



## RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

### INSPECTION DETAILS

**Title of Inspection**      **An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales**

**Date Inspection Published**      - 8 December 2023

**Type of Inspection:**

- |   |  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleveland Specific | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follow Up          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner Inspection |  |

**Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?**      ☐ Yes ☒ No

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

The purpose of the inspection was to establish how well the police and law enforcement bodies understand and respond to group-based child sexual exploitation (CSE). The report noted that policing has taken huge steps in improving its response to CSE and know more about the wider context in which child abuse can occur. However, it was noted that progress remained slow.

Other key points were as follows

- The police service had problems identifying group-based child sexual exploitation because there was no clear definition of it
- There wasn't enough reliable information about group-based child sexual exploitation
- The quality of criminal investigations was inconsistent
- Despite efforts to avoid criminalising children unnecessarily, in some forces HMICFRS found victim-blaming language being used
- Forces weren't always doing enough to disrupt the threat of group-based child sexual exploitation

### Recommendations

HMICFRS made nine recommendations and identified one area for improvement. These aim to improve how the police and law enforcement bodies understand the nature and scale of group-based child sexual exploitation and achieve better outcomes for children.

### **Recommendation 1**

By 31 December 2024, the Home Office, the Department for Education, the Welsh Government, the National Crime Agency, the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) and the [College of Policing](#) should adopt the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's](#) definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation. Or they should devise and implement a suitable alternative.

### **Recommendation 2**

By 31 December 2024, all chief constables should make sure that their forces have problem profiles for child sexual exploitation, each of which should include an assessment of the nature and extent of group-based child sexual exploitation. This should include relevant data from local partner agencies and should be updated frequently, at least annually.

### **Recommendation 3**

By 30 May 2025, the National Crime Agency should produce an assessment of group-based child sexual exploitation as part of its annual [strategic assessment](#) of [serious and organised crime](#). The assessment should use the agreed definition of group-based child sexual exploitation from our recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 4**

By 31 December 2024, all chief constables and the relevant business user groups for police record management systems should make sure there are sufficient measures in place to identify group-based child sexual exploitation.

### **Recommendation 5**

By 31 March 2025, the Home Office should stop collecting group-based child sexual exploitation data through its [annual data requirement](#) on custody, known as ADR149.

### **Recommendation 6**

By 31 March 2026, the Home Office should introduce a new and specific [annual data requirement](#) on group-based child sexual exploitation. This should be aligned with its existing child sexual abuse and exploitation crimes annual data requirement. The supporting guidance to forces should use the agreed definition of group-based child sexual exploitation from our recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 7**

By 31 December 2024, the College of Policing should update its [authorised professional practice](#) on child sexual exploitation to include group-based child sexual exploitation. It should use the agreed definition from our recommendation 1.

### **Recommendation 8**

By 30 June 2024, all chief constables of forces that are yet to receive the [Hydrant Programme's continuing professional development](#) offer should arrange it.

### **Recommendation 9**

With immediate effect, all chief constables should take effective steps to eradicate [victim-blaming](#) language in their forces.

### **Area for improvement**

All chief constables should work with their statutory safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively in their forces.

This should include consideration of options such as the advice given in the [Home Office disruption toolkit](#) and an Operation Makesafe (a national police initiative to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in the business community) type of approach.

## FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

All new reports into the Force follow a specific process which involves informing the Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, of the report's publication and identifying an Executive Lead to monitor/drive progress of the actions going forward.

A plenary session with the Exec lead and relevant stakeholders is held to discuss the actions and agree how they will be progressed. The outcome from this session is reported back to the GAIN Board for acceptance and approval; progress is then monitored through governance meetings until such a time as the action is considered complete.

The process for closing actions is depicted by HMICFRS, as they award each action a level; the Force complies with the appropriate course of action, linked to this level, to formally close the actions.

The report included 3 recommendations and 1 area for improvement for forces:

- By 31 December 2024, all chief constables should make sure that their forces have problem profiles for child sexual exploitation, each of which should include an assessment of the nature and extent of group-based child sexual exploitation. This should include relevant data from local partner agencies and should be updated frequently, at least annually.
- By 31 December 2024, all chief constables and the relevant business user groups for police record management systems should make sure there are sufficient measures in place to identify group-based child sexual exploitation.
- With immediate effect, all chief constables should take effective steps to eradicate victim-blaming language in their forces.
- All chief constables should work with their statutory safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively in their forces.  
This should include consideration of options such as the advice given in the Home Office disruption toolkit and an Operation Makesafe (a national police initiative to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in the business community) type of approach.

A plenary session has not yet been planned following receipt of a letter (to all forces) from the NPCC lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation. The letter explains the significant work by colleagues from the Hydrant Programme and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, which has already resulted in the launch of a CSE Taskforce. Significant progress has already been made by them in meeting the

requirements of all the recommendations contained in the report.

This work will continue to be driven by the Taskforce working with all forces and the College of Policing which will ensure that we can address the recommendations swiftly and effectively. The NPCC lead has asked that forces allow the Taskforce to provide us and our teams with support and advice that can help shape our local response.

More detail is to be outlined in a letter to Chief Constables in the coming weeks in relation to the work of the CSE Taskforce and how it can support our force.

Once that information is received, we will progress with the plenary session. All actions will be progressed over the coming months with the support of the Executive lead.

The Force continues to actively work to satisfy all recommendations and AFIs which are discussed regularly in the relevant Force Governance meetings.

## **PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION**

Comment by the PCC:

The PCC welcomes the report and agrees with the recommendations that have been made.

Progress on the recommendations will be monitored through the PCC's Scrutiny, Standards and Accountability Programme

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☒ Response forwarded to Home Office

☒ Response published on PCC website