



To: The Home Secretary
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire and Rescue Services

25th May 2023

Dear Home Secretary and HMICFRS

Response from Dr Alan Billings, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire to the HMICFRS Report: An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

I wholeheartedly welcome the findings of this National Thematic Inspection on such a significant and growing area of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

It is encouraging that Inspectors have found there to be a clear commitment from national leaders in law enforcement bodies to tackle the growing problem of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. I am pleased also that it has been found that existing governance structures at a national level provide a foundation for good oversight and improvement.

Locally, my Police and Crime Plan has specific areas of focus for South Yorkshire Police (SYP) in this area. This includes tackling child sexual exploitation, the wider exploitation of adults and children and cybercrime, including asking SYP to focus their efforts on the online exploitation of adults and children.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remains a specific area of focus for me, and one that is prioritised by SYP. I was first elected as PCC for South Yorkshire in the aftermath of the report by Professor Alexis Jay (the Jay Report) into the failure of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and SYP to investigate thoroughly allegations of CSE in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.

Since then, the police approach to CSE nationally has changed significantly. And other forces have looked to SYP who have led the way in improved practices.

South Yorkshire Police devotes significant attention to the changing nature of CSE and has seen a substantial increase in CSE offences taking place online. This focused attention enables SYP to continue to develop the capacity and capability to deal with new forms of offending. I routinely ask for assurance and formal reports to my Public Accountability Board throughout the year at both a district and force level in respect of CSE including online exploitation.

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The key findings and associated recommendations detailed in HMICFRS's report will support greatly SYP's continued focus and determination to continually improve in this area with the aim of making sure children and families in South Yorkshire are always robustly safeguarded and supported effectively.

The recommendations for all Chief Constables detailed in the report have been accepted by the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police and as PCC I have clear oversight of the implementation of these recommendations and updates from lead police officers to whom each of the recommendations have been allocated for progression.

There are two recommendations for all PCCs in the report and I would like to provide assurance that these are being progressed in line with the deadlines set for implementation of July and October this year.

All good wishes



Dr Alan Billings
South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner