



South Yorkshire Police's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation

Findings of an inspection commissioned by the
Police and Crime Commissioner

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Executive summary

In August 2013, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for South Yorkshire Police commissioned¹ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to provide:

- an independent assessment of the effectiveness and resilience of the current arrangements in place within South Yorkshire Police to protect children from sexual exploitation; and
- recommendations for improvement.

Full terms of reference are attached at Annex A.

Fieldwork was conducted in late September and early October 2013. The inspection methodology is set out at Annex B.

Principal findings

Strengths

The PCC and Chief Constable have stated that the protection of children from sexual exploitation is a top priority for the force. To underline this focus, in early 2013 the PCC decided to increase the number of posts dedicated to tackling this kind of offending; as a result, there are now ten more officers working in this area.² This shows a clear commitment to enhancing the force's response to the sexual exploitation of children.

In addition, the inspection found all the officers and staff working in child protection to be deeply committed to their work. They were conscientious, enthusiastic, and focused upon achieving good outcomes for the children with whom they work.

The force and the PCC have also made considerable efforts to improve South Yorkshire Police's response to victims and potential victims of child sexual exploitation. For instance, they have:

- improved their engagement with other agencies and organisations which have responsibilities in relation to child protection (such as local authorities, child social care and education services, and third-sector organisations such as Barnardo's);
- developed strategies with these partners aimed at preventing children from becoming victims of child sexual exploitation; protecting children at risk of child

¹ Police and crime commissioners can commission HMIC to undertake inspections under section 54(2BA), Police Act 1996.

² The number of officers increased from 11 to 21.

- sexual exploitation; and supporting children in all situations (although these strategies are at varying stages of maturity); and
- created a comprehensive plan to assist in developing the way the force responds to cases of child sexual exploitation, with progress made in many areas of work as a result.

A number of force operations have led to prosecutions and convictions for child sexual exploitation. There are further court cases due in early 2014, which have resulted from operations conducted across the force. Investigations (using staff both from the districts, and from the force's major investigation teams) continue to identify historical cases of child sexual exploitation.

Areas for improvement

Overall, however, HMIC found that these efforts to improve the force's response to child sexual exploitation have had mixed success.

In particular, although staff and officers were aware that tackling child sexual exploitation was a stated force priority, this has not consistently been translated into operational activity on the ground at a local (district) level:³

- many of the staff interviewed for this inspection felt that the emphasis from senior and middle local managers was still more focused on dealing with offences such as burglary and vehicle crime, rather than child sexual exploitation (and both the notices displayed in police stations, and some of the documentation reviewed for this inspection support this perception);
- at a force level, the processes for gathering and analysing intelligence clearly support the major child sexual exploitation investigations, and force units which two years ago would not have contemplated dealing with these kinds of cases are now managing several. However, local resources – including intelligence teams – were not fully supporting child sexual exploitation investigations; and
- staffing structures, resources and the approach to responding to child sexual exploitation have developed independently across the four districts, and vary significantly as a result. This makes it difficult to implement in a consistent way the actions detailed in the force plan to improve the response to this kind of offending.

HMIC therefore recommends that as a matter of urgency the force must put the PCC's strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.

In addition, South Yorkshire Police now must audit its response to child sexual exploitation and make sure that it has carried out this evaluation in accordance with the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan.⁴ It must assess whether the changes it is making are having the desired effect (i.e. of improving outcomes for

³ South Yorkshire Police is divided into four territorial districts, each coterminous with a local authority: Sheffield City; Rotherham Metropolitan Borough; Doncaster Metropolitan Borough; and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough.

⁴ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012.

children). The force proposed to do so in the summer of 2013; however, at the time of the inspection, the audit had still not been conducted. This means the force is unable to evaluate whether its plans in this area are on track.

In particular, HMIC is concerned that the force is not able to evaluate the quality of its protective work. HMIC's inspectors reviewed a small sample of such cases, and raised concerns with local managers that in some instances investigations led to prosecutions, but there was no record in the case file of the level of support and intervention provided by police and partners to the victim. This makes it impossible for the force to know whether the victim received the best possible service.

HMIC also found that many staff in public protection and children safeguarding specialist units were working in crowded offices, were poorly equipped, and found it difficult to manage their workloads. This situation is adversely disproportionate to the importance the PCC and Chief Constable have placed on this area of policing.

Conclusion

South Yorkshire Police has made considerable efforts to improve its child sexual exploitation response. However, HMIC considers that the force-level focus and commitment to this is not truly and consistently replicated in all districts. While there are pockets of good and effective practice (most notably in Sheffield), the approach taken to tackling this kind of offending varies significantly across the force's four districts.

This situation must not be allowed to continue. It is unarguably of paramount importance that all children in South Yorkshire receive the same high levels of protection, irrespective of the policing districts in which they live.

HMIC has therefore made a number of recommendations (see p.34), and proposes to revisit South Yorkshire Police in spring 2014 to assess the progress and improvements made by the force.

About this inspection

In August 2013, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for South Yorkshire Police commissioned⁵ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to provide:

- an independent assessment of the effectiveness and resilience of the current arrangements in place within South Yorkshire Police to protect children from sexual exploitation; and
- recommendations for improvement.

Fieldwork was conducted in late September and early October 2013. The inspection methodology is set out at Annex B.

In this report, inspection findings are organised under the headings contained in the terms of reference (which are attached at Annex A):

- leadership;
- strategies;
- management;
- training;
- structures;
- processes;
- intelligence gathering;
- innovation;
- benchmarking;
- compliance with national guidance; and
- the robustness of partnership working arrangements.

⁵ Police and crime commissioners can commission HMIC to undertake inspections under section 54(2BA), Police Act 1996.

Background and context

The police role in child protection

The police, working with partner agencies such as local authority child social care teams (CSCs), the health service and local authority education departments, have a responsibility to protect children from harm. The Children Act 1989 and guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children⁶ stipulate how this should happen, and what each statutory agency should do to meet this requirement.

In order to ensure that agencies co-operate to keep children safe and look after their welfare, each local authority is required by section 13 of the Children Act 2004 to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This board has senior representatives from all agencies (including the police). It is used to coordinate activity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area, and to ensure the effectiveness of what each of the agencies is doing for those purposes (section 14 of the Children Act 2004).

All officers and members of police staff should understand their duty to protect children as they go about their day-to-day work. It is essential that all officers are able to recognise the signs that indicate a child or children are at risk of harm, and then act to make them safe.

