse and Online Investigation

- 2.6.1 During the latter half of 2021 demand continued to increase in Suffolk which was in line with a national increase in online offending. Demand was up by 17% in 2021 from 2020 with an average workload of 33.9 investigations per FTE. The Internet Child Abuse Investigation Team (ICAIT) has been subject of a full review, with a recommended uplift of 4 additional members of staff to be implemented by July 2022.

2.6.2 ICAIT are supported by the Area Based Scorpion Teams who assist with the execution of the ICAIT warrants in addition to their other commitments. Regular enforcement days are planned, and subsequently, outstanding suspect numbers remain low. Scorpion Teams receive bespoke briefings from the ICAIT Detective Sergeant prior to the execution to ensure the relevant devices are seized and to understand the extent of any search required.



	2021	2020
Jul	22	22
Aug	27	22
Sep	24	14
Oct	18	18
Nov	23	23
Dec	20	17

2021	
Quarter	Avg Referrals
Q1	20.0
Q2	24.7
Q3	24.3
Q4	20.3

2.7 Schools Liaison and CYP engagement

2.7.1 Since September Schools Officers have been back into school premises. Consideration of continuing on-line delivery was discounted as direct engagement with schools is an essential part of the role. The Schools Officers are essential for building trust with Children and Young People. There was a focus on Healthy Relationships and County Lines during this period, to support the focus on Violence against Women and Girls and County Lines Intensification Week.

2.7.2 The following chart shows number of School Liaison Officer Inputs and the number of children reached over the last 6 months:

TOTALS	
Inputs	No of Children
County Lines	6
Healthy Relationships	12
Knife Crime	1
Internet Safety	2
Other	11
	6225

2.7.3 The three CYP officers are now embedded and have created bespoke inputs for the 16+ cohort. This have been reviewed with Suffolk County Council and have been approved for delivery in higher education settings. They have delivered 322 inputs into higher education settings, focussing on ‘revenge porn’ and ‘sexting’.

2.7.4 Over the next 6 months there will be a focus on engaging with Children and Young Persons to establish mechanisms of how the Constabulary can better understand what concerns them and how CYP can inform policing priorities. There have already been dynamic ‘street meets’ in schools in the South which have been well received.

2.8 Suffolk Youth Justice Service and Suffolk Constabulary Partnership

2.8.1 Preventing unnecessary criminalisation of Young People remains a priority for the police and Youth Justice, and work continues to develop in this area. This includes ensuring that Children and Young people are referred into non-crime diversion into YJS. The numbers of non-crime referrals police have made have increased in the last 6 months to 27.

2.8.2 A focus remains on ensuring that Children are not unnecessarily arrested or remain in custody for extended periods. There has been a significant decrease on the number of children that have been arrested and detention authorised in custody, from 317 from June 2021 to December 2021 to 277 from 1st July 2021 to 1st January 2022. (These are children who have passed through Suffolk Police Investigation Centres)

2.8.3 Suffolk Constabulary recognises that BAME Children are overrepresented within the Criminal Justice System. A BAME child is 2x more likely to be arrested than a white child. Work is being undertaken with Youth Justice Service to understand this. Suffolk Constabulary are working with Youth Justice Service to increase the information of the different outcomes that can be provided by Youth Justice Services and what restrictions a no comment interview may have on potential disposal options.

Police Electronic Notifications to YOTs (PENY) referrals	Total Last 6 Months
Youth Conditional Caution	15
Youth Caution	30
Diversion Crime	160
Community Resolution	54
No Further Action	16
Charge	13
Total:	288

2.8.4 A joint decision-making audit has been completed between Suffolk Constabulary and Youth Justice Services to ensure that decision making was appropriate and consistent across the 3 areas (South, East and West). The audit identified that there although decision making was consistent across the three areas, there was differences in how the decision making was recorded.

2.9 Cadet Scheme

Emergency Service Cadet Scheme

2.9.1 Since lockdown the cadet numbers reduced from 155 in March 2019 to 129. This replicated the national and regional picture. Cadet leaders also struggled to facilitate meaningful and appropriate on-line meetings. Safeguarding was also a concern during this period as leaders were unable to offer extra support to 'vulnerable cadets' online and communication was difficult.

2.9.2 There are 8 cadet units across the county (three joint with the fire service). There are over 40 applicants on the waiting list. It is hoped this cohort can be accommodated once face-to-face cadets resumes.

Headlines

- Vetting of cadets has now ceased;
- National safeguarding standards have been introduced;
- Part-time cadet coordinator post is currently vacant;
- We continue to require more Police Officer Cadet Leaders to support our scheme, an 'incentive' paper has been proposed.

The following community engagements were completed throughout this period:

- All units assisted at PHQ Fireworks events;
- ROC 24 Charity fun run – Woolston Ipswich School Elizabeth Hospice – Martlesham;
- Women Tour of Britain – Haverhill and Martlesham;
- Crime prevention leaflet engagement – Martlesham;
- Race for Life – Martlesham;
- Ongoing project in Hollywells park – Ipswich;
- Litter pick with Town Council – Sudbury;
- Girls Night Out – Charity event – Sudbury;

- Steam Rally - Lowestoft;
- Santa's Train – Lowestoft;
- Halloween leaflets – Sudbury;
- Newmarket Soapbox Derby – Forest Heath.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Going forward there are key areas of focus for CYP, these include the following:
- 3.2 Relationships and Engagement with Children and Young People. This is reflected on the CYP Delivery Plan and involves utilising established CYP representative groups from across Suffolk to assist in identifying the issues effecting CYP, to inform policing priorities and to assist in identifying solutions. This piece of work should be completed by 30th June 2022.
- 3.3 To reduce the number of children becoming first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System. Work continues with YJS to streamline the non-crime diversion form for police to ensure that diversion work is undertaken with CYP coming to police notice prior to being reported for a criminal offence. This will be complimented by work with an information sheet provided to CYP, their appropriate adults and legal representation when they arrive at a Custody Suite. The timeline for completion is 1st September 2022.
- 3.4 To identify, investigate and disrupt those who seek to exploit Children and Young People. To ensure those Children and Young People who are being exploited are identified and safeguarded. To put in place governance and allocation structures to ensure that CYP who are being exploited have the appropriate level of response that seeks to ensure effective safeguarding and the identification and disruption of perpetrators. This is governed through the Child Protection Board.

4. OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

- 4.1 The Hope Awards are now in their 2nd year and the panel to assess the nominations have recently taken place, with the Assistant Chief Constable of Local Policing being included as part of the judging panel. This will be a yearly event celebrating the achievements and resilience of Children and Young People within Suffolk co-ordinated by the police.

Convictions this year for Child Sexual Abuse Offences

- 4.2 There has been excellent work by the Safeguarding Investigation Unit in the South resulting in the following convictions for Child Sexual Abuse Offences.
- R v WOODS - Convicted of rape of 4-year-old female and sexual assault of 5-year-old. Sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.
 - R v BANHAM - Convicted of 9 Serious Sexual Offences against 9-year-old victim including rape. Sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.
 - R v HINES - Convicted of multiple interfamilial sex offences both current and historic against 3 child victims. Sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There have been no specific financial implications highlighted during this period.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 6.1 The impact of the increase in the cost of living has not yet been explored in detail. However, it is anticipated that this will increase the number of children and young people living in poverty. This in turn usually sees an increase in levels of crime and a decrease in services that are provided to Children and Young People and their parents, from both Statutory and Non -Statutory Organisations. This will leave Children and Young People more vulnerable. This area should be reviewed and managed through the Youth Justice Board, the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership and Safer Stronger Communities Board at a strategic level.

- 6.2 Following lockdown there has been an increase in children being referred into Mental Health Services. There is limited information of what the impact this will have on policing in the long term, however, this will undoubtedly make some children and young people more vulnerable both inside and outside the home environment. This will need to be a key consideration when working in partnership.