



27<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Further to an inspection in January 2022, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) published findings and recommendations into how well Cheshire Constabulary protect children. The report, published on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022, concluded that in some areas more needs to be done to safeguard children but does recognise that there have been significant changes within the Constabulary with the election of a new Police and Crime Commissioner, the appointment of a new Chief Constable and Senior Leadership Team who together had 'a clear commitment to child protection and providing better outcomes for children'.

HMICFRS also recognises the commitment that I have made in my Police and Crime Plan to protecting at-risk and vulnerable people in our communities, and I echo the remarks in the report in noting the renewed focus and commitment being given by the Constabulary's senior leadership team. I am also grateful for the dedicated individuals within our organisation, who are instrumental in making Cheshire a safer place for children.

I have commissioned services to support children. Remedi deliver the 'Got your back' programme, which is available to all young people in Cheshire who have been a victim of crime if they are aged 18 and under. Services are available even if the incident is not reported to the Police. I have also made available provision to support a Child and Young Person Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), employed by the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) as well as a full time Domestic Abuse practitioner to provide services for young victims.

In addition to this, through additional funding obtained through my office we now have the opportunity for a further full-time therapist, who will work with survivors of sexual violence especially those with additional specific needs such as learning difficulties. The focus of the client work will be those aged 13-25 years across Cheshire and will be led by RASASC. This funding stream will also provide a full time Domestic Abuse Young Victim Practitioner, who will work with young victims of domestic abuse and provide support services to them and also a Child to Parent Violence and Abuse lead.

However, I do not lose sight that we still have work to do to prevent harm and improve outcomes for children. I have discussed the report with the Chief Constable at a recent Joint Strategic Development Day. This gave me the opportunity and reassurance that the Constabulary are moving forward in line with my plan and will hold the Chief Constable to account in my public scrutiny meetings and performance reviews. Furthermore, I will work with partners across Cheshire to support a more joined up approach.

I am pleased with the progress made thus far and I have submitted a detailed report of work to HMICFRS that is taking place against the recommendations.

John Dwyer

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire



	<b>Position Statement</b>
Within three months, Cheshire Constabulary should review its processes regarding incidents relating to child protection, paying particular attention to how Control Room Staff make decisions on Officer response	<p>The effective use of THRIVE is a key element in enabling Control Room Staff to make decisions on Officer response. This is evidenced in the findings of both the National Child Protection Inspection and Cheshire Constabulary's recent HMICFRS PEEL inspection.</p> <p>In response to both, Cheshire has commissioned a review of best evidence nationally. This identified West Midlands Police who during their victim service assessment correctly used the risk assessment to make decisions on Officer response in 96% of the cases sampled. This best practice extended to their use of THRIVE to support investigations through their locate team into missing people.</p> <p>Following a visit to understand and map good practice a delivery plan for improvement has been developed and is currently with the Senior Leadership Team within the Force Control room for review. This delivery plan has focused amongst other things on identifying incidents involving children and then subjecting those to a timely and accurate identification of risk. This is facilitated through a revised THRIVE question set.</p>
We recommend that Cheshire Constabulary immediately improves its response to missing children so that it is consistent with the risks identified and ensures that the response is effectively supervised.	<p>In response to the observations of the Inspectorate Cheshire Constabulary immediately reviewed its approach towards missing children. This saw the force review and amend its force policy, specifically to reflect all children, should be initially categorised as HIGH RISK. This position will and has allowed the right level of focus and resource to scale up or down the response as needed. This decision-making sits with Duty Inspector / Force Silver Command</p> <p>All children who have a CSE, CE, CCE or County Lines flag will remain high risk. A clear and consistent message has been cascaded throughout the Force by Senior Leaders in relation to expectations flowing from this policy change to help support the mindset shift required.</p>
We recommend that Cheshire Constabulary immediately engages with its safeguarding partners to review the terms of reference and practices of its multi-agency risk management	<p>Both Cheshire Constabulary and Director of Children's Services across our four unitary authorities acknowledge there is significant improvement required. This improvement plan has commenced with a series of meetings led by the Head of Public Protection and Executive Leadership Teams from each of the authorities.</p>

<p>meetings in relation to missing children and children at risk of exploitation.</p>	<p>Progress has been made through Cheshire’s safeguarding executive meetings to ensure a consistent approach is being applied in relation to our collective approach to how we respond to children missing from home and those at risk of child sexual exploitation. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent approach to assessing and progressing strategy meetings</li> <li>• Improving the quality of the data recorded both where the strategy meeting took place, actions agreed, time frames agreed and consideration of contextual safeguarding.</li> </ul>
<p>We recommend that within three months, Cheshire Constabulary should act to make sure that Officers obtain and record children’s concerns and views (including noting their behaviour and demeanour) to help influence decisions made about them.</p>	<p>The Constabulary has developed an improved Officer interface (PIPS) for the completion and submission of Vulnerable Person Assessments (VPAs). These improvements are focused on prompts for Officers when completing a VPA to ensure the Voice of the Child and the child’s Lived Experience is considered and recorded.</p> <p>In support of these improvements additional VPA training continues to be provided to all front-line Officers and Staff with 42% of Response Officers having been trained at time of writing. The Constabulary has also established a series of self-assessment audits focused on the areas where we need to improve most.</p>
<p>Recommendation: Cheshire Constabulary should immediately improve its understanding of child sexual exploitation, paying particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving staff awareness, knowledge and skills in this area of work.</li> <li>• The importance of timely sharing of information with partner agencies.</li> <li>• Undertaking risk-assessments that comprehensively consider a child’s circumstances and risks to other children; and</li> <li>• Improving the oversight and management of cases.</li> </ul>	<p>A child sexual exploitation problem profile has been commissioned (due end July 2022) to better understand the impact of exploitation and the improvements that can be made in investigations. There is a definitive link between MFH and CSE , the revised policy approach reflects this, which sees the CSE coordinator aligned to the MFH coordinator and Problem-Solving teams, bolstered further by 12 MFH Problem-Solving Officers.</p> <p>In order to raise awareness of knowledge and skills required to deal with CSE a programme of training has been developed and will commence Monday 20th June 2022. This includes CSE screening tools, VPA’s, Voice of the Child, partnership work and investigative mindset. Following the roll out of this training the plan is to extend this awareness and uplift in knowledge to local Officers. The initial training phase will complete on 11th July 2022 with MFH Problem-Solving, Prevent and Engagement Workers, Hidden Harm Teams and Force Control Room Resolution Team prioritised in the initial delivery. Evaluation of the training will be carried out on completion before the next phase commences in September 2022.</p> <p>The force has committed to progressing an uplift in CSE Investigators in each of the Problem Solving Teams in PBB 2022/2023 to improve the oversight and management of CSE investigations as well as provide clarity regarding local ownership of these issues. This commitment will mirror the approach taken in relation to MFH Problem-Solving Officers and</p>

	<p>will include the closer alignment of local authority commissioned Missing and CSE Services to these dedicated problem-solving resources.</p>
<p>We recommend that, within three months, Cheshire Constabulary reviews guidance to improve practices for when children are taken into Police protection to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant information is properly recorded and made readily accessible.</li> <li>• It consistently records relevant information and decisions; and</li> <li>• Officers regularly review and endorse the use of protective powers.</li> </ul>	<p>A review of every case featuring a Police Protection Order (PPO) in the last 12 months has been completed (51 cases). All 51 cases have been examined. This allowed us to understand compliance in relation to timeliness and the quality of the decisions made. The same approach was taken to ensure the designated Officer rescinded within set time frames and that supervisory oversight has been complied with. Of note, approximately 1 PPO per week has been our consistent level throughout 2022 also.</p> <p>Consistent delivery in relation to the use of PPOs and Public Protection performance in general is delivered under the governance of the Head of Public Protection. Monthly and bi-monthly governance meetings are now in place via a Public Protection Performance meeting and Vulnerability Board respectively. In addition, further quarterly governance is provided by ACC Crime at the Public Protection Quarterly Performance Review.</p> <p>Training in relation to the use of PPO's has also been delivered and supported by an internal communications strategy. Response and Beat Officers have received Safeguarding CPD training from Safeguarding and Partnership Detective Inspectors covering CAWNs and PPOs. 399 Officers were trained during February 2022 with further sessions scheduled on Officer training cycles.</p>
<p>We recommend that Cheshire Constabulary immediately improves the way it manages registered sex offenders, paying particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How it records information on local and national systems; and</li> <li>• Ensuring its risk management processes are clearer and bespoke to individual registered sex offenders; and</li> <li>• Risk assessments on home visits and Officer attendance comply with authorised professional practice.</li> </ul>	<p>Resourcing this area of business in support of the inspections findings has been a key element of how Cheshire sustainably improves its approach to managing those who pose a risk to children.</p> <p>Benchmarking has been carried out across several forces and evidenced that higher performing forces invest in supervisory support that sees the ratio of Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) to Detective Sergeant ratios in the region of 300:1, currently in Cheshire this sits at 600:1. This supports the findings that indicate DS's are not spending time adding meaningful and accurate updates or reviews within Visor.</p> <p>This is being addressed through uplift of a further three DS's, bringing the ratio more in line with accepted and manageable numbers. The Senior Leadership Team have also supported an uplift of an additional ten PC's to support our improvement plan alongside investment in the right equipment, (kiosks, computers and outrider devices) to help those Officers work more efficiently.</p>

	<p>A performance management process has been implemented alongside a tracker that will allow a daily assessment of process against key metrics and qualitative measures that improve risk management. This data and the daily prioritisation of resources is now governed by a Daily Focus Meeting under a DCI, supported by bi-weekly governance through Head of Public Protection. This is supported by a clear delivery plan.</p>
<p>We recommend that Cheshire Constabulary immediately undertakes a review of how it manages the detention of children. This should be done jointly with Children’s Social Care Services, Youth Offending Services and other partner agencies. The review should include, as a minimum, how best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that appropriate adults promptly attend the Police Station;</li> <li>• Make sure Officers consider the needs and record the voices of children and refer them to Children’s Social Care Services when necessary; and</li> <li>• Work with Local Authorities to ensure that children charged and refused bail are moved to appropriate alternative accommodation and not held in Custody overnight.</li> </ul>	<p>An internal audit process has been implemented following inspection to review the detention of Children in Custody. Dip samples of Custody records, which includes focus on appropriate adult provision, care and treatment and Inspector reviews are being conducted every week. These areas have been added to our existing Pan Cheshire Multi-agency meeting in addition to the circumstances of overnight detention.</p> <p>As a result of briefings and continued scrutiny and feedback to Custody staff