

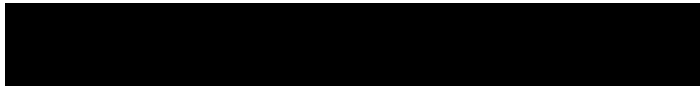
Public Document Pack



04 March 2022

To: Members of the Public Accountability Board

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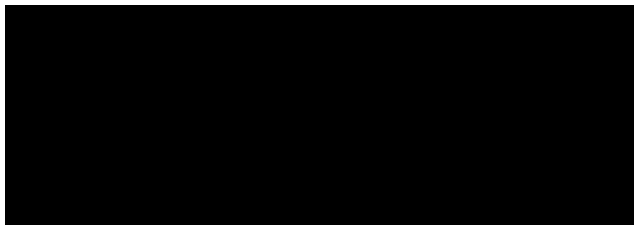


Dear Colleague

Public Accountability Board – Supplementary Agenda

Please find enclosed a Supplemental Agenda Pack for the Public Accountability Board on **Wednesday 9th March 2022** at **3.00 pm** via MS Teams.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Buttery
Chief Executive and Solicitor

Enc.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH 2022

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

DATE 09 MARCH 2022

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN PRIORITIES

THEME: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

REPORT OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been produced following a request from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to provide information around how South Yorkshire Police responds to Child Sexual Exploitation.

This report aims to answer a number of questions raised by the PCC and provide re-assurance that the ongoing response by SYP supports the OPCC Safer Streets Plan 2022 – 2025 and the PCC's overarching aim of South Yorkshire being a safe place in which to live, learn and work.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S) AND / OR DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 2.1 The force recommends that the PCC considers the contents of this report.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) that continues to blight communities and ruin childhoods. Many victims do not disclose abuse at the time exploitation is occurring and some victims/survivors never feel able to disclose, meaning children and those turning in to adults will continue to suffer in silence, whilst perpetrators may remain free to continue offending.
- 3.2 With the advancement in technology and the widespread internet access now available, this has created more opportunity for people who pose a sexual risk to children to offend from the relative safety of their own homes. Furthermore, victims will be harder to identify, and this will result in a significant amount of abuse going un-reported. This creates challenges for police and partners in identifying this type of offending and gaining information/intelligence as to who the victims and perpetrators are.
- 3.3 Understanding of CSE has evolved since the exposure of the 'grooming gangs' that were identified over the last decade and involves other forms of offending with victims and perpetrators coming from all backgrounds. The most typical types of CSE offending are believed to take the following forms:

- Organised/Network
- Gang Associated
- Peer on Peer
- Older 'Boyfriend/Girlfriend'
- Online Grooming
- Inappropriate Relationship

3.5 All children are vulnerable to exploitation, however due to additional vulnerabilities, some children are more so than others. It is essential therefore that police and partners have a good knowledge and awareness of vulnerability, understand how the trauma suffered by victims may impact on how they engage with services and must show 'professional curiosity' when engaging with potential victims. SYP place victim care as one of the highest priorities. The force continues to strive for improvement in this area and is constantly looking to adapt to the needs of victims so to enable the highest quality of service to every single victim.

3.6 To enhance victim care, SYP are developing a trauma informed approach to victims, placing trauma at the centre of how we deliver a compassionate and engaged service through six key principles:

- Safety – keeping and supporting victims to feel safe
- Trust & Transparency – being clear and transparent with victims to build their trust
- Peer Support – providing victims with access to peers who are best placed to support them through shared similar experiences
- Collaboration – continue working with relevant partners to support the victim
- Empowerment – ensuring the victim is allowed to recover and move on in their life
- Humility & Responsiveness – ensuring we listen and act on feedback when we make mistakes

GOVERNANCE

3.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) continues to be a high priority for SYP and remains a key element on the force's Plan on a Page and Control Strategy, due to the significant impact offending has on vulnerable victims.

