



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

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection - Cleveland Police: National child protection inspection

Date Inspection Published - 15 January 2025

Type of Inspection:  Cleveland Specific  National  
 Follow Up  Thematic  
 Partner Inspection

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report?  Yes  No

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

Children are among the most vulnerable in society. Most children grow up in loving, caring families and reach adulthood unharmed. But some do not - they fall prey to people who coerce them into criminal enterprises or exploit them for sexual gratification. Children who do not grow up in loving, caring families face heightened risks, as do children who go missing from home.

Public services, including the police, have a shared responsibility to look for the warning signs, be alert to the risks and act quickly to protect children.

In February 2024, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) introduced a new child protection rolling inspection programme. For each police force in England and Wales, HMICFRS makes five judgments on how effectively the force safeguards children at risk.

This report sets out the findings of HMICFRS's 2024 inspection of child protection services in Cleveland Police.

In each inspection, HMICFRS focuses on the experiences of children who come into contact with the police when there are concerns about their safety or well-being.

#### **HM Inspector's summary**

Cleveland Police has worked hard over the years to improve how it safeguards vulnerable children and families. But there is still much more to do.

Two causes of concern have been identified regarding the performance of Cleveland Police in safeguarding children at risk. These concerns relate to how the Force responds to children that are missing, and how the Force investigates online child sexual exploitation.

The Force does not consistently recognise the risks posed to missing children. Nor does it respond to them effectively. And the Force needs to improve how it investigates cases involving children being sexually exploited online. This includes how it assesses wider risks posed by offenders, and

how it provides support to children and families.

The Force does not have enough trained officers and staff to investigate reports of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. Also, although the Force has worked hard to train its officers and staff, this training does not always result in improving outcomes for children.

The Force needs to make sure it equips officers and staff to recognise risk and consistently record the voice of the child. It needs to make sure it effectively shares relevant information with its safeguarding partners. And it needs to improve how it assesses and responds to children at risk of, or harmed by, exploitation.

Chief officers and senior leaders understand their statutory responsibilities to safeguard children. The Force chairs one of its two safeguarding children partnerships. This demonstrates the Force's investment in partnership working.

However, at an operational level, improvements are needed. Especially to the Force's joint working arrangements in managing children at risk of exploitation.

The dedication and steadfastness shown by officers and staff at Cleveland Police is commended. They are committed to safeguarding children, while operating in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. But despite the efforts of senior leadership, the Force is not yet achieving consistently good outcomes for children. This affects the provision of safeguarding and potentially leaves children at risk.

Progress will be monitored closely within Cleveland Police over the coming months.

### **Leadership of child protection arrangements**

Cleveland Police's leadership of its child protection arrangements requires improvement.

### **Areas for improvement**

#### ***The Force needs more officers and staff trained to investigate reports of child abuse, neglect and exploitation***

The Force's leaders recognise that many of the officers and staff investigating crimes against children are inexperienced and not fully trained.

Although the Force's specialist child abuse investigation development programme is not mandatory, the programme gives officers and staff a good understanding of the principles set out in the Working together to safeguard children 2023 guidance. It also explains how to work with safeguarding partners to better protect children at risk. But in this inspection, only one in seven officers in the complex exploitation team have completed the programme. And even though the Force has offered the team a range of training, this is having a limited effect on outcomes for children. Officers also are not experienced enough to carry out their role.

In the child abuse and vulnerable adults team, which investigates child abuse and neglect, less than a third of officers have completed their initial crime investigators development programme.

The complex exploitation team should consist of 22 officers, but at the time of this inspection it only had 11 officers in post. Some of its officers and staff are also assigned to long-term investigations, such as complex and lengthy child sexual exploitation investigations, putting more pressure on the team.