Section 17 cases

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a general duty on each local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its area who are believed to be 'in need' (as set out in the Children Act 1989 – see Annex C). Police may find children who are 'in need' when they attend incidents. This section of the Act also requires forces to refer these cases to the local authority.

Section 47 cases

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 details the duty placed upon agencies, including the local authority and the police, to make enquiries to safeguard and secure the welfare of any child within their area who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Multi-agency safeguarding hubs

In order to deal with cases of child protection which are brought to the attention of the police, forces have specialist teams who deal specifically with referrals about children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

⁶ *Working Together To Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. Department for Education, 2013.

The teams work very closely with partner agencies such as the local authority, the probation service and the health service, often sharing offices. These joint or multi-agency teams are often called multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). Staff are able to share information easily within these teams. This is essential in the successful protection of children from harm.

When a section 47 case has been identified, staff from agencies which may hold information about the child or children meet to discuss the case and share the information. This meeting is called a strategy discussion. Decisions about the best way in which to safeguard the child or children are made at this meeting, and must be recorded. Any information which is discovered subsequently must also be shared. This means those actively involved with protecting the child from harm should be in possession of the most complete information available.

Some section 47 cases require further police investigation, and these may be referred to another specialist team which deal specifically with investigations into allegations of crimes against child victims. Again, these teams often work with statutory partners such as local authority child social care departments.

Child protection in South Yorkshire Police

South Yorkshire Police is divided into four territorial districts, each of which is coterminous with a local authority. Those authorities are Sheffield City; Rotherham Metropolitan Borough; Doncaster Metropolitan Borough; and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough.

Each district is led by a chief superintendent, who is responsible for the majority of policing activity in the district. This includes responsibility for the district public protection unit, which is the police unit primarily responsible for tackling child sexual exploitation.

All four district public protection units are led by a detective inspector, who reports to a detective chief inspector. In Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley, the detective chief inspector has responsibility for a range of policing activities, including public protection and general criminal investigation. In Doncaster, since September 2013, the detective chief inspector in question has been exclusively deployed to public protection.⁷

Child sexual exploitation

The term 'child sexual exploitation' does not refer to a specific action or a particular criminal offence; rather, it is a general term applied to an array of behaviours and offences. These range from the lowest level in the child sexual exploitation definition (non-contact incitement to commit indecent acts, either alone or with another person or other people), to the highest level (multiple rapes).

⁷ More information on the officers and staff involved in South Yorkshire Police's response to child sexual exploitation is given in the 'Structures' section.

The Government, the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the police forces of England and Wales all adopt the same definition of child sexual exploitation:

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phone without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.⁸

In August 2009, the Department for Education published *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation*.⁹ This aimed to help practitioners to identify instances of child sexual exploitation. It identified the many forms sexual exploitation can take, and advocated the development of local partnership strategies to combat the risk of harm to children and young people.

Since then, police and partner agencies nationally have developed a greater understanding of child sexual exploitation. As a result, in many areas services across agencies have developed to respond to the needs of children at risk from child sexual exploitation.

In South Yorkshire, a number of force operations have led to prosecutions and convictions for child sexual exploitation. There are further court cases due in early 2014, which have resulted from operations conducted across the force. Investigations (using staff both from the districts and from the force's major investigation teams) continue to identify historical cases of child sexual exploitation.

⁸ *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation*, Department for Education, 2009. This definition arises from joint work in 2008 between project members of the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (which is a support group for individuals and service providers working with children and young people who are at risk of or who experience sexual exploitation). The Group's membership covers voluntary and statutory services, including health, education and social services.

⁹ *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation*, Department for Education, 2009.

Leadership

Police and Crime Commissioner leadership

The PCC has included protecting vulnerable people as one of his three “key priorities” in the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan for 2013/17.¹⁰ This specifically includes reference to the importance of tackling child sexual exploitation.

The plan also lists activities to support this priority. These include:

- providing £0.5 million funding for additional public protection officers, and for specialist training for staff;
- bringing local partners, both statutory (such as the police) and non-statutory (such as charities), together to improve communication, develop joint protocols and share good ways of working regarding child sexual exploitation;
- holding the Chief Constable to account for implementing the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan;¹¹ the recommendations of a 2012 Office of the Children’s Commissioner report;¹² and the recommendations of a 2011 Barnado’s report;
- investing in enhanced services for young victims of crime;
- establishing a county-wide child sexual exploitation forum; and
- developing more effective working with the Crown Prosecution Service to secure more successful outcomes for victims.

To support these activities, the PCC has established a PCC Safeguarding Forum, which meets quarterly and has the following membership:

- the Director of Children’s Services (DCS), a member of the council cabinet, and the LSCB Independent Chair for each local authority area;
- Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Operations);
- the four district commanders;
- the force Head of Public Protection;
- the force Lead for Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Victim Support representation;
- Crown Prosecution Service representation, and
- health representation.

The PCC Safeguarding Forum’s objective is to aid collaboration between agencies on child sexual exploitation. Work includes establishing joint protocols, and sharing good

¹⁰ *Police and Crime Plan 2013/17*, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, 2013.

¹¹ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012.

¹² *“I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world.” Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (Interim report)*, Office of the Children’s Commissioner, 2012. Recommendations in this report include circulating the warning signs of child sexual exploitation to all professionals.

ways of working by reviewing recommendations from serious case reviews, Ofsted reports and HMIC inspections.

The Forum first convened on 14 February 2013, and has met on three further occasions since then.

Force leadership

Governance

The Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Operations) has overall responsibility for public protection, including child sexual exploitation, and is held to account for the force's performance in this area at the regular force chief officers' meetings. The Detective Chief Superintendent (Specialist Crime Services) reports to the Assistant Chief Constable, and is the force lead on public protection. In June 2012, a temporary detective superintendent was given the responsibility of developing the force's response to child sexual exploitation. This person also reports to the Assistant Chief Constable of the force.

In the course of the fieldwork conducted in the four districts, it was clear that the majority of public protection staff were clear that the force lead on child sexual exploitation was responsible for developing the force's response. However, the same staff were not sure which chief officer held the overall force responsibility in relation to tackling this kind of offending. They felt there were too many senior officers involved, and it was unclear whether the force lead, the force's Head of Public Protection or the local district commander was in charge.

Risk Management Board

The Chief Constable has oversight of how the force responds to this kind of offending by chairing the Risk Management Board.¹³ This meets quarterly, with the strategic risks posed by child sexual exploitation first considered in January 2013. During that meeting it was decided that a risk analysis would be conducted and the Rotherham district commander was given responsibility for ensuring this action was completed.

Child sexual exploitation was also discussed at Risk Management Board meetings in April and July 2013. At the first of these, the force lead on child sexual exploitation gave a presentation on work to date, plans for the future, and risks to be managed.

Public Protection Strategic Board

The Public Protection Strategic Board also meets every quarter, and is the vehicle for reaching agreement on force priorities, plans and decisions for public protection, including those aimed at tackling child sexual exploitation.

¹³ The Deputy Chief Constable sometimes represents the Chief Constable at this meeting.

Chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (Specialist Operations), the board members are:

- Detective Chief Superintendent, Specialist Crime Services;
- Detective Superintendent, Major Crime;
- the force Head of Public Protection;
- a district commander (representing all district commanders);
- a district crime manager (representing all crime managers);
- a district public protection detective inspector (representing all four district public protection detective inspectors); and
- Criminal Justice and Administration Unit representatives.

Discussion of child sexual exploitation issues has been a regular feature of the 2013 meetings of this board.

Child Sexual Exploitation Gold Group

The force established the Child Sexual Exploitation Gold Group to oversee the implementation of the force's child sexual exploitation action plan (see p.16). The group first met on 13 March 2013, and met monthly until June 2013. It was then agreed that, subject to the results of the planned audit of child sexual exploitation cases, the work the group had been undertaking would be overseen by the Public Protection Strategic Board.

Strength

The PCC and the force have effective leadership and governance structures to oversee the police response to child sexual exploitation across South Yorkshire. There is engagement with relevant local partners in tackling child sexual exploitation.

Area for improvement

The leadership provided by the Chief Constable in respect of child sexual exploitation is unclear to many members of South Yorkshire Police officers and staff. The direction and the messages from senior leaders at superintendent level also differ across the force. The force should therefore review its internal communication channels regarding child sexual exploitation and ensure that clear, consistent messages are passed on to all officers and staff. The messages should ensure that everyone is aware which chief officer is the lead on tackling child sexual exploitation.

The priority placed on child sexual exploitation

South Yorkshire Police has established the priority it must place on tackling child sexual exploitation as follows:

- in September 2012, the Chief Constable and the force lead for child sexual exploitation appeared before the Home Affairs Select Committee in the House of Commons. The Committee wished to explore the force's response to cases of child sexual exploitation. Following this evidence session, the force set itself an objective to improve its prosecution of offenders for child sexual exploitation;
- in November 2012, the Force Strategic Assessment¹⁴ recommended that child sexual exploitation be one of the priorities in the force control strategy.¹⁵ This was agreed, and child sexual exploitation has remained a listed priority since then;
- the force has refreshed its use of strategic and tactical assessments. These have been used to create a set of operational policing priorities, which are regularly reviewed and reflect the current needs of the communities the force serves. The top priority at the time of the inspection was child sexual exploitation;
- the force has also made effective use of the National Intelligence Model and the National Decision Making Model in identifying child sexual exploitation as a strategic and tactical priority;¹⁶ and
- the use of an impact probability matrix. This considers the amount of risk in an issue (in this instance, child sexual exploitation), and enables the force to identify clearly its top priorities each month. At the time of the inspection, child sexual exploitation had been identified as the top priority for the force using this process.

Translating strategic priorities into action

The force tasking process (which provides managers with information about crime, anti-social behaviour and other policing issues, to help them decide where staff should be deployed) has recently been updated. This process requires that force priorities are

¹⁴ A document prepared by the Force Intelligence Department to inform the Chief Constable on the crime and other risks faced by the force, with recommendations to manage those risks.

¹⁵ A control strategy identifies the strategic policing priorities for a basic command unit, force or region.

¹⁶ The National Intelligence Model and the National Decision Model are guidance provided to police forces to enable them to consider the risks they face through gathering information from the public, police forces, partner agencies such as local councils and then develop the best way to manage those risks with the staff and equipment available.

considered at the monthly force tasking meeting (where the deployment of specialist officers like roads policing and firearms is decided).

Most staff spoken to by HMIC inspectors were aware that tackling child sexual exploitation was a priority for the force; the majority also understood that it had been identified as the top priority. However, they reported that this stated priority had little effect or implications “on the ground”, where practitioners felt the focus remained on tackling burglary and vehicle crime. Staff reported the focus of the force on the South Yorkshire PCC’s targets¹⁷ (as opposed to priorities) dictated the crimes on which they concentrated. As there were no targets for child sexual exploitation, little focus was given to it.

Gathering and analysing intelligence on child sexual exploitation

At present, each of the four South Yorkshire Police districts has its own intelligence function.¹⁸ All of these units have been instructed to make sure that their staff are able to identify intelligence reports that indicate a risk of child sexual exploitation. When these reports are identified, intelligence staff are expected to conduct further research, and then to send an intelligence package (which can be used by officers to target crime and criminals) to the relevant public protection unit.

However, staff working within each of the four intelligence units stated that child sexual exploitation was not set as a priority for them – burglary and vehicle crime was a greater focus for their efforts. As a result, little analysis of child sexual exploitation was taking place, with no identification of problem areas, individuals or vehicles.

In addition, although in December 2012 each district intelligence unit had drawn intelligence together on child sexual exploitation (called a child sexual exploitation problem profile), it was unclear how these profiles had been used to develop each district’s response to child sexual exploitation.

Use of covert human intelligence sources

There were no covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) specifically recruited to gather intelligence in relation to child sexual exploitation, although some of the existing sources had provided this kind of detail. Intelligence managers had not deployed CHIS handlers to debrief child sexual exploitation suspects in order to identify potential intelligence opportunities.

¹⁷ As identified in the *Police and Crime Plan 2013/17*, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, 2013.

¹⁸ The force intelligence system is moving from a district-based style of working to a centralised one. It is intended that by January 2014 the whole intelligence system will be led by the force Director of Intelligence, who will directly manage all the intelligence staff rather than them being separately managed by their district commanders, as they are at present (although they will remain based in the districts).

Action plan for child sexual exploitation

The force has created a comprehensive action plan for responding to child sexual exploitation, which has been used to develop its response to this kind of offending. The plan is based on the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan¹⁹ (which itself was created to complement the Department for Education's action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation²⁰). It also reflects recommendations made within other reports, including the 2012 report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner,²¹ and Barnardo's 2011 publication.²²

The action plan has resulted in a large amount of activity and improvements. These include the training of frontline officers; the creation of a single child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool; and the development of a communications strategy (all of which are discussed later within this report).

Tracking progress in implementing the action plan

The force had planned to conduct an audit of child sexual exploitation cases across all four districts, to measure how successful the action plan has been in providing good outcomes for child victims. This was due to take place in June and July 2013. However, at the time of the inspection (September/October 2013), this work had still not started.

