



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection

PEEL: PCC HMICFRS Response National Child Protection Inspection 2019 (Feb 2020)

Date Inspection Published

27 February 2020

Type of Inspection:

- Cleveland Specific
 Follow Up
 Partner Inspection

- National
 Thematic

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?

Yes

No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

In 2014 the HMICFRS began a national programme of child protection inspections, to examine the effectiveness of decisions made by the police at each stage of their interactions with or for children, from initial contact through to the investigation of offences against them. This report builds upon the findings of the previous inspections and explores the key themes identified by the evidence gathered.

The themes are divided into five broad areas:

- The role of leaders and leadership;
- The recognition of risk and vulnerability;
- The response to risk and vulnerability;
- Protecting children from those who pose a risk to them; and
- The detention of children in police custody.

The report makes the following observations:

- Innovative work the police are doing to protect children;
- When the risk is immediate forces usually respond well;
- Police now understand that those children who go missing are at increased risk of exploitation, but responses still require improvement;
- Opportunities for the police and their partners to intervene at an earlier stage are recognised;
- The response to criminal exploitation is evolving but too many exploited children are

criminalised;

- Approaches to managing risks to children posed by others are inconsistent; and
- Police increasingly recognise the vulnerability of children in custody but too many are still detained unnecessarily.

The report also noted that the demands placed upon the police reflected the increasing complexity of the risks faced by children in need of help and protection. Police systems were struggling to meet demand for sharing information with partners. Current child protection and safeguarding arrangements were too often reactive. The commitment of senior leaders to protect children at risk was clear and unambiguous and without exception PCC police and crime plans and force priorities reflected an unambiguous commitment to the protection of children and other vulnerable people.

Performance information to understand outcomes for children requires further development. Training for officers responding to child protection is widely available but understanding how that training is used by staff is underdeveloped.

HMICFRS remained concerned about the protection of some children who regularly go missing from home. The understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation had improved however whilst some investigations were good, further opportunities existed to improve the quality and consistency of the police response. Exploited children were still likely to be prosecuted for offences they were coerced to commit.

Delays in the attendance of appropriate adults to support children in custody are not routinely referred to children's social care, the need to find alternative accommodation is understood, but not escalated if none is available.

In conclusion, the commitment found from leaders and practitioners does not waver, however in too many cases the strategic aspiration to improve was not being translated into better outcomes for children in need of help and protection,

The report made 6 recommendations, of which 2 were for Chief Constables nationally and an additional 1 for Chief Constables of forces not yet inspected.

1. That Chief Constables take steps to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children. Such steps could include (but don't need to be limited to) considering fully a child's circumstances when making decisions; more effective use of legislation to discontinue prosecutions not in the public (or child's) interest; the development of more effective non-criminal justice pathways for vulnerable children who commit lower level crimes
2. That Chief Constables should review performance management and quality assurance approaches to ensure that assessments of the nature and quality of decision making are routinely made. The purpose of this would be to reinforce the understanding that compliance with policy or process is only one part of effective practice.

The National Child Inspection for Cleveland was published in September 2017.

FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The HMICFRS raised some valid points during the 2014 inspection. We are confident as a service that we are heading in the right direction when dealing with young persons with a considerable amount of work completed and some progressing by Cleveland Police and partner agencies to focus how children/young persons are dealt with from notification of offence through to outcome.

Additionally the child/young person themselves and their history is carefully considered, i.e. are they a local Authority Child, are they at risk or CSE/CCE – ultimately not having one rule for all being a sanctioned charge for an offence, understanding why the individual is committing crime and the interventions support that can be applied as opposed to criminalisation.

Cleveland Police follows a number of Triage/Processes to conclude the appropriate action;-

- 10 point Checklist for Local Authority children and Care Leavers – this is supportive of young people in a care/residential setting and is outline below to ensure they are not unduly prosecuted due to their circumstance when they wouldn't if in a family environment.

10 Point Checklist for LAC in Care/Residential Setting

1	Disciplinary Policy of Children's Home?	
2	Why have the police been involved and is it as agreed in the policy?	
3	Any informal action/disciplinary action already taken?	
4	Any apology/reparation?	
5	Victim's views?	
6	Social Worker's views?	
7	Care Plan for Looked After Child?	
8	Recent behaviour/incidents re looked after child?	
9	Information about incident from looked after child (interview or other)?	
10	Aggravating and Mitigating Features?	

- Where low level offending is identified Cleveland Police can/do refer to the Early Intervention Co-ordinator via the Vulnerability Desk. This pathway allows offences to be 'screened out' without an officer attending. When allocated the OIC then has the opportunity to liaise with Youth Justice Service Officer and consider a number of options where the victim is not seeking/supporting a prosecution. In response to this and working with the child /young persons though he Early intervention Co-ordinator targeted interventions can be used;-

Letter of Apology
Face to Face Apology/Mediation
Reparation
Intervention relevant to the referral
Joint Working with Fire Service eg For fire setting

- Triage is completed by the Youth Justice Service whereby a full needs assessment is completed and then an intervention plan identified for the individual which could include the below interventions:-

Reparation
Offending Behaviour Session
Substance Misuse (voluntary)
Speech and Language (voluntary)
Health Needs Assessment (Voluntary)
Restorative Justice (Voluntary)
Education, Training, Employment support (Voluntary)
Restorative Justice/Victim Awareness Work

- Where a child/young person commits an offence and there is admission of guilt, this will be reviewed and where appropriate for diversion it will be passed to the Youth Justice Service Police Officer. The YJS, alongside the Police Officer will assess and discuss the referral within the Out of Court Disposals Decision Making Panel comprising of:-

- YJS Police Officer,
- YJS Manager,
- YJS Restorative Justice Officer
- Children’s Services if open/involved, the responsible Social Worker or Family Support Worker should attend.

Current individual circumstances of the individual will be considered the appropriate outcome decided upon ranging from:-

- No further Action
- Restorative Intervention
- Youth Caution
- Youth Conditional Caution (3month period with appropriate conditions)
- Charge

- Liaison and Diversion are based in the custody suite and have an opportunity to screen for any underlying mental health needs which may help inform their decision making around the individual and the reasoning for committing crime.
- The Youth Justice Service Police Officer will flag any young people on NICHE who have a Speech, Language or Communication Need and add communication tips to inform the Officers dealing of any SLCN which will assist in their communication with the young person to ensure their needs are fully understood and not misinterpreted.
- A number of Youth Offending Interventions include programmes as below to raise awareness and to assist in prevention.

Prison me no Way
One Punch Manslaughter
Sticks and Stones – Violence and Weapon offences
Making a change – Offending behaviour
U-Turn – Road Safety and Driving Offences
E-Safety
Drug and Alcohol Awareness
Peer Pressure
Prison Mentor- Kirklevington
Harbour
Child Criminal Exploitation
Child Sexual Exploitation

When a child/young person is brought into a Cleveland Police Custody suite deeming this to be the most appropriate and proportionate course of action. Cleveland custody has in place to ensure firstly, that we follow the concordat on children in custody and secondly we have a focus on this issue by way of review and feedback to local authority.

To provide a more cohesive relationships/working practices and information sharing, in early 2020 a new working group was formed, with representation from children’s service MBC, YOT, EDT and the custody management inspector. Early actions include monthly data shared by Police of all juveniles in custody at some point between the hours of 2200 and 0800. In addition a bid has been made for office space for integrated services within M8 to include staff from EDT and YOT. This will enable a much timely intervention for children in custody.

Below are some examples of where decision making is responsive to the young person's needs (Provided by YJS)

1. Young person who was suspected to be involved in a Possession of an Offensive Weapon and was reported as missing at the same time. The circumstances of the offence v the circumstances of the individual were reviewed by the OIC and Sgt and it was not deemed to be in the public interest due to the needs of the young person.
2. A Local Authority Child young person had an outstanding Public Order offence which occurred when he was a High Risk missing person and threatening self-harm. The young person had been placed in multiple homes around the Country and there had been no opportunity to issue the Youth Caution. Upon review by the YJS Police Officer and a YJS Manager it was agreed and felt not in the public interest or the child's interests to continue pursuing and a recommendation was made to the OIC to NFA the outstanding offence.

PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

Comment by the PCC:

I agree with the HMICFRS' report which states that there is an unambiguous commitment from police leaders, officers and staff to the protection of children and that there is always more that can be done to improve the approach to protecting children, including ensuring that we work closely with our partners in order to do so.

In my refreshed Police and Crime Plan (2016-21) I make a commitment to work with the Youth Offending Service to review the triage service delivered to young people and support the Youth Offending Team through the changes to Youth Justice Reform.

I invest in the evidence-based Youth Triage scheme, which provides specialist assessment and intervention programmes to address needs of children and young people at the earliest signs of offending behaviour. This is delivered across the Cleveland area by Youth Offending Teams. I have funded the Youth Offending Triage Service to ensure that Youth Offending Service leads and police representatives extend restorative interventions delivered by frontline police officers. Collectively it is recognised that there is an opportunity to provide a more structured early intervention offer to young people who are on the 'cusp' of offending behaviour. Initial discussions have gained support from 2 youth offending services to pilot the delivery of restorative interventions in 2020

The effectiveness of this scheme has reduced the rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system by 27% (between 2015 and 2018).

In my Police and Crime Plan I also made a commitment to understand the commissioning landscape for Child Sexual Exploitation to ensure the most vulnerable receive the best possible support. I have therefore also funded and supported the undertaking of ground-breaking research into motivations of Sexual Exploitation offenders, including prison interviews and analysis. This is work which I believe society needs to do much more of, in

understanding and tackling an issue with wide-ranging impacts for our communities and our institutions.

I have provided funding for the Force to conducted training for officers and partner agencies in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE),

Finally, I will be working closely with the Chief Constable to make sure the recommendations are implemented and through my refreshed scrutiny programme, I will be ensuring that the Force's performance in this area will continue to be a priority of mine.

I am now preparing a 2020/21 police and crime plan to go to Police & Crime panel in July and will make sure relevant issues are picked up and taken forward in this

<https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/Decisions/HMIC-Inspection-Responses.aspx>

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