



Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
c/o St Marks House
St Marks Court
Thornaby
Stockton on Tees
TS17 6QW

Email: pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk
Website: <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk>

Police and Crime Commissioner
Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer:

Matt Storey
Lisa Oldroyd

Tel: 01642 301861
Tel: 01642 301861

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

Scrutiny Meeting

Date: Tuesday 1 April 2025

Time: 9:00am - 10:00am

Venue: PCC Office/Teams [Join the meeting now](#)

Agenda

	Item	Presented By
1.	Apologies for Absence	PCC
2.	Draft Notes - Scrutiny Meeting (Right Care Right Person) - 4 February 2025 (<i>for internal use only</i>)	PCC
3.	Scrutiny Actions - An Update	PCC
4.	Child Protection and Child Exploitation	Cleveland Police
5.	Any Other Business	PCC
6.	Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 21 May 2025 Topic: TBC	PCC



**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and
Members of the Audit Committee**

18th December 2025

Presenting Officer: [REDACTED]

Status: For Information

**Update report on Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of
Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Force's current position in relation to outstanding areas of improvement and recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and provide assurance that the Force has appropriate governance and scrutiny arrangements to ensure that the required improvements are made and embedded.

2. Background

- 2.1 HMICFRS independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces in the public interest. This is primarily achieved through local PEEL assessments and national thematic inspections. The PEEL inspection programme provides an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of all police forces in England and Wales and provides graded judgements across a range of policing areas. It identifies where forces need to improve and helps the public understand how well their force is performing.
- 2.2 If HMICFRS identifies an aspect of a force's practice, policy or performance that falls short of the expected standard, it will be reported as one or more area(s) for improvement (AFI). AFIs are not accompanied by a recommendation.
- 2.3 Identification of a serious or critical shortcoming in a force's practice, policy or performance, will be reported as a cause of concern. A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations.
- 2.4 HMICFRS continuously monitors the performance of all police forces in England and Wales and the monitoring process consists of two stages: 'scan' and 'engage'. All police forces are in routine monitoring under the 'scan' stage by default but may be escalated to enhanced monitoring under the 'engage' stage if they are not effectively addressing the inspectorate's concerns.

3. Current position

3.1 As previously reported, HMICFRS has introduced follow up activity levels for every recommendation and area for improvement (AFI) as follows:

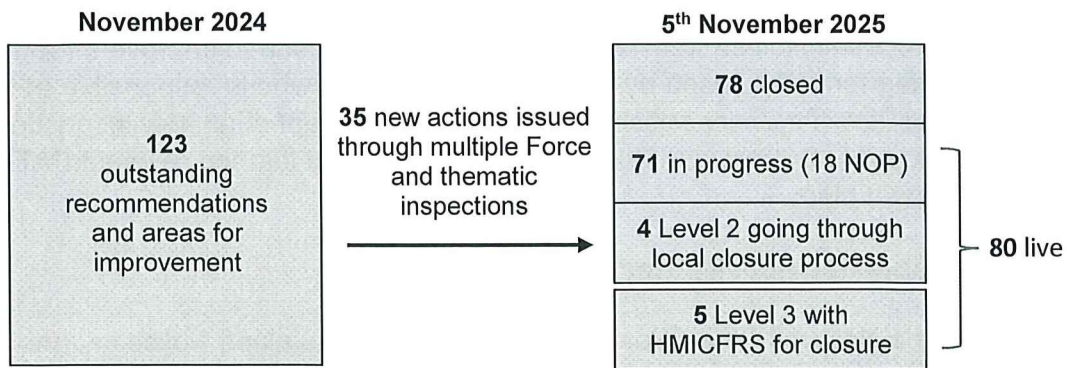
- **Level 1** - No recorded follow up required and record closed
- **Level 2** – Force is able to close the record when the work is completed, with a letter uploaded to the HMICFRS Portal, signed by the Chief Constable.
- **Level 3** - Force self-certifies that the recommendation is complete, including uploading a letter signed by the Chief Constable with HMICFRS follow-up/ verification via the next relevant planned inspection or revisit.
- **Level 4** - No force self-certification. HMICFRS follow-up work conducted via further bespoke fieldwork, with additional support / inspection when appropriate. In most cases will be for forces moved to Engage.

3.2 The table below provides a breakdown of Force’s current position in relation to ‘live’ improvements required against the new activity levels as at 05.11.25. The portal does not include super-complaints however these are tracked locally to ensure that the Force has adequately dealt with any findings.

HMICFRS activity level	Local	National	Total
Cause of concern	0	0	0
Recommendation Level 1	0	0	0
Recommendation Level 2	0	41	41
Recommendation Level 3	0	8	8
Recommendation Level 4	0	0	0
AFI Level 1	0	0	0
AFI Level 2	0	1	1
AFI Level 3	12	0	12
AFI Level 4	0	0	0
Super-complaints (not on the portal)	0	18	18
Total ‘live’ activity	12	68	80

3.3 As highlighted above, the Force’s position has continued to improve over the past 12 months. Despite the receipt of a number of national recommendations issued to all forces (as detailed later in the report) the number of ‘live’ actions has further reduced and of the 80 current live actions, only 12 are specific to Cleveland Police. This improvement is further illustrated in the chart overleaf.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED



3.4 Work continues to address the 'live actions' outlined above under the supervision of the GAIN Board and the Force is making active use of its ability to locally close level 2 actions and request the closure of level 3 actions where there is clear evidence to demonstrate that the required improvements have been embedded.

4. Governance and scrutiny arrangements

- 4.1 Governance and scrutiny arrangements associated with HMICFRS activity fall under the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Constable led Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board which meets monthly. The GAIN Board provides a single governance forum to manage all inspection and audit related activity, the terms of reference for which can be found at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The Force continues to take a proactive approach to HMICFRS activity, and whilst the Board monitors progress against existing recommendations and areas for improvement, its' core focus is on working towards achievement of the standards of good outlined in the HMICFRS PEEL Assessment Framework (PAF). A copy of the updated PAF for the 2025-27 inspection round is attached at Appendix B. To ensure appropriate drive and oversight, each PAF question area has a designated Chief Officer lead and a senior officer/staff equivalent delivery lead. Progress against achievement of the characteristics of 'good' outlined in the PAF is routinely tracked at the GAIN Board with a 'deep dive' into one of the PAF areas each month on a rotational basis.
- 4.3 To further support the Force's improvement journey, the Force's internal monitoring portal StART (**S**trategic **A**ctions and **R**ecommendations **T**racker) is hosted on SharePoint and provides force wide access to the current status of all HMICFRS recommendations and areas for improvement (AFIs). This includes details on where the AFI originated from, what action is required, who is responsible at Chief Officer and delivery lead level and the current delivery confidence level. Information can also be filtered to provide a customised view.
- 4.4 In addition, evidence to demonstrate compliance with the PAF standards of good in readiness for future inspection activity, continues to be collated in the Force Inspections and Visits Evidence Store (FIVES). Also hosted on SharePoint, this provides a central repository of positive evidence and a reminder to identify items suitable for inclusion on FIVES is a standing agenda item at all corporate meetings.
- 4.5 The Force continues to adopt a robust process to ensure that any recommendations and AFIs resulting from local and national inspection activity are promptly considered

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

and allocated for action. The detailed process flow at Appendix C illustrates the 'end to end' process followed from the Force receiving a notice to improve through to an action being formally closed by HMICFRS and shows who is responsible at each stage. Facilitated plenary sessions are held upon receipt of all new inspection reports and any identified improvement activity is incorporated into the relevant PAF improvement plan.

5. Local inspection activity since the last update

- 5.1 Following a National Child Protection Inspection of Cleveland Police in June 2024, HMICFRS published their inspection findings in January 2025 which included the following graded judgments of how good the Force is at safeguarding children who are at risk, along with two causes of concern and five AFIs.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Working with safeguarding partners	Leadership of child protection arrangements	Responding to children at risk of harm
			Risk assessment and referrals	Investigating child abuse, neglect and exploitation

- 5.2 In response the Force developed an improvement plan to deal with the issues highlighted, which was submitted expediently to HMICFRS ahead of the required deadline. Progress against the plan was tracked and monitored via a Deputy Chief Constable led Gold Group and a Silver Group was established to drive the required improvement activity.
- 5.3 The Force invited HMICFRS to formally review progress made against the improvement plan in early September 2025. Following an audit of activity and outcomes for children, HMICFRS were satisfied with the Force's progress, and both causes of concern were removed. In addition, four of the five AFIs were closed. The remaining AFI which relates to consistent recording of child demographic data continues to be progressed and a programme of activity remains underway under Chief Officer leadership to ensure the Force continuously improves policing services provided to vulnerable children.

6. HMICFRS reports published since last update

- 6.1 Cleveland Police: National child protection inspection (published January 2025)

Force specific inspection with two causes of concern and two linked recommendations graded level 4, and five level 3 AFIs. Locally aligned to PAF 7 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Both causes of concern and their associated recommendations have been closed following review by HMICFRS along with four of the AFIs. Work to address the remaining AFI is ongoing.

- 6.2 Crime investigations - An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime (March 2025)

National thematic inspection with eight level 2 recommendations issued to all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 6 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

One recommendation has been closed as superseded. Work to address the remaining recommendations is ongoing.

6.3 PEEL 2023/25: An inspection of Cleveland Police (April 2025)

Force specific inspection with eight level 3 AFIs. Locally aligned to the relevant PAF areas with a Chief Officer lead at ACC/ACO level. Work to address the AFIs is ongoing.

6.4 An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 2 (May 2025)

National thematic inspection, no recommendations issued to forces.

6.5 Improving the response to organised immigration crime (May 2025)

National thematic inspection with four level 2 recommendations issued to all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 6 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Work to address the recommendations is ongoing.

6.6 Joint child protection inspection of victims of domestic abuse in Redcar and Cleveland (June 2025)

Local Partnership inspection, no recommendations issued to the Force.

6.7 Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service: final report (July 2025)

National thematic inspection with three level 2 recommendations issued to all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 6 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Work to address the recommendations is ongoing.

6.8 How effectively do the police record crime? PEEL spotlight report (August 2025)

National thematic inspection with three level 2 recommendations issued to all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 6 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Work to address the recommendations is ongoing.

6.9 State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024–25 (September 2025)

National thematic inspection, no recommendations issued to forces.

6.10 The effectiveness of diverting children from the criminal justice system: meeting needs, ensuring safety, and preventing reoffending (October 2025)

Joint national thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HMICFRS with one level 2 recommendation issued to all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 7 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Work to address the recommendation has commenced.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

6.11 Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation: A progress report (October 2025)

National thematic inspection with four level 2 recommendations for all forces. Locally aligned to PAF 7 with ACC Crime and Safeguarding as Chief Officer lead. Work to address the recommendation has commenced.

6.12 Evaluation of PEEL inspections (October 2025)

National evaluation report, no recommendations issued to forces.

7. **2025-2027 PEEL inspection programme**

7.1 The 2025-27 inspection round has now commenced and Cleveland Police is due to be inspected as part of batch 10. An indicative timetable has been issued to forces which includes key milestone dates for the different stages within the process. The key dates for Cleveland are as follows:

- Document request - week commencing 8th June 2026
- Final evidence collection phase - two weeks commencing 30th November 2026
- Final report publication - April 2027

7.2 HMICFRS have updated their PEEL assessment framework for the next round of the PEEL inspection programme in response to new and emerging priorities in policing and Government missions. They will continue to make graded judgments in several areas of policing against the 'core questions' within the PEEL assessment, but have made the following key changes:

- The introduction of two new core questions on safeguarding children and adults at risk and the response to fraud
- The movement of custody from a specialist inspection into PEEL, which will increase the frequency of inspections, so every force is inspected every four (rather than six) years
- Revisions to how they inspect and report on crime data integrity and the management of suspects and offenders
- A revised HMI summary.

8. **Other planned inspection activity**

8.1 In addition to the PEEL continuous assessment process, HMICFRS conduct thematic inspections across a range of policing areas. From April 2025, HMICFRS will continue a multi-year programme of thematic inspections in line with their strategy, the timing of which will depend on their funding and capacity and the emerging priorities for policing.

8.2 HMICFRS' planned thematic inspections over the next four years (2025 to 2029) are as follows. The list is not in order of priority and includes the carryover of inspections from 2024/25:

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- firearms licensing
- police leadership
- the police response to knife-related crime
- the efficiency and effectiveness of current arrangements that provide local, regional and national policing services
- science and technology
- police and fire service cybersecurity
- counter-terrorism
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles
- data and analytics
- retail crime and shoplifting

8.3 It is not known at this stage whether Cleveland will be directly involved in any of the above inspections, however the Force will be subject to any national recommendations arising from them.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The Force continues to take a robust approach to tackling the required improvement activity identified by HMICFRS with significant progress being made. New governance arrangements are working effectively with regular monitoring and scrutiny in place, and additional resources have been invested to ensure that the Force is well prepared in advance of future inspections and has a clear understanding of any gaps against the required standards.

9.2 The Force's internal arrangements for tracking and monitoring HMICFRS actions were subject to an internal audit by RSM in August 2025 which resulted in an internal audit opinion of 'substantial assurance'.



Terms of Reference

Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board

Purpose

To provide a mechanism through which the Chief Officer lead is assured of:

- the Force's readiness for HMICFRS and other inspection/audit activity and its response to areas for improvement arising from such activity;
- the Force's ability to meet the defined quality and standards contained within the HMICFRS inspection framework;
- the identification of best practice to enhance the service we provide to our communities.

Core activities

- To monitor Force activity in relation to existing causes of concern, areas for improvement and recommendations for change arising from external inspection, audit or other regulatory bodies
- To oversee the development of practice and procedures that will deliver identified areas for improvement
- To oversee the on-going development of the Force in relation to its effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy through PEEL, within a culture of continuous improvement
- To provide assurance that products coming out of audit and inspection work are embedded and being used effectively to drive performance in the organisation
- To ensure that the Force is able to demonstrate and evidence the outcome and impact of its improvement activity at both a tactical and strategic level
- To lead and oversee the Force's approach to HMICFRS inspection planning and preparation
- To consider any identified areas of risk and commission further internal inspection and review work as necessary
- To identify recommendations and areas for improvement which are suitable for local. Closure (where appropriate) or submission to the HMICFRS to request closure
- To review the findings of new reports by HMICFRS and other audit/regulatory bodies and assign an appropriate lead officer to oversee the development of action plans to deliver the required improvements

Membership

Members

Deputy Chief Constable (Chair)
 Assistant Chief Constables
 Assistant Chief Officer (Enabling Services)
 Chief Superintendents
 Head of Corporate Services
 PAF Delivery Leads
 Head of Performance, Quality and Review
 Review and Assurance Team Inspector
 HMIC Governance Officer

If members are unable to attend, a suitably briefed deputy should be nominated who is empowered to make decisions on their behalf.

Frequency

Monthly

Governance**Agenda compilation** Executive Support**Notes taken by** Executive Support**Document Control**

Version	Date	Status
1.0	June 23	Approved at GAIN Board meeting on 21.06.23
1.1	07/03/24	Formatting updated
1.2	07/01/25	Change of Force crest
1.3	11/11/25	Membership and role titles updated

PEEL Assessment Framework (PAF) 2025 - 2027

The following core questions, topic areas and characteristics of good will be assessed.

Topic areas		Characteristics of good
1. Leadership		
a.	The force's senior leaders use all available information to develop strategic plans that will help provide a quality service to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force uses its force management statement to inform its strategic planning and performance objectives. The needs of the community and the workforce inform the force's strategic plans. The force has robust governance arrangements that hold its leaders to account.
b.	The force's senior leaders make sure there is a clear performance framework aligned to the force's strategic plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has access to and uses high-quality data and analysis to make sure it operates efficiently and effectively. Officers and staff understand the force performance framework and it is aligned to force priorities. The force understands what good performance is and holds its leaders to account against these performance measures to improve the service it provides to the public.
c.	The force's senior leaders make sure there is the right culture and capable leadership at all levels to oversee how the force's strategic plans are implemented, and its performance objectives are achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force's strategic priorities and performance objectives are clearly communicated, and the workforce understands them. The force has the right people with the right leadership skills in the right place to develop and implement its strategic plans. The force is continuously improving its leadership standards, behaviour and culture.
d.	The force's senior leaders make sure it has an effective, efficient and productive workforce to achieve the force's strategic plans and priorities, including better use of technology, continuous improvement and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force's operating model makes sure the force can address current and future demand. The force can show how it continues to improve productivity through digital, data and technology solutions. Leaders can show the benefits of collaborations and partnership working.
e.	The force's senior leaders make the best use of available funding to implement the force's strategic plans and achieve its performance objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force's financial plans make sure spending is aligned to its priorities. The force appropriately targets its funding to make sure it can achieve its priorities. The force's future financial plans are affordable and sustainable.
2. Supporting and developing the workforce		
a.	The force has a diverse workforce and recruits the right people to meet the needs of its communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has a fair, open and inclusive recruitment process to make sure it recruits the right people with the right skills. The force promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Leaders at all levels create an inclusive workforce culture. The force takes positive action to better represent the communities it serves.

b.	The force develops its workforce to make sure it has the skills and capabilities to meet the needs of its communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force creates opportunities for all members of the workforce to progress, including under-represented groups. Leaders support their teams to access development opportunities. • The force makes sure it gives officers and staff the right training to carry out specialist work. • The force prioritises and progresses the development of its workforce through continuing professional development. • Leaders identify and manage talent well. The workforce understands, uses and values the professional development review process.
c.	The force supports its workforce by making good efforts to retain officers and staff, while meeting the needs of the individual, force and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force understands the well-being challenges of its workforce. Leaders at all levels prioritise and promote the physical and mental health of all officers and staff. • The force has processes to encourage officers and staff to stay in its workforce where appropriate. • Leaders at all levels monitor and review information about why officers and staff may want to leave or have left the workforce
3. Public treatment		
a.	The force's training and feedback systems improve how it uses stop and search and use of force powers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers have the knowledge and confidence to interact with the public fairly and appropriately during stop and search and use of force encounters. • And supervisors effectively review these interactions and give feedback to officers to improve performance. • The force uses body-worn video in all appropriate use of force and stop and search encounters in line with its own policy and guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council. Interactions between officers and the public are improved as a result. • The force supports independent external scrutiny processes and responds to scrutiny and challenge it receives to improve how officers use stop and search and use of force powers.
b.	The force's use of stop and search powers is fair and appropriate and supports its force priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force only uses stop and search powers when there are reasonable grounds to do so. And it follows correct and fair processes. • The force uses safeguarding interventions when children are stopped and searched. • The force has management structures that make sure quality assurance processes lead to improved interactions during stop and search. The force accurately records all data and uses the analysis to make sure its use of the power is fair. • The force shows that the fair use of intelligence-led stop and search supports a problem-solving approach, which helps prevent and detect crime and keep people safe.
c.	The force's use of force is fair and appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When officers use force, it is recorded, justified, proportionate and fair. • The force uses safeguarding interventions for children involved in use of force encounters. • The force has management structures that make sure quality assurance processes lead to appropriate, fair and proportionate use of force. The force accurately records all data and uses the analysis to make sure its use of the power is fair.

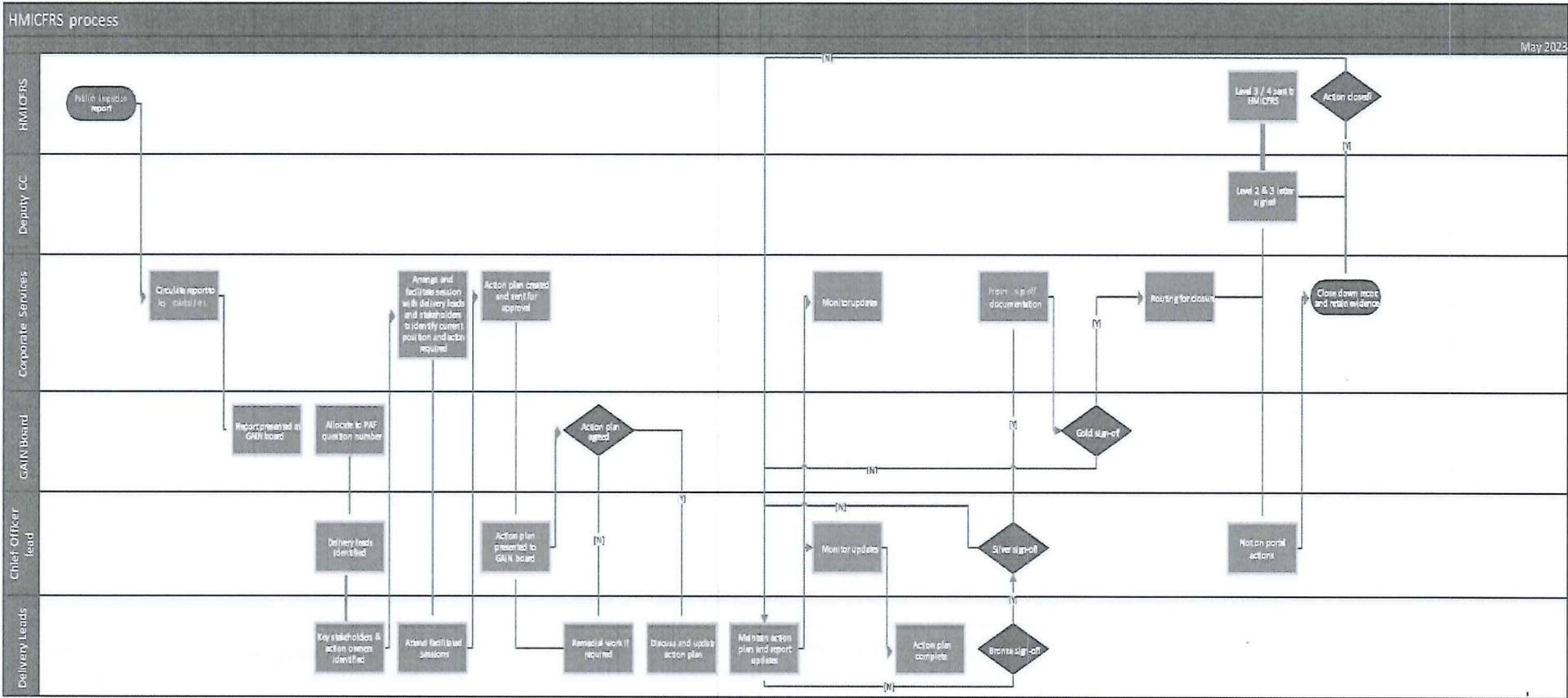
4. Prevention and deterrence		
a.	The force works with partner organisations to identify and prioritise its approach to prevent vulnerability, antisocial behaviour and crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has an effective management structure that allows it to identify vulnerability, repeat volume crime, neighbourhood crime and antisocial behaviour. The force, where required, accurately records crime within incidents of antisocial behaviour.
b.	The force uses primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activity to prevent, deter and tackle crime and antisocial behaviour and keep its communities safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force uses appropriate antisocial behaviour legislation and interventions where needed. The force widely encourages a problem-solving culture and has effective governance, support and systems in place to monitor and evaluate problem-solving activity. The force works with partner organisations to prevent crime and divert young people away from committing crime through early intervention programmes. The force works with partner organisations to reduce the risk of persistent and problem offenders reoffending (including integrated offender management).
c.	The force's neighbourhood policing teams interact with, listen to and respond to its communities to help make them feel safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood policing teams have the capacity and capability to provide a regular, accessible and targeted presence within local communities. The force closely monitors officers and staff who are taken away from their main neighbourhood duties of deterring crime and antisocial behaviour. The force demonstrates ongoing two-way communication tailored to meet the needs and preferences of different communities. It monitors and evaluates how it works with its communities to develop a better understanding of their needs and how to address them.
5. Responding to the public		
a.	The force meets the needs of the public who make contact using a range of communication methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has an effective management structure that makes sure it understands its performance and can make sure the public receives a quality service. The force answers 999 calls in line with the national standards for contact management to keep the public safe. The force answers 101 calls promptly, keeps waiting times to a minimum and makes sure low numbers of callers end the call. The force has processes in place to make sure the public who contact the force using digital platforms receive a high-quality service. The force should make sure it has processes in place to supervise and manage all demand to minimise delays when the public has contacted them using any of the available communication methods.
b.	The force understands risk and vulnerability at the first point of contact and makes sure it gives appropriate advice and guidance to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact. It records an initial structured triage that determines how it will prioritise the call. The force should make sure it gives appropriate and proportionate advice on safeguarding, evidence preservation and crime prevention at the first point of contact.
c.	The force provides an appropriate response to calls for service and manages and prioritises ongoing risk to keep the public safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force attends calls for service quickly which keeps the public safe, and secures and preserves evidence. Responding officers receive information and intelligence to understand the risk and vulnerability of the calls for service they attend, which helps them make appropriate recording and investigative decisions. The force understands ongoing risk using a structured risk assessment process to help the public receive an appropriate response.

6. Investigating crime		
a.	The force secures justice for victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has an effective management structure that provides appropriate governance and oversight of investigations. It understands the importance of maintaining high investigative standards. • The force makes sure crimes are allocated to appropriately skilled officers and staff to achieve an appropriate outcome for victims. • The force consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims, which includes bringing offenders to justice. • The force records crime accurately to make sure it meets the national crime recording standard and victims receive appropriate support.
b.	The force carries out high-quality investigations to achieve appropriate outcomes for victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force consistently carries out thorough and timely investigations that lead to appropriate outcomes for victims. • The force supervises and reviews investigations to make sure they are of a high quality and result in appropriate outcomes for victims. • The force has processes to make sure it promptly deals with outstanding suspects and wanted people, to progress investigations and reduce the risk of harm to the public. • The force monitors use of voluntary attendance, released under investigation and pre-charge bail to make sure they are always used appropriately to safeguard victims and protect the public from harm.
c.	The force provides a quality service to victims of crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force maintains victim confidence by making sure victims receive their entitlements as set out in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.
7. Safeguarding children and adults at risk		
a.	The force understands and addresses the vulnerability and safeguarding concerns it identifies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has an effective governance structure that allows it to understand and address vulnerability and protect children and adults at risk of harm. • The force's compliance with statutory safeguarding processes improves its response to children and adults at risk of harm. • The training that the force provides to personnel involved in safeguarding activity helps them to reduce harm to children and adults at risk of harm. • The force records crimes when it receives reports from partner agencies and victims of domestic abuse, and reports of incidents of rape (N100s), and cancels recorded crimes of rape appropriately.

b.	The force reduces and prevents harm by safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force safeguards children and adults at risk of harm through high-quality assessment, appropriate safeguarding interventions and referrals to support services or processes. • The force works with multi-agency partners to safeguard and reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people through prompt information-sharing and effective joint working arrangements (through the multi-agency safeguarding hub or equivalent processes). • The force applies for and monitors prevention orders and schemes to safeguard vulnerable people and manage the risk that offenders pose. • The force considers all appropriate tactics when working with partner organisations to safeguard vulnerable people and challenge offenders. • This includes during multi-agency risk assessment conference and multi-agency tasking and co-ordination.
8. Managing fraud		
a.	The force understands the scale and impact of fraud in its communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has an effective management structure that creates accountability for understanding and managing the threat of fraud in its communities. • The force has enough capacity and capability to manage fraud in its communities and provide support to victims.
b.	The force provides a quality service to victims of fraud and achieves appropriate outcomes for victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has processes that make sure victims of fraud who contact the force receive an appropriate response. • The force appropriately allocates investigations it receives from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and other sources. Its investigations achieve appropriate outcomes for victims. • The force works with multi-agency partners to safeguard and reduce the risk of harm to victims of fraud that the National Fraud Investigation Bureau and other sources identify.
9. A safe and lawful custody environment		
a.	The force protects the safety and well-being of detainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force's leadership structure and approach to performance management provides robust oversight of custody. • The force promotes fair outcomes for all detainees and is open to effective external scrutiny.
b.	The force protects detainees from neglect and harm by recognising and meeting their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force maintains a safe custody environment and promotes the security, privacy and dignity of detainees. • The force makes sure detention before and after charge is appropriate for children and vulnerable adults and prioritises their needs, well-being and safety.
c.	The force follows the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 codes of practice and College of Policing authorised professional practice and makes sure detainees can exercise their legal rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained custody officers appropriately authorise detention and make sure detainees understand and can exercise their legal rights. • The force carries out reviews of detention as required by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and in the best interests of the detainee to make sure continued detention is necessary.

d.	The force makes sure it assesses, manages and regularly reviews any risk detainees pose to themselves and/or others throughout detention and on release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custody officers assess, manage and review risk throughout detention. • The force makes sure detainees are released or transferred from custody safely and appear at court promptly in person or through video conferencing.
e.	The force makes sure any use of force in custody is lawful, necessary and proportionate, and is subject to robust scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force makes sure only appropriately trained staff use force in custody. • The force makes sure it only uses strip searching when necessary and its use is appropriately authorised and recorded.
f.	The force makes sure detainees have access to a range of appropriately staffed and well-managed healthcare services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders oversee healthcare services to make sure there are enough trained staff to provide appropriate healthcare support in custody. • The force makes sure detainees receive timely assessment and treatment for physical, mental health and substance misuse needs in an environment that promotes dignity and maintains privacy.

HMICFRS Process Flow



From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 10 September 2025 12:43

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: NCPI Reality Testing

Dear both

I wanted to share with you the positive news that following reality testing we have had informal indication from HMICFRS that they are to sign off the two NCPI causes of concern and all but 1 AFI. This is fabulous news and recognition of the substantial progress made in relatively quick time. We will of course keep you updated in relation to plans to notify key stakeholders that I've previously briefed. This needs to be timed carefully to follow formal closure as per [REDACTED] email below.

Kind regards

■

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cleveland Police Central Headquarters | 1 Cliffland Way | Hemlington | TS8 9GL

T: 01642 301215

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X / Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



Policing Cleveland Together



PROTECT
PEOPLE



PROTECT
COMMUNITIES



TACKLE
CRIMINALS



BE THE BEST
WE CAN BE



RESPONSE BY THE PCC TO HMICFRS INSPECTIONS OF CLEVELAND POLICE

INSPECTION DETAILS

Title of Inspection - Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation - A progress report

Date Inspection Published - 24 October 2025

Type of Inspection:

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

Is Cleveland Police quoted in the Report? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

Between 2015 and 2022, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) exposed harrowing failures across public institutions to protect children from organised and group-based child sexual exploitation. Its findings revealed not only the devastating scale of these crimes but also how agencies repeatedly failed to recognise, prevent and respond to them.

In 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected how the police, law enforcement agencies and other public bodies were tackling this challenge. While HMICFRS identified some progress, the Inspectorate found that deep-rooted problems remained. HMICFRS made nine recommendations and identified one area for improvement.

In this report, HMICFRS review progress against those nine recommendations, and issue six new recommendations to make sure group-based child sexual exploitation is consistently identified, properly understood and addressed with urgency.

HMICFRS's 2023 report

In March 2022, the then Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to carry out an inspection into the policing of this especially harmful form of criminality.

HMICFRS published its findings in its 2023 report, 'An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales'.

HMICFRS found that the challenges previously identified in academic literature and reported through public inquiries persisted. These included the lack of a clear definition for group-based child sexual exploitation. This meant that there was no common understanding of the threat. And the use of victim-blaming language during investigations meant that vulnerable children might not be safeguarded promptly enough, or at all, and instead left at risk of exploitation. HMICFRS also found that the police, law enforcement bodies and the Government still didn't

have a full understanding of the scale or nature of these crimes.

Progress since 2023

In January 2025, the then Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to review the progress made since its 2023 report.

Based on HMICFRS's most recent findings in respect of the area for improvement issued in 2023, the Inspectorate consider that police forces have made the necessary improvements. HMICFRS has therefore closed this area for improvement. Four recommendations have either been met in full or are nearing completion in a clear programme of work. One recommendation isn't due for completion until March 2026. However, four recommendations, all of which relate to data, flagging and the IICSA definition of group-based child sexual exploitation, haven't been met and are overdue. In this progress report, HMICFRS makes six new recommendations.

Key findings are detailed below:

- Not all bodies have made enough progress to adopt a common definition of group-based child sexual exploitation
- Police forces who use the Hydrant Programme template develop better strategic assessments of child sexual exploitation
- The National Crime Agency has provided insight into the scale and nature of group-based child sexual exploitation as a national threat
- Despite efforts by many forces to improve how they identify and flag child sexual exploitation cases, a robust national solution is still needed
- The Home Office hasn't yet made progress to collect meaningful police custody data on group-based child sexual exploitation
- The quality of police investigations into group-based child sexual exploitation is improving
- National police training to improve the police response to group-based child sexual exploitation is still being developed, but all forces have invested in Hydrant Programme specialist training
- The police are making efforts to eradicate victim-blaming language
- Forces need to adopt Operation Makesafe consistently to maximise its preventative effects
- The Hydrant Programme has laid a positive foundation to tackle child sexual abuse, but some critical gaps still remain

Recommendations from HMICFRS's 2023 report

In HMICFRS's 2023 report, nine recommendations and one area for improvement were issued. Of these, HMICFRS consider that two recommendations have been completed and three recommendations are in progress. The remaining four aren't yet completed and require further action. HMICFRS has closed the area for improvement.

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.

Status: Incomplete

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.

Status: Incomplete

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.

Status: In progress

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.

Status: Incomplete

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.

Status: Incomplete

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.

Status: In progress

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. And it should use the agreed definition from our recommendation 1.

Status: In progress

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.

Status: Completed

Recommendation 9

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

Status: Completed

Area for improvement

All chief constables should work with their statutory safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure 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 child exploitation disruption toolkit and an Operation Makesafe (a national police initiative to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in the business community) type of approach.

Status: Closed

Recommendations in this report

In this report, HMICFRS make six new recommendations.

Recommendation 1

By 31 March 2026, the Home Office, Department for Education and all police forces and law

enforcement bodies that are yet to do so should adopt the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation. And they should make sure they use this definition in all relevant policies, training products, procedures and guidance.

Recommendation 2

By 31 March 2026, all police forces should fully adopt and use the Hydrant Programme's child sexual exploitation problem profile template as a minimum when preparing their 2025/26 child sexual exploitation problem profiles.

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2026, the Hydrant Programme should develop quality assurance guidance for all police forces so they can accurately and efficiently identify child sexual exploitation and group-based child sexual exploitation in their child protection and abuse investigation data returns and police record management systems.

Recommendation 4

By 31 July 2026, all chief constables should use the Hydrant Programme's guidance so forces can efficiently and accurately identify child sexual exploitation and group-based child sexual exploitation in their police record management systems.

Recommendation 5

By 31 December 2026, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Hydrant Programme and the Home Office should work together to create and implement a robust and reliable method of identifying and collecting all child sexual exploitation data, including group-based child sexual exploitation data, in police record management systems.

Recommendation 6

By 31 July 2026, all police forces should devise a strategy to implement Operation Makesafe consistently and include this in their child sexual exploitation data returns to the Hydrant Programme. This strategy should include the adoption and use of the rebranded Operation Makesafe police and partnership marketing materials.

A copy of the full report can be accessed here: [Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation – a progress report](#)

FORCE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Force is in a good position nationally regarding the adoption of the IICSA definition and the work it conducts with Hydrant. The Force has made good progress with the actions from the original publication; of the 4 recommendations and 1 AFI issued all have been completed and signed off except for Recommendation 2; for which an update has been provided below.

The Force fully accepts its role in providing protection and safeguarding for the most vulnerable in Cleveland's communities. The Force works closely with its safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively.

The Force has adopted a standard process to ensure that any recommendations resulting from local and national inspection activity are promptly considered and allocated for action. Facilitated plenary sessions are held upon receipt of all new inspection reports and any identified improvement activity is incorporated into the relevant PEEL Assessment Framework (PAF) improvement plan. In line with this process, the 4 recommendations for forces made within this report have been considered at the Force Governance of Audit and Inspection (GAIN) Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, and a Chief Officer lead and delivery lead have been assigned to both identify and implement any improvement activity required.

A plenary session has taken place to discuss the actions, detail the Force's current position, identify what if any activity is required to satisfy the action and to collate evidence that would support the closure of the action.

Initial results of the discussions are detailed below:

Recommendation 1; The Force has already adopted the IICSA definition of 'organised network'. And used the definition in the latest Group Based CSE profile. The Force will perform a review of relevant policies and training packages to determine if the definition should be included or amended if any previous definitions are quoted.

Recommendation 2; The Force has committed to updating the CSE profile every two years in line with current resourcing capacity. (last completed 2024). The Hydrant template was used in the production of the last profile and will be used going forward. The Force goes above and beyond the content on the Hydrant template to ensure the profile includes enough information to match requirements locally.

Recommendation 4; This action cannot be progressed until the Hydrant Programme develop the guidance as detailed in recommendation 3.

Recommendation 6; The Force is in a strong position nationally, with Operation Makesafe fully embedded. As part of Operation Makesafe, the Force works in partnership with Barnardo's and other networks. The Force delivers bespoke training to the hotel sector on child sexual exploitation and regular meetings are held with the hotel sector to ensure their continued support. The Force submits a quarterly return to Hydrant on the template they provide. Branded materials are available to officers and staff on the Force SharePoint system.

Recommendation 2 (from original report): When this recommendation was initially issued the Force introduced processes to ensure CSE cases were flagged on Force systems; the Force has worked with the National Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation (CSAE) taskforce to gain assurance relating to data and levels of flagging. They have reviewed the Force's cases and found its data to be reasonable and in line with its peer groups. This action is linked to recommendation 4 in the new report awaiting action by Hydrant Programme to produce definitive guidance for all forces to follow, as such the Force will look to close this action, as superseded, and follow the new guidance once it has been produced.

Ongoing progress will be tracked through the relevant Force delivery group and overseen by the GAIN Board until sufficient evidence is provided that the recommendations have been met.

PCC RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

Comment by the PCC:

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) welcomes the encouraging progress made in responding to HMICFRS's 2023 recommendations. However, it is acknowledged that significant challenges remain and therefore the PCC fully endorses the six new recommendations.

The PCC acknowledges police and partners have a crucial role to play in protecting and safeguarding the most vulnerable people in Cleveland's communities, especially children, to prevent them being exposed to exploitation and harm. Where young people are identified as 'at-risk' of criminality, the PCC understands agencies must work quickly to consider appropriate and meaningful interventions to prevent escalating behaviour.

The PCC's Police and Crime Plan 2024-29 recognises that sadly, young people can be vulnerable and at risk of becoming involved in criminality. The PCC pledges to work with

organisations to educate teachers, professionals and parents about the signs of criminal and sexual exploitation of children - and ensure they know how to reach out for support if they think a young person may be at risk. The plan highlights that education is key to make sure young people understand the dangers and risks they may face. The PCC wants to see better educational provision for young people on topics such as knife crime, hate crime, exploitation, healthy relationships and antisocial behaviour.

At the Scrutiny Meeting held on 1 April 2025, the topic of Child Protection and Child Exploitation was considered. During this session, the PCC was looking to:

- seek assurance that the Force is proactive in protecting and safeguarding children and preventing them being exposed to exploitation and harm; and
- provide reassurance to the public that the Force is making the necessary improvements at pace.

At the meeting, the PCC requested an update on the progress the Force had made with implementing the recommendations outlined in HMICFRS's 2023 report - 'An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales'. In response, the following evidence was provided:

- The Force is making good progress with implementing the recommendations outlined in the report.
- The Force has recently submitted a progress update to HMICFRS.
- The Force is currently developing a problem profiles for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The CSE profile will include an assessment of the nature and extent of group-based child sexual exploitation.
- The Force has received the Hydrant Programme's continuing professional development offer. The Force takes part in peer reviews, peer support, debriefs and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- The Force continues to take effective steps to eradicate victim-blaming language and regular audits of case files are undertaken.
- The Force continues to work with statutory safeguarding partners to review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively.
- The Force recognises the importance of outreach work to improve intelligence and target resources effectively.
- The Force is reviewing its Niche operational platform to ensure group-based child sexual exploitation can be identified.

The PCC was partly assured by the evidence submitted by the Force. The PCC commended the commitment and dedication of the Force in making immediate and ongoing improvements to safeguard children at risk. The PCC will continue to monitor performance in this area.

The PCC will revisit the topic of Child Protection and Child Exploitation at a forthcoming Scrutiny Meeting in 2026. During this session, the Force will present performance data demonstrating the impact of its work in this area. Furthermore, the Force will be required to provide evidence of progress made in response to the recommendations issued in 2023, as well as the six further recommendations detailed in the subsequent progress report.

For Office Use Only

Response forwarded to Home Office

Response published on PCC website