HMIC considers that the force must now conduct this audit. This will enable the force to ascertain the actual progress that has been made, and to identify areas where further work is required.

Engagement with partner agencies

Missing children

At a strategic level, the force has decided to engage with partner agencies to improve their response to missing children who are at risk of being exploited. In all districts, missing person coordinators (MPCs) are dedicated to managing and monitoring missing person cases. As part of this work, they look for and identify cases in which missing children are potentially at risk from sexual exploitation. They also initiate activity by other units within the police and local partner agencies to prevent these children from coming to harm, or to protect them from further harm.

¹⁹ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012.

²⁰ *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: action plan*. Department for Education, 2011.

²¹ "I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world." *Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (Interim report)*, Office of Children's Commissioner, 2012.

²² *Puppet on a String: The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation*. Barnardo's, 2011.

The MPCs are located within the district public protection units. This enables effective communication between them and their colleagues who are responsible for child sexual exploitation case management.

Barnardo's

The force has negotiated with Barnardo's for the charity to fund four trained social workers to work across the four local authority areas in South Yorkshire, supporting children who are identified as being at risk from child sexual exploitation. These individuals (who started work in September 2013, and will be in post for at least three years) work with children assessed as being in the low-risk category, and supplement existing child protection resources.

Strengths

The force has made effective use of the National Intelligence Model and the National Decision Making Model in identifying child sexual exploitation as a strategic and tactical priority. Staff were aware of the priority placed on tackling child sexual exploitation.

South Yorkshire Police's action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation is a good planning tool. It is compliant with the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan,²³ and reflects recommendations made within other reports, including the 2012 report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner,²⁴ and Barnardo's 2011 publication.²⁵

The force has dedicated staff managing and monitoring missing person cases, particularly those involving children. The staff were familiar with the potential for missing children to be involved with child sexual exploitation, and monitor their cases with this in mind. They have made numerous referrals across the force as a result of this work.

The force has worked effectively with third-sector providers (such as Barnardo's) to secure additional resources to support victims and potential victims of child sexual exploitation.

Areas for improvement

Although the force has identified child sexual exploitation as its current top priority, and this was well known among those spoken to as part of this inspection, this is not

²³ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012.

²⁴ "I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world." *Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (Interim report)*, Office of Children's Commissioner, 2012.

²⁵ *Puppet on a String: The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation*. Barnardo's, 2011.

reflected in operational activity. In particular, much of the focus of senior and middle managers in districts is still on tackling burglary and vehicle crime. Similarly, the work carried out by local intelligence units is more focused on these offences, rather than child sexual exploitation.

The force should review the operation of its local intelligence units to ensure they are fully supporting its response to child sexual exploitation, and must as a matter of urgency put the PCC's strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.

The force had planned to conduct an audit of child sexual exploitation cases taken on since June/July 2013, to determine if the developments in respect of child sexual exploitation have improved outcomes for child victims. The audits have not started. The force must now conduct this audit, in order to determine if the force is making victims of child sexual exploitation safer, and to identify what further work it needs to complete.

The force should review how it can better use research and analysis to support strategies to deal with child sexual exploitation.

Structures

The force operates a devolved style of management for public protection:

- the force Head of Public Protection works within the Serious Crime Directorate, and is responsible for the force policies and procedures relating to public protection,
- the force Lead on Child Sexual Exploitation also works within the Serious Crime Directorate, as part of the Major Investigation Team; while
- each of the four districts has its own public protection unit, which is supervised by a chief superintendent and led by a district detective inspector. These district detective inspectors work closely with the force Head of Public Protection, who regularly conducts audits of the work completed within the district public protection units.

Staffing

Until the intervention of the PCC in early 2013, the following staff had been dedicated to child sexual exploitation:

Sheffield	One sergeant, one detective constable and two constables.
Doncaster	One acting detective sergeant, one detective constable and two constables.
Rotherham	One detective sergeant, one detective constable and one constable.
Barnsley	None.

In 2013, the PCC decided to increase the number of officers dedicated to child sexual exploitation. This resulted in the appointment of one more detective sergeant and nine additional detective constables to specialist roles:

- the detective sergeant and four detective constables were formed into a specialist investigative unit at Snig Hill, Sheffield;
- one detective constable was allocated to each of the Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley districts; while
- two detective constables were allocated to the Sheffield district.

The PCC also provided additional resources so that the force could deploy an analyst specifically to support the force's work to tackle child sexual exploitation. This shows a clear commitment to enhancing the force's response to child sexual exploitation.

However, at the point when the additional officers were due to be deployed, a significant child sexual exploitation investigation was instigated. As a result, all but one of the additional officers were allocated to that investigation, rather than to their intended districts. This operational decision was made by the Chief Constable. It is important that the rationale behind it is communicated to all the staff involved, the PCC, and other interested parties.

Local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs)

There is a local safeguarding children board within each local authority area. Attendance on these boards is as follows:

Barnsley	District Detective Chief Inspector and Head of Public Protection.
Doncaster ²⁶	District Chief Superintendent and Head of Public Protection.
Rotherham	District Chief Superintendent and Head of Public Protection.
Sheffield	District Chief Superintendent.

Structures and systems in the four districts

The systems and processes designed to respond to child sexual exploitation are different in all four force districts. Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham districts all work with local partner agencies, but otherwise have developed their own teams, with different styles and ways of working (as is described below).

There are also different numbers of staff working on tackling child sexual exploitation in each of the four districts. It was unclear how these staffing levels had been determined, and HMIC found that the force's Head of Public Protection had not been consulted by the district commanders to make sure that the force complies with statutory child protection procedures.

One consistency HMIC found across all districts was that all the staff involved with child sexual exploitation and child protection were deeply committed to their roles. They were conscientious, enthusiastic, and focused upon providing good outcomes for the children with whom they work.

Barnsley

Until the appointment of the new child sexual exploitation officer (see p.19), there were no specialist resources within Barnsley's public protection unit. All child sexual exploitation cases were instead managed by the general public protection investigation staff.

From 1 January to 30 September 2013, the police in Barnsley were involved with 55 child sexual exploitation referrals. The local authority has decided that this volume of cases is not sufficient to justify a dedicated social worker for child sexual exploitation. Social work support is instead provided by the district's wider child protection joint investigation team.

²⁶ The district chief superintendents at Doncaster and Rotherham started to attend these boards in 2013. The boards were previously attended by the district detective chief inspectors.

Doncaster

Doncaster has a dedicated child sexual exploitation police team, which is located within the public protection unit. It consists of an acting detective sergeant, a detective constable and two constables.

From 1 January to 30 September 2013, the Doncaster team were involved with 97 cases of child sexual exploitation.

The police public protection unit shares local authority premises with staff from the local authority child social care team (CSC), although they do not occupy the same office. Staff from the CSC, Barnardo's, and local health and education services who are dedicated to child sexual exploitation are located in a different office from the police public protection team.

The resources within the unit's office are poor, with officers often having to wait for a vacant desk. There are six vehicles supporting the work of 36 officers and staff. Staff reported having to wait for transport and to work out routes so they can drop off officers at certain points to conduct enquiries.

HMIC inspectors were told by staff that due to the poor working conditions, staff were much more likely to consider reporting as sick. This could affect the capacity of the child protection team.

There were also concerns that staff working in child sexual exploitation and child protection teams were over-stretched. The new dedicated detective chief inspector has started a review of workloads (this had not started earlier because public protection has only just been made the sole focus of the role).

Rotherham

There is a dedicated child sexual exploitation team within the public protection unit, consisting of a detective sergeant, a detective constable and a constable. They share premises in Maltby Police Station with a multi-agency team comprising a CSC team leader, three social workers, a youth worker, and a worker from Barnardo's.

From 1 January to 30 September 2013, the team was involved with 127 child sexual exploitation cases.

The detective sergeant formerly worked in the public protection investigation unit, and an officer has been redeployed from the team which manages sex offenders to fill the post he left vacant. This redeployed officer has not been replaced, which means that sex offenders are now being managed by a smaller number of staff. This is having a negative impact on the ability of the team to manage offenders in line with national policing guidance²⁷ on how this should be achieved.

²⁷ *Guidance on Protecting the Public: Managing Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2010.

District managers had not explained the rationale behind the decision to reduce staffing in the unit. Staff were also unaware of any objectives that outlined what they were expected to achieve in their work.

The staff reported difficulties with transport, stating that there were only three cars for the 16 officers and staff members within the public protection unit. This was affecting their ability to conduct their investigations promptly and efficiently.

Sheffield

HMIC observed an effective child sexual exploitation response in Sheffield, involving staff from the South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield Futures.²⁸ This multi-agency team shares local authority premises and provides a protective, supportive and investigative service for victims of child sexual exploitation.

The team is made up of a detective sergeant, a detective constable and two constables, who work with two social workers, a team leader and four youth workers, and a Barnardo's youth worker. From 1 January to 30 September 2013, the child sexual exploitation team was involved in 146 cases

The team receives referrals about a range of child sexual exploitation concerns from local statutory and voluntary agencies across Sheffield. Each referral is examined by the multi-agency team, using information gathered from each agency's records. Decisions are made jointly on the most appropriate way of dealing with the referrals. These range from early intervention work (where local Community Youth Teams work with children to develop their own preventive approaches), to section 47 enquiries, where children are considered to be at risk of significant harm.

The police part of the team is adequately staffed, although busy, and the inspectors observed cases where officers conducted effective criminal investigations while ensuring that children were properly protected.

The team liaises with other local policing teams to develop specific child sexual exploitation responses, including 'Hotel Watch' and 'Operation Krib', both of which aim to identify vulnerable young people at risk of sexual exploitation, to prevent crime, and to protect the vulnerable.²⁹

Strengths

Since child sexual exploitation was identified as a priority for the force by the PCC, additional resources in the form of a detective sergeant and nine detective constables have been allocated specifically to tackling child sexual exploitation. Additional resources were also provided to allow for an analyst to be allocated to supporting work to tackle child sexual exploitation.

²⁸ Sheffield Futures is an independent charity which aims to support communities and help young people, particularly the vulnerable, to achieve their full potential in learning, working and life.

²⁹ These initiatives are described in more detail on pp.29–30 below.

All the staff involved with child protection and tackling child sexual exploitation are conscientious, enthusiastic and committed.

Areas for improvement

The additional specialist officers have not yet been deployed to the districts. The force should communicate and explain this temporary delay to the PCC, staff and other interested parties.

The development of child sexual exploitation responses across the four districts has been variable. Different styles and processes have been adopted, and this has led to victims receiving inconsistent support from the police. The variations have also made it difficult for the force's child sexual exploitation action plan (see p.16) to be implemented consistently. The force should review the processes in place to respond to child sexual exploitation in all four districts, with a view to creating greater uniformity, and ensuring all areas attain the high standards observed in the Sheffield district.

Staff within the public protection units at Rotherham and Doncaster reported exacting workloads, which they were finding hard to manage. HMIC inspectors were unable to identify any processes or reviews that assessed the capacity of staff to deal with the volume of child sexual exploitation cases being referred to the units. Staff reported that a number of officers had considered reporting as sick as a result of the stress caused by their workloads. The force should review the workloads of all staff within public protection units to ensure they have the capacity to manage effectively the cases they are allocated.

Failure to fill a vacant post in the Rotherham team that manages sex offenders means that the remaining officers face an unmanageable workload. The force should review the team to ensure that it has sufficient staff to manage sex offenders in line with national guidance.

Processes

Hi-Tech Crime Unit

The force Hi-Tech Crime Unit (HTCU) is based at Snig Hill, Sheffield, and supports the work of all four districts. The unit comprises three teams: digital media investigation; mobile phone analysis; and communications data investigation.

At the time of the investigation, the unit manager reported that there were six cases assessed as being of a high priority, and it was taking the following periods of time to complete digital media investigations³⁰ within the unit:

- Low priority³¹ 10 – 11 months.
- Medium priority 6 – 8 months.
- High priority 2 weeks – 2 months.

The force has been proactive in reducing the time that it takes to complete digital investigations, and used a range of approaches to achieve this end, including:

- triaging of cases (i.e. making an initial assessment of the priority of each case as it comes in);
- the use of staff from outside the unit to complete non-specialist tasks (such as grading images); and
- considering streamlined forensic reporting (which is a method of agreeing what material the defence will require at any trial).

Despite these efforts, there is a backlog of cases. The force has recognised this, and recorded it as an issue on the Serious Crime Directorate's risk register, on the basis of:

- the impact on victims and potential victims;
- the impact on suspects;
- the potential for an abuse of process;
- the fact that, as the examinations are taking this amount of time, some other offences are going to court separately, when they should be going to court together; and
- the effect of delays on the ability of the suspect to prepare a proper defence.

³⁰ That is, analysis of computers to establish whether they hold indecent images of children, or other evidence of child sexual exploitation

³¹ The force employs a 'prioritisation matrix' (which is used by a number of forces in the East Midlands region) to allocate a priority to a case. This matrix has been updated to reflect the significance of child sexual exploitation, which ensures investigations of these crimes are always in the medium or high priority bands.

HMIC inspectors were made aware of a further concern within the force that has placed additional pressure on the unit, and is likely to have a negative effect on the backlog of cases. As a result of a pay review of unit staff, it was proposed that the digital media investigators should have their salaries reduced by approximately 25 per cent. Of the four digital media investigators within the unit, one has already handed in his notice, and is due to leave the unit in December 2013. There are concerns that others will follow, and the unit manager informed HMIC inspectors that it would be difficult to find a fully trained replacement, due to the shortage of suitable candidates.

This HR decision to reduce salaries calls into question the extent to which child sexual exploitation is a top priority for the force. This risks delaying current and future investigations.

Child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool

The force has developed a child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool,³² which has been approved for use across the whole of South Yorkshire. Based on a tool used elsewhere, this was developed in collaboration with the force's partners, and is intended to be a multi-agency resource.

However, staff across all districts reported difficulties with using the tool. A common problem was that the outcome of the assessment very often indicated a lower level of risk than the multi-agency staff involved, based on their experience, felt was appropriate.

As a result, officers and staff routinely apply their own professional judgment and raise the risk levels identified by the tool.

Areas for improvement

There are concerns that the current backlog of cases and demand for their services mean the High-Tech Crime Unit might be inhibiting the force's implementation of a comprehensive child sexual exploitation strategy. In addition, the recent HR decision to reduce the salary of digital media investigators is threatening to reduce the staffing levels of the unit. The force should review the staffing arrangements within the Hi-Tech Crime Unit, to ensure these are sufficient to manage effectively the demands of a thorough and comprehensive child sexual exploitation strategy.

The force should review the tool used to assess the risk of child sexual exploitation to ensure it provides the best possible reflection of the level of risk faced by victims. This may involve additional training for the staff, or a change to the scoring mechanism used to calculate the level of risk.

³² The tool is a document used by specialist staff involved in child sexual exploitation to record, score (for risk) and assess different aspects of a child's situation, including his or her family circumstances, other potentially harmful issues, and his or her contact with other agencies (such as children's, health and education services).

Training

All officers and staff

The force has made a concerted effort to raise the awareness of staff about the risks of child sexual exploitation, and created a specific child sexual exploitation training plan. The first step of this plan was to place a child sexual exploitation awareness video (developed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) on the force intranet for officers and staff to view.

The force has also added the following videos, to maintain the focus of all staff on the issues and risks of child sexual exploitation, and to complement the training provided on this type of offending:

- 'My Dangerous Loverboy', a short drama sponsored by the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre, and put together with input from young women and frontline agencies dealing with human trafficking; and
- 'Sick Party', a hard-hitting film based on real-life stories and experiences, which depicts the current picture of child sexual exploitation in Leeds and many other cities across the UK.

Frontline officers and staff

In December 2012, a pocket notebook-sized aide memoire on the legislation and best practice of working on cases of child sexual exploitation was distributed to all frontline officers and staff (i.e. those within uniform response and safer neighbourhood teams). This contains a list of vulnerabilities and warning signs that officers can use to identify vulnerable children affected by or at risk from child sexual exploitation.

Between January and March 2013, the force trained all its 1,700 frontline staff on child sexual exploitation. This comprised a mixture of presentations and group activity within the regular 'Street Skills' training sessions, led by a trainer and designed to provide staff with information on:

- the definition of child sexual exploitation;
- how to recognise the phases of initial contact, grooming and exploitation;
- how to recognise warning signs and risk factors;
- how to deal with child sexual exploitation; and
- the difficulties of dealing with child sexual exploitation.

Although no formal evaluation of the training has been completed, the force Lead for Child Sexual Exploitation was confident that it had been well received. He also reported that following the training there was a significant increase in the numbers of potential cases identified by frontline staff, and that this has continued (albeit at a slightly lower level) through the rest of the year.

Staff in communications rooms

Staff within communications rooms, particularly those who answer calls from the public, have also been provided with information on the features of child sexual exploitation, and how they can help identify children at risk of this kind of offending. They are also aware that calls from members of the public about child sexual exploitation must be prioritised.

Specialists

The specialist child sexual exploitation staff that were recruited after the additional funding from the PCC (see p.19) have been provided with a full day of specific training, focused on their new roles.

Strength

The force has designed a training strategy that has ensured all frontline staff have been provided with information specifically on child sexual exploitation. Background material (aide-memoire and videos) has supported this approach.

Area for improvement

The force has not determined what follow-up training will be provided to frontline staff to ensure the focus on child sexual exploitation is maintained. The force should review its training plan to ensure all staff develop and sustain a good understanding of child sexual exploitation.

Intelligence gathering

As mentioned in the previous chapter, all frontline staff in South Yorkshire Police have been provided with child sexual exploitation training and aide-memoires to help their understanding and identification of child sexual exploitation. As a result, there has been an increase in intelligence and referral submissions relating to child sexual exploitation.

The force has in the past used intelligence on internet use to initiate investigations into the possession and distribution of indecent images of children (Operation Tharsley). At the time of the inspection, the only district still using this intelligence was Barnsley, which was conducting, on average, three such investigations a month.

The force does not have any trained covert internet investigators (CIIs), although trained staff are available through the regional organised crime unit (ROCU). HMIC was unable to determine when CIIs had been deployed in South Yorkshire to gather or develop intelligence in relation to child sexual exploitation.

At a partnership level, the co-location of multi-agency staff has improved information and intelligence sharing in Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. This has enabled staff to build a better appreciation of the risks each potential child victim faces, and consequently to develop more effective protective measures – although incompatible information and intelligence IT systems mean that staff often have to enter the same information twice.

The position in Barnsley is not so well advanced; there are no dedicated CSC resources currently working with the child sexual exploitation officer.

Strength

The co-location of multi-agency child sexual exploitation resources in Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield has facilitated the more effective sharing of information and intelligence.

Areas for improvement

The force should review how it monitors the internet for evidence of child sexual exploitation, to ensure intelligence opportunities are not being overlooked.

The force and its partners should examine how it can more efficiently manage the handling of child sexual exploitation information and intelligence. In particular, the difficulties in sharing information within the multi-agency teams at Doncaster and Rotherham (because of incompatible information and intelligence IT systems) should be resolved.

Innovation

HMIC inspectors identified a number of examples of innovative practice in the force's response to child sexual exploitation. Each of these is considered to be making a positive difference to children's lives.

Schools

In Rotherham and Doncaster, the district Police and Young People's Officers were actively involved in education sessions in the secondary schools across their district, providing information about internet safety. This enabled children to recognise attempts to sexually manipulate them, and to develop means of managing these risks.

In Rotherham, Police Community Support Officers provided similar information to primary school children.

Hotel Watch

In Sheffield, police officers had identified that child sexual exploitation perpetrators were using local hotels as locations in which to offend. They successfully persuaded hotel managers across the city to work with them to create processes that would enable the police to respond to any activity that hotel staff suspected to be child sexual exploitation. Hotel staff were provided with training to help them recognise the signs, and police officers were encouraged to provide an appropriate level of response.

This initiative has now been adopted by the Doncaster district. The approach has also been extended by the police working with staff from Sheffield City Council's licensing department, taxi drivers and staff from fast food locations, who have all been trained to recognise and report incidents that they consider could be child sexual exploitation. This approach has been nationally recognised as a good way of working.

Operation Crib

From interviews with child sexual exploitation victims, the police in Sheffield had identified locations where perpetrators attempt to engage with young girls and women as a means of sexually exploiting them. Sheffield officers conducted structured observations of those locations to identify men whom they suspect to be perpetrators, and their potential child victims. The children are approached by members of the child sexual exploitation unit, in an attempt to gather information or evidence.

Abduction Notices

Across all districts staff regularly use 'Abduction Notices' as a means of preventing and protecting children from the risks of child sexual exploitation. Potential perpetrators (as identified through missing person information or intelligence) are served with notices that inform them that future contact with a specific child will make them liable to arrest and/or prosecution under the Children Act 1989 or the Child Abduction Act 1984.

National Working Group

Officers from the force are members of the National Working Group (see p.10, footnote 8), a charity established to promulgate good ways of working in responding to child sexual exploitation. Through this membership the force has been able to identify good practice from other force areas, and to pass on ideas and initiatives that have been developed in South Yorkshire.

Learning from other forces

Staff and officers have also visited forces which have been identified as having well-developed processes to tackle child sexual exploitation, to identify, understand and learn best practice from them.

Strengths

The force has developed a number of local initiatives that have created additional opportunities to protect children from child sexual exploitation. Some of these ideas have been marketed as best practice nationally.

The force has sought evidence of good ways of working from a variety of sources, and has then embedded some of these practices into their work. These new arrangements are considered to improve the protection of children at risk from child sexual exploitation.

Benchmarking

The force has started a process to analyse its levels of activity in tackling child sexual exploitation, to provide a benchmark for the future. From 1 January 2013, it has ensured that offences that potentially involve child sexual exploitation are reviewed to see if they match the national definition (see p.10). Where a match is identified, a marker is attached to the crime record to enable all such crimes to be easily identified. This will enable the creation of statistical returns on the level of this type of offending, as well as easier analysis of cases involving child sexual exploitation.

In relation to child sexual exploitation, HMIC does not have any comparative information to use in assessing South Yorkshire Police's performance with that of other forces.³³ However, a recent visit by the College of Policing child sexual exploitation co-ordinator indicated that the force is working in line with the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan.³⁴

Strength

The force has created a mechanism to identify all child sexual exploitation crimes.

³³ Forces recognise child sexual exploitation offences in different ways, which makes it difficult to compare responses to this kind of offending from a national perspective. This is compounded by the fact that there are many different activities involved in the police response to child sexual exploitation; for instance, submissions by frontline officers, referrals to other agencies, and initial contact with potential victims to establish if anything illegal has happened.

³⁴ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012.

Compliance

The national policing guidance on responding to child sexual exploitation has not yet been published. HMIC therefore assessed the force's performance against the national policing child sexual exploitation action plan (although as a strategic overview document, it does not contain detail on case management and the running of individual units).³⁵

HMIC inspectors found that the force's approach mirrors that set out in the national policing action plan. In addition (and as mentioned in the previous section), the College of Policing has recently conducted an assessment of how well the force has implemented the recommendations outlined within the national action plan. This concluded that the force has made good progress and is on schedule to implement the recommendations in full.

HMIC inspectors also looked for compliance with Department for Education guidance on safeguarding children,³⁶ which includes elements of tackling child sexual exploitation.

Staff within dedicated child sexual exploitation teams were not always compliant with this guidance in three areas:

- a small number of relevant case files did not (as they should) record the fact that children were being protected from child sexual exploitation;
- appropriate strategic discussions were not always taking place with partner agencies, meaning that opportunities to safeguard children might be missed; and
- investigations were not always conducted jointly with partner agencies.

Area for improvement

Staff within dedicated child sexual exploitation teams are not always complying with statutory child protection guidance. This means children may not be being protected effectively. The force should review the management of cases by staff in the dedicated child sexual exploitation teams, and ensure this always complies with statutory child protection guidance.

³⁵ *Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan*, Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012. This action plan was created as a requirement of the national child sexual exploitation action plan, and complements the work undertaken by other national bodies.

³⁶ *Working Together To Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. Department for Education, 2013.

Robustness of partnership working arrangements

All four districts have created multi-agency relationships to help tackle child sexual exploitation. These include successful engagement with third-sector providers to increase the range of preventive and protective activities to support victims and potential victims of child sexual exploitation. For instance, HMIC found evidence of engagement with:

- Barnardo's, to support locally-based social workers;
- 'Safe@Last', a charity which supplies support across all four districts in respect of gathering of information from missing children and working with children at risk of child sexual exploitation; and
- the Golddigger Trust in Sheffield, a charity which works with the multi-agency team to ensure young people at risk of sexual exploitation have available the support they need.

The force has plans to bring in additional support from partnership resources. For instance, it is currently in negotiation with a further third-sector provider to supply workers to support child sexual exploitation victims associated with gangs.

In addition to these third-sector partnerships:

- in 2013 the force reinforced its commitment to local safeguarding children boards by increasing its representation to chief superintendent level in Doncaster and Rotherham (see p.20); and
- the PCC has achieved a high level of commitment from all four local authorities and other significant agencies for his countywide PCC Safeguarding Forum, which is seen as a significant opportunity for developing multi-agency services. For instance, at the most recent meeting of this forum, a multi-agency communication strategy was approved for the whole county.

However, the level of engagement and commitment from partners varies in each area.

Strength

The multi-agency working arrangements within the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Scheme were found to be thorough, and child-focused, and to provide good outcomes for children.

Recommendations

Immediately

The force should review the management of cases by staff in the dedicated child sexual exploitation teams, and ensure this always complies with statutory child protection guidance.

The force should communicate and explain to the PCC, staff and other interested parties the delay in deploying the ten additional child sexual exploitation officers to the districts.

Failure to fill a vacant post in the Rotherham team that manages sex offenders means that the remaining officers face an unmanageable workload. The force should review the team to ensure that it has sufficient staff to manage sex offenders in line with national guidance.

The force should review the staffing arrangements within the Hi-Tech Crime Unit, to ensure these are sufficient to manage effectively the demands of a thorough and comprehensive child sexual exploitation strategy.

The force should audit its response to child sexual exploitation, to assess whether the changes it is making are having the desired effect (i.e. of improving outcomes for children), and to identify any further work that is required.

Within three months

The force should review its internal communication regarding child sexual exploitation and ensure that clear, consistent messages are passed to all officers and staff. The messages should ensure that everyone knows which chief officer is the lead on tackling child sexual exploitation.

The force should review the tool used to assess the risk of child sexual exploitation to ensure it provides the best possible reflection of the level of risk faced by victims. This could involve additional training for those using the tool, or a change to the scoring mechanism used to calculate the level of risk.

The force should translate the PCC's strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.

The force should review the workloads of all staff within public protection units to ensure they have the capacity to manage effectively the cases they are allocated.

Within six months

The force should review its training plan to ensure all staff develop and sustain a good understanding of child sexual exploitation.

The force should review the processes in place to respond to child sexual exploitation in all four districts, with a view to creating greater uniformity, and ensuring all areas attain the high standards achieved in the Sheffield district.

The force should review the operation of its local intelligence units to ensure child sexual exploitation is thoroughly supported by an intelligence approach.

The force should review how it can make better use of research and analysis to support strategies to tackle child sexual exploitation.

The force should review how it monitors the internet for evidence of child sexual exploitation to ensure intelligence opportunities are not being overlooked.

The force and its partners should examine how it can more efficiently manage the handling of child sexual exploitation information and intelligence. In particular, the difficulties in sharing information within the multi-agency teams at Doncaster and Rotherham (because of incompatible information and intelligence IT systems) should be resolved.

Annex A: Terms of reference

Purpose

To provide the Police and Crime Commissioner with:

- a) an independent assessment of the effectiveness and resilience of the current arrangements in place within South Yorkshire Police to protect children from sexual exploitation; and
- b) recommendations for improvement.

Scope

The inspection will examine the following areas of police management in relation to the force's response in protecting children from sexual exploitation:

- leadership;
- strategies;
- management;
- training;
- structures;
- processes and any associated blockages;
- intelligence gathering;
- innovation;
- benchmarking;
- compliance with the Government's child sexual exploitation National Action Plan, National Children's Commissioner and Barnardo's recommendations in their 'Cut them Free' campaign; and
- the robustness of partnership working arrangements.

Annex B: Methodology

The inspection team interviewed:

- the temporary Assistant Chief Constable responsible for child sexual exploitation during the development of the force's action plan;
- the force lead for developing the force's response to child sexual exploitation;
- the force lead for Public Protection;
- the District Commander for Rotherham;
- the operational leads of teams responsible for child sexual exploitation;
- police officers and staff working within teams dealing with child sexual exploitation;
- police officers and staff responsible for managing missing person issues;
- the manager of the force intelligence unit;
- the manager of the force hi-tech crime unit; and
- a manager from a local authority department responsible for the management of staff working with children at risk from child sexual exploitation.

The inspection team inspected the following documents:

- the force policy on child sexual exploitation/missing children/children protection;
- the force guidance/procedure on child sexual exploitation/missing children/child protection;
- the force action plan or equivalent in respect of child sexual exploitation;
- minutes of force governance meetings where child sexual exploitation performance is monitored;
- minutes of local safeguarding children board meetings relating to the development of responses to child sexual exploitation/missing children ;
- performance data relating to responses to child sexual exploitation; missing children; and hi-tech crime unit activity;
- force tasking documents relating to National Intelligence Model (NIM) level 1 or level 2 activity;
- force training plans in respect of child sexual exploitation; and
- problem profiles in respect of child sexual exploitation.

The inspection team reviewed the following information from the force:

- case files relating to investigations into child sexual exploitation (spread across the four local authority areas);

- missing children interventions relating to each local authority area, in respect of children suspected to be at risk from child sexual exploitation;
- referrals from any source relating to internet-enabled grooming;
- partnership referrals relating to children suspected of being victims of child sexual exploitation; and
- intelligence packages relating to child sexual exploitation suspects or victims.

Annex C: Glossary of terms

Children at risk of significant harm

A child is defined as being at risk of subject of significant harm where there is ill-treatment or impairment of health or development:

- 'ill-treatment' includes sexual and emotional abuse as well as physical abuse;
- 'health' means physical and mental health;
- 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;
- 'significant harm' turns on the question of the harm suffered by a child in respect of his health and development compared with the health and development reasonably expected of a similar child.

(Section 31(10) of the Children Act 1989.)

Children in need

A child is defined as being a child in need if:

- he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving, or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority; or
- his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or
- he is disabled.

(Section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989.)

Child protection plan

When a child protection case conference decides a child or young person is at risk of abuse or support, he or she is known as a 'child subject of a child protection plan'. This plan outlines what each agency will do to keep the child or children safe.

Children's social care team (CSC)

The dedicated team within a local authority social care department which deals specifically with children who are in need or at risk.

Joint or single agency investigations

Where a case requires further investigation, a decision is made during the strategy discussion on who should do this. In some cases (for example, where a crime has been committed), the case work is likely to be completed by the CSC and police working together. In other cases (for example, where parenting skills are highlighted as an issue within a family), this would be dealt with by the CSC as a single agency.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

A joint or multi agency team comprising children's social care workers, police and other agencies such as the health service, probation service and local authority education department. Within these teams, staff members are able to share information easily, as is essential in the successful protection of children from harm.

Section 17 enquiries

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a general duty on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are believed to be 'in need'. Police may find children who are 'in need' when they attend incidents. This section of the Act also requires forces to refer these cases to the local authority.

Section 47 enquiries

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the duty placed upon agencies, including the local authority and the police, to make such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and secure the welfare of any child within their area who is the subject of an emergency protection order; or who is in police protection; or whom they have reasonable cause to suspect is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Strategy discussions

When a section 47 case has been identified, staff from agencies that may hold information about a child or children (for example the police, the health service and the local authority) discuss the case and share information. This is called a strategy discussion or meeting. Decisions about what is the best way in which to safeguard a child or children are made within this meeting, and must be recorded.