3.8 SYP has appointed leads for CSE:

- Executive Lead – ACC Sarah Poolman
- Strategic Lead – Chief Supt Shelley Hemsley
- Thematic Lead – T/DCI Rob Platts

3.9 SYP has invested in a dedicated CSE Analyst who produces an annual Strategic Intelligence Profile, as well as updates for the CSE element of the Strategic Intelligence Assessment. CSE also features within the Force Intelligence Requirement.

3.10 SYP Governance is supported by a dedicated CSE Policy (Pi 10.33), a Child Abuse and Exploitation Strategy 2021 – 2023 and a CSE Delivery Plan. These

provide direction and policy as to how Districts and Officers/staff should respond to reports.

- 3.11 Across the force, CSE is supported through a monthly tactical Meeting, chaired by the CSE Force Thematic Lead – T/DCI Rob Platts. This links in to the Monthly PVP Performance meeting, chaired by Det Supt Pete Thorp – Head of PVP Performance and Governance. Operating above this is the Vulnerability Theme Leads Meeting, chaired by ACC Poolman, which then links to the Force Performance Day, chaired by DCC Tim Forber. This provides the Force with a senior level of oversight from local delivery of CSE to forcewide governance.
- 3.12 Externally, both from a national and regional perspective SYP are engaged in governance structure that not only holds the force to account, but also provides a platform for shared learning. These include:
- National Group Based CSE Offending Group
 - National Child Sexual Abuse Prevent/Pursue Boards
 - Regional CSEA Threat Reduction Group
 - Regional Joint Vulnerability and Children & Young Persons Meeting

OVERVIEW

Crimes

- 3.13 There were a total of 409 CSE crimes (keyworded) recorded in 2021. This includes Stovewood (78). This is a reduction of 85 compared to 2020 (494 – Figure taken from 2021 Strategic Intelligence Profile). Since 2013, there has been a year-on-year increase in recorded crimes with a peak in 2018. Since then, however, the numbers have fluctuated, with a reduction in 2019, before a rise in 2020 and then a reduction in 2021. It is unknown what the true extent of the Covid pandemic will be yet, but there will always be some natural fluctuation that is seen in all aspects of monitoring.
- 3.14 From the 409 crimes reported in 2021, 199 of these were committed during the same month as being reported. This leaves 210 reports that would be termed historic or non-recent reports. This highlights that historic reporting still makes up a significant amount of all crimes reported and shows the continuing difficulties faced with victims who don't want to report crimes.
- 3.15 From the 199 crimes committed and reported in 2021, 56% (106 crimes) had an online element. This is down from 2020, where 59% of the 216 committed and reported had an online element (127 crimes). This reduction goes against the national average for reported crimes with an online element, which is around 70%, however it still highlights the challenges Police and Partners face in identifying this. With the nature of this offending, this will also be a crime type that is under reported, especially with the advances in technology and the fact that younger children are now having access to more hi-tec internet enabled

devices. A possible explanation to this could be that officers/staff haven't recorded the online indicator properly. Further analysis would be required to fully establish the position; however SYP has planned audits which will identify issues of this nature.

- 3.16 Whilst online offending may be the start of an exploitation cycle, there is evidence that shows the longer this takes place, the more likely it will move to physical contact. SYP has a dedicated Internet Sex Offenders Team (ISOT) which conducts activity to identify and target offenders, working with other agencies in doing so. SYP is also represented in the regional Op Reveal Team, which uses covert tactics to identify and target offenders, gathering intelligence and evidence.

Outcomes

- 3.17 Often due to difficulties with victim engagement, challenges can be encountered in obtaining successful prosecutions for CSE related offences. Victims, due to the grooming process, fear, or a genuine belief that they are in a loving relationship, can be reluctant to disclose offences when they are occurring. Some victims report offences a period of time later, when they realise they have been subjected to exploitation, whilst others never feel able to report the abuse they suffered. This aspect is understood to be one of the reasons why historic reporting remains so high. To tackle this, Police and partners must make determined efforts to build up the trust and confidence with victims, without prejudicing any subsequent attempts for prosecution. Intelligence development and conducting disruption activity relating to offenders and locations remains an essential avenue for doing everything possible to safeguard victims, prevent offences occurring and relentlessly pursue perpetrators. Evidence led prosecutions are considered at every opportunity, however these can be difficult to obtain, when often with CSE offending the main piece of evidence is from victim disclosure.
- 3.18 SYP continues to promote positive outcomes through successful prosecutions and convictions. This is proven to give victims and survivors more confidence to report their own abuse. In addition to this, SYP conduct regular victim surveys and receive national updates about how they can improve engagement with victims/survivors. Training and CPD for officers and staff ensure knowledge and awareness and SYP maintains close working relationships with partners to tackle this together. Whilst continual improvement is sought to improve the overall response to CSE, including outcomes, challenges still exist especially with regards to victim engagement for those who are actually going through the exploitation.

- 3.19 In 2021 out of the 336 outcomes applied, there were 30 that resulted in a charge/summons and 1 in a caution (alternative offence). This shows clearly the challenges that exist in SYP and elsewhere in obtaining positive outcomes.

Recording Ethnicity

- 3.20 SYP has robust mechanisms in place for recording ethnicities for both victims and suspects named on CSE investigations. Issues were identified previously, however for 2021, all crimes that were missing recorded ethnicity have been identified and updated, leaving only a small number where it is not possible to know the ethnicity due to the limited information obtained. To ensure continual improvement in this area, SYP now conduct monthly audits to specifically review ethnicities for both suspects and victims in CSE keyworded offences in addition to key data quality markers. Any identified deficiencies are returned to Districts for prompt remedy and informs ongoing training plans to ensure we continually learn and improve.

Intelligence

- 3.21 In 2021, there were a total of 561 intelligence reports submitted that related to CSE. This is an increase of 48 from the 513 that were submitted in 2020. There has been a significant amount of work conducted across the districts with regards to promoting the submission of intelligence. The CSE Force Thematic lead includes this within the CSE training and it is promoted within District Supervisor Away days, Street Skills training sessions and through a recent Wednesday Webinar. The identified intelligence gaps are highlighted within the CSE Strategic Intelligence Profile and CSE features with the Force Intelligence Requirement. The increase in 2021 from 2020 shows that officers/staff remain aware of the requirement to submit intelligence in this priority area.
- 3.22 Each District has in place a partnership third party reporting form so that partners can submit CSE intelligence directly in to the respective Local Intelligence Cell. The submission of intelligence by this route is actively encouraged during partnership meetings.
- 3.23 Each District LIC has an appointed CSE SPOC. They are responsible for monitoring all CSE intelligence and bringing this to the CETG (Child Exploitation Tasking Group), or District THRIVE, where intelligence is discussed and actioned for development. The CSE SPOC is also responsible for ensuring the District CSE Briefing page is maintained and updated as appropriate.
- 3.24 SYP has an online reporting portal on its CSE webpage. This has a knowledge bank attached to it containing information about CSE and allows members of the public to report incidents and pass information directly to the Police. Crimestoppers and the NSPCC are also organisations which allow for the

reporting of CSE information. Both organisations work closely with Police and other law enforcement agencies and share information on a regular basis.

- 3.25 At this time SYP does not have any mapped OCGs with a primary offending of CSE. There are however a small number of individuals who are mapped OCG nominals who have a risk marker for CSE. Analytical work completed in 2021 by the Regional CSE/A Threat Reduction Group analyst identified these individuals and a report was received in Force. This was circulated to the respective District CSE SPOCs with a view to Districts developing opportunities around intelligence gathering and disruption. Organised criminality with regards to CSE has been identified as an intelligence gap and is highlighted on the CSE Strategic Intelligence Profile and Force Intelligence Requirement.
- 3.26 All four Districts have CSE/CCE briefing pages on Connect. These contain information primarily about children at risk of CSE/CCE with appropriate development/intelligence collection plans included as required. The briefing pages are maintained by the District Local Intelligence Cell CSE/CCE SPOCs and are utilised by all departments across the respective District when briefing their staff.

VICTIM CARE

- 3.27 SYP continue to adopt a victim focussed approach with the victim being placed at the centre of everything we do. The trauma informed approach that is being developed will enhance the victim experience further and should provide victims with the additional compassion that supports them through the investigation and subsequent criminal justice system.
- 3.28 SYP have access to ISVA and CHISVA provision ensuring victims of all ages and backgrounds are supported across all four Districts.
- 3.29 SYP and our partners have embedded and tested multi-agency processes for any child identified as being subjected to or at risk of exploitation, as per 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. This can take the form of a multi-agency Section 47 (child at risk if significant harm) Strategy meeting, Child Protection Conference or referral to MACE – Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting. All four Local Authorities have Child Exploitation Teams which work closely with Police to identify, safeguard and support victims. South Yorkshire has a dedicated children's SARC based within the Sheffield Children's Hospital, which provides a dedicated quality provision for all child victims of a sexual, violence or neglect offence.

MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation)

- 3.30 The primary mechanism for multi-agency oversight on cases involving Child Exploitation is the MACE process. This is a national framework and is embedded across all four Districts of South Yorkshire. All Districts hold a weekly MACE which is well attended by multi-agency professionals, including Education, Health, Social Care, Police, Probation, Youth Crime Prevention, Youth Offending Services and Psychological services. Children most at risk of exploitation are referred into the MACE process, which includes children subjected to both CSE and/or CCE. Action relating to safeguarding, diversion, prevention, and additional support are outcomes from MACE, which is a victim focussed process.

Missing

- 3.31 Occurrences of children going missing and sexual/criminal exploitation are known to be intrinsically linked. Children will go missing for a reason and it is important to understand why this is and whether this is due to ongoing exploitation. SYP have invested a significant amount of effort in to improving the response to missing episodes. In October 2021, the Force rolled out a new missing persons system – Compact. This allows the Force to conduct detailed analysis on missing people including the use of adding flags/tags to both people and locations.
- 3.32 To compliment the roll out of Compact, SYP ensured all officers/staff received additional training, this included inputs on recognising and assessing risk, conducting quality reviews, and utilising trigger plans and return to home interviews effectively.
- 3.33 All four Districts/partnerships are now signed up to using the Philomena Protocol when responding to missing children. This provides an evidence-based response to missing episodes, which creates opportunities for officers to make directed enquiries to enhance the prospect of locating the missing child promptly.
- 3.34 The force has recently implemented a force wide template for completing trigger plans. This has ensured a consistency across the Force in what is a key aspect of responding to missing incidents. Like the Philomena Protocol, an effective trigger plan can provide responding officers with a directed approach to increase the prospect of locating the missing child promptly.

SUSPECT MANAGEMENT

- 3.35 SYP take a positive approach when dealing with all individuals suspected of committing CSE-related offences. All Districts have processes in place to identify suspects through intelligence development and conduct activity to

relentlessly pursue offenders, taking all opportunities to prosecute and/or disrupt their unlawful activities.

Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN)

- 3.36 Child Abduction Warning Notices are intended as a disruption tool to prevent inappropriate contact by adults with children who may be at risk of harm because of their relationship. When used appropriately they have been proven to be an effective measure to prevent further contact.
- 3.37 The use of CAWN's has been promoted across the Force during 2021 and this is continuing in to 2022. A new guidance document has been created and published, and a task has now been added to Compact so to ensure Officers consider a CAWN during every missing from home episode, where appropriate.
- 3.38 During the course of 2021 a total of 90 CAWN's were recorded as being issued, this the same figure as from 2020.

SYP RESPONSE

District Structures

- 3.39 Sheffield and Rotherham Districts currently have a dedicated CSE/CE Team based within a partnership setting. The teams are responsible for the investigation of all CSE crimes as well as intelligence development opportunities. This includes building trust and confidence with victims, considering evidence led prosecutions and conducting disruption activity, including the pro-active targeting of offenders. With the emergence of CCE/County Lines, both teams are responsible for picking up the safeguarding for victims that have been referred through the NRM. The team provides representation at the weekly MACE meetings.
- 3.40 Barnsley and Doncaster Districts currently do not have a dedicated CSE/CE team, but do have a CSE/CCE SPOC, an appointed officer who attends the weekly MACE meetings and picks up all engagement with partners regarding CSE/CCE. The responsibility for the investigation of CSE crimes falls to the district PVP teams. Disruption activity is conducted by Fortify Teams and neighbourhood resources and is managed through the Child Exploitation Tactical Group or equivalent and the District THRIVE (Threat Harm and Risk) process.

PVP Review

- 3.41 SYP is currently undergoing a force wide PVP review, which is considering all aspects of PVP delivery. This is being led by Det Supt Peter Thorp (PVP

Performance and Governance) and facilitated by our Business Change Team. Included within this review is the Force response to child exploitation, including planning around the future structures and resources for each district.

Child Exploitation Tactical Group (CETG)

- 3.42 Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster Districts all have a CETG in place. Rotherham takes place weekly, whilst Sheffield and Doncaster are bi-weekly. The CETG is an intelligence led meeting where Police and partners attend to review all new and ongoing intelligence submissions, with a view to identifying and understanding the risks and concerns, along with any safeguarding, evidential or disruption opportunities. Information is shared and actions and plans are identified to mitigate/eliminate risks or create further intelligence development avenues. Missing children deemed to be at risk of exploitation are also considered during this process. Partners who attend the CETG include – Police, Children’s Social Care, Health, Youth Offending Services, Barnardo’s (Rotherham only), Local Authority CSE Teams, Housing, Licensing, ASB Officers.
- 3.43 Whilst Barnsley don’t have a CETG, they have a daily partnership exploitation meeting, where a review of all intelligence, crimes, referrals, and relevant missing children in the proceeding 24 hours takes place. Actions are identified and high-risk cases are referred to the monthly Multiple Vulnerabilities and Complex Abuse (MVCA) meeting. Here safeguarding strategies are developed and accountability to address concerns are decided. Children who are identified as high risk from MACE are also discussed.
- 3.44 All four Districts have a monthly Child Exploitation Subgroup Meeting, which falls out of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships. In Rotherham this is known as a Child Exploitation Delivery Group. Here strategic decisions are taken with regards to the delivery of child exploitation across the partnership, which are reported back to the LSCPb for sign off.

Training

- 3.45 CSE training is embedded within Student Officer training. This is delivered online by the University and includes the following:
- Definition
 - SYP Policy in full
 - Disruption toolkit
 - Film where a survivor of CSE speaks about her experiences.
 - Appropriate language toolkit
 - Spot the Signs
 - Panorama – Stolen Childhoods - Film looking at what grooming is

- Models of Exploitation and dealing with children at risk of CSE
 - Partners and referrals (Inc. NRM)
 - Instruction to access College of Policing APP
 - A paper feed exercise around a MISPER investigation where the MISPER is at high risk of CSE
- 3.46 Training around CSE continues to be delivered to officers and staff around the force. Recent examples include District Supervisor Away Days; Local Referral Unit CPD; Child Matters Training; Op Hydrant CPD.

Further CPD events are to be planned through the course of 2022 in support to our response to the Linden report.

Op Makesafe

- 3.47 Op Makesafe is the national response to raising awareness of child sexual and criminal exploitation to the hotel and leisure industry. It focuses on ensuring that people working within these sectors are aware of the warning signs of CSE/CCE and know to how and when to report concerns to Police. SYP has an Op Makesafe SPOC and is a prominent member of the Op Makesafe National Working Group.
- 3.48 Whilst Op Makesafe has existed for several years, there is currently a national plan being developed. The first part of this plan is for a re-invigorated training package to be prepared, which is to be rolled out initially to the large chain hotels, before moving to the lesser-known ones. SYP are a signed-up member to this plan and will be implementing this once completed, however in the meantime will continue to conduct pro-active Op Makesafe activity.
- 3.49 All Districts have plans in place to partake in Op Makesafe activity during 2022. Rotherham District have already done so recent, conducting a test purchase operation at local hotels to test compliance and knowledge³ of the process.

Vulnerability Awareness Campaign

- 3.50 SYP is currently in the planning stage for a new vulnerability awareness campaign, which will focus on all forms of vulnerability including CSE. Led by the Media Team, there will be an internal and external element of this which will have the primary aim of continuing to raise awareness for all forms of exploitation, whilst providing the public and professionals with the right information for them to become more confident in identifying and reporting concerns or incidents to the Police/Partnership. Spotting the signs, using professional curiosity and effectively responding to all reports of CSE will be the focus of the internal campaign, as well as promoting the submission of intelligence for Police and partners.

- 3.51 The SYP Media Team constantly review outcomes, including positive prosecutions with a view to promoting the excellent work conducted by the organisation. Not only does this send out a positive message about what work is being done, but it is shown that this gives confidence to both victims and survivors to engage with Police and report any abuse or exploitation that has occurred.

CHALLENGES

- 3.52 Barnsley and Doncaster Districts currently have no dedicated CSE or Child Exploitation team, other than a single District SPOC. This limits the capacity to conduct pro-active and disruption work in the wider targeting of offenders. The ongoing PVP Review includes the force response to child exploitation and will include a detailed review of the structures and resources at each District.
- 3.53 The application of CSE keywords continues to be a challenge. This is a national issue, which is mostly due to the subjective nature of the CSE definition. Nationally the NPCC Group Based CSE Offending Group is looking at this issue with a view to producing guidance at a point in the future. In the meantime, audits are taking place along with training delivered by the Force Thematic Lead to reduce the impact of this issue.
- 3.54 Online offending continues to present challenges to Police and Partners. Due to the nature of offending, in that it mostly takes place behind closed bedroom doors and out of the sight of parents/carers, this will inevitably be vastly under reported. Online offending is an intelligence gap for SYP and requires officers to be professionally curious when engaging with children. This is a national issue, and the Home Office are fully aware of the challenges. Legislation around tech companies is currently being reviewed to place a burden on them to reduce this occurring.
- 3.55 The securing of orders (Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs)) continues to be a challenge. Due to the relatively low prosecution rates for CSE offenders, this reduces the prospect of obtaining SHPOs on conviction. Whilst SROs have been obtained, these are relatively low in number, primarily due to the high threshold required for applications to succeed. This is a national issue, not just bespoke to SYP.
- 3.56 Following the recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), forces are being asked to collect data on all known or suspected CSE cases involving groups or networks. This creates a challenge for all forces including SYP, as we currently don't have a search facility or keyword that will easily capture this data on our current system. SYP's Strategic Delivery Unit are currently reviewing systems to identify a resolution to this, which is also compounded by the ongoing CSE keyword issue as mentioned, due to the subjective nature of the CSE definition.

4 FUTURE DIRECTION / DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 SYP is committed to do everything possible in conjunction with our partners to tackle CSE offending, to identify emerging issues as they arise and to continue to learn and improve our response so that children are safeguarded.

5 EXCEPTION REPORTING

NONE

Chief Officer Lead: Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Poolman

Report Author: T/Det Chief Inspector Rob Platts

END