#### ***The Force needs to record children's demographic information more consistently***

HMICFRS found that the Force did not record children's ethnicity in half of its case file reviews (25

[REDACTED]

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**Subject:** Fortnightly Catch-up: PPC [REDACTED] DCC [REDACTED]  
**Location:** PCC's Office

**Start:** Thu 16/01/2025 10:00  
**End:** Thu 16/01/2025 10:30  
**Show Time As:** Tentative

**Recurrence:** (none)

**Meeting Status:** Not yet responded

**Organiser:** [REDACTED]  
**Required Attendees:** [REDACTED]

[Redacted]

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**Subject:** Fortnightly Catch-up: PPC [Redacted] & DCC [Redacted]  
**Location:** PCC's Office

**Start:** Mon 27/01/2025 10:00  
**End:** Mon 27/01/2025 11:00  
**Show Time As:** Tentative

**Recurrence:** (none)

**Meeting Status:** Not yet responded

**Organiser:** [Redacted]  
**Required Attendees:** [Redacted]

- 27/1

Confirmed result 11/12th Feb

- Pursuit

10th March - Full

→ Inflexible / likely they won't sign-off

→ Action plan updated 7th Feb

- sign-off?

→ Feasibility testing - improvements

→ Silver group dashboard

→ Silver command role will remain

→ [Redacted]

→ [Redacted]

→ [Redacted]

[Redacted]

- Gold structure remains

- Remain in place until

-

- lessons learning

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] - 10am ~~16/1~~

- Gisel grasp this afternoon

- Workforce content.

= Timeliness of report.

= Leadership.

- CC. NRCC

[Redacted] reviews capd NFA.

- Cases

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

- Feb 2025 - revisit on NCP1

- Review CoC, AFP1.

[Redacted] visit in March.

AFIIS reviews

- NCP1. Report - online improvement

[Redacted]

Gaps still evident from HMIC feedback in Feb  
- initial broader safeguarding of online exploitation  
- voice of child (now have strategy)  
- ethnicity recording of online reporting.

audit scheduled to look at quality - MFM  
- victim blaming language.

Impact -> month on month reductions in MFM  
-> increase in high-risk incidents

MFM - LA core - no clear oversight previously - adopted processes now clearly if it is a looked at child.

Had good impact - but still work to do.  
MFM / exploited children are getting a better service now than 12 months ago.

█ - what are the next steps -> formal assessment goes over to PEEL inspection now.

█ - HMIC emitted in when there are actions for closure  
-> FII - June / July in force - process continues until summer - if formally closed can be force is where it wants to be communicated publicly.

█ - what will the force put in the public domain about the good work that has happened for public assurance.

key partners have been briefed - prior and after NCP.T.

Harm outside the Home -> 4 LA processes - trying to bring them together.

Exploitation } single independent  
Child Abuse } chair - 1 single referral tool.

(Children First Strategy)  
is a public document

wider partnership assistance - Rachelle - where can we help

School exclusions - getting the right people at the right meetings

more likely to be involved in crime, exploitation.

Group based Child Sexual Exploitation

CSE Problem profile - highlighted gaps in force + partners.  
\* to send to [redacted]

HOTH - improve intelligence gathering will help as the threat isn't really known.

ask from NACC Govt - review group based CSE.

non recent CSE 2015 investigations that have been NFA'd.

70 investigations - in Cleveland - finding from govt for extra staff - look for opportunities to re-investigate.

Child on child abuse.

CSA problem profile by May 2025.

lack of outreach opportunities in Cleveland. - where children can often disclose things. ∴ our intelligence around this would be better.

Partly answered - scale of how bad report

- still work to do

- recognized still

FOI - no imp PCC - chief

Redact - details

(FOI)

- need to check [redacted]

2018 - no info - 7 year disposal route

section 40 GDPR breaches

Public Interest Test.

Date: 01/04/25

## Child Protection Scrutiny

\* All DAs attended get PPN submitted.

\* Revisit Feb

- positive feedback in terms of policy and process.

\* 7% to 40% high risk missing.  
- accumulative risk.

\* Allocation of online CSE cases:

▶ POLIT Sharepoint

- point of ref to support frontline officers

- all cases now allocated to POLIT.

\* Op Unified - go live Sept

- central unit for serious child abuse / CSE and rape.

\* Support package for victims of CSA/E  
- online.

## Performance Management

June / July time - FFLM visit.

- Thresholds

- children who sit below this do get some informal intervention.

→ very much ship area of business - any challenge concerns frustration with partners.



## \* Return interviews ???

- Exclusions and education
  - Strategic leads ??
  - Knife Crime discussions.

- CSE Problem Profile - copy will be provided.
- CSA Problem Profile - early May.
- HOTH - working to collectively understand the risk of CSE in Cleveland.

- Group based CSA - 2 or more offenders.

- NFA CSE/A cases - reviewed centrally and if cases need re-opening sent back for local investigation.

- Lack of outreach provision to build intelligence. -



# Child Protection and Child Exploitation - scrutiny 1 April

## Child First Strategy Developed

NCP1 inspection - improvement Plan received

- no HMICFRS feedback on the plan

How will  
HMIC  
measure  
this.

\* How soon can we say what's improved? what's the positive news?

Problem Profile - only just completed and not fed into force

Last year

6,780 Child victims of crime

CP - has some of the  
highest levels of serious  
youth violence in the country

7,920 children suspected of committing a crime

3,559 MFTs

Trauma  
underlying cause  
of vulnerability

Prevent against offending, offer the best protection, put the  
child at the centre of decision making.

Trust and Confidence

Child's voice

Outcomes + Futures for children

Effective referrals - to multi Agencies / safeguarding

Reduce Crime / ASB / quality investigations

## knife crime

victims over 18 - 91%

under 18 - 9%

offenders over 18 - 85%

under 18 - 15%

## Victim blaming language

- culture

- being anxious

\* Develop a child scrutiny panel

- review our approach to

stop search

ASB

use of force

other themes at their request

## Improving the identification of CSE

- Implement Home Office Principles

multi agency, 4 LA areas  
improve outcomes for  
children at risk of exploitation

NCP1 inspection - what will be different and by when

CSE update - <sup>HMIC</sup> feedback

How can we work together to minimize concerning sexual behaviors  
PrC Plan - better educational provision  
- healthy relationships

(Young People's Sentencing Panel)  
→ in Children First Strategy

DAPO Success  
- Home office praise  
- 30 DAPOS  
1 arrest for breach

[REDACTED] Performance  
now a tactical vulnerability group → led to task + finish groups  
+ performance metrics  
Improvement journey - in progress

HMIC - concerns led to immediate action and gold group.

MPersons Delivery Group - new policy, new risk assessment processes.

Improvements in quantity of PPNs 90% - quality is still a gap  
but work being done.

→ was 7%  
C 40% of MFM are classified as high risk + ∴ get different  
tactical approach - silver needed to verify the MFM.

NCP1 - February - feedback positive but still work to do  
- clear evidence of improvement  
- training - was an area needing more work

allocation of online CSE - to frontline (immediate policy  
change - allocated to POLIT)

OP cripped - going live September 2025  
Central unit - for serious child abuse and exploitation  
- all rape offenses

High risk DA → local CID departments - PIP 2 accredited people

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**Rescheduled Scrutiny Meeting (Child Protection and Child Exploitation)**

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**Organiser** [REDACTED]  
**Meeting time** This event occurred 1 year ago (Tue 01/04/2025 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM)  
**Location** PCC's Office, Microsoft Teams Meeting  
**My response** Not yet responded  
**Required attendees** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Optional attendees** [REDACTED]  
**Message sent** Tue 18/03/2025 10:31 AM

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To confirm, the meeting that was originally planned for Tuesday 4 March, has been rescheduled and will now take place on Tuesday 1 April at 9.00am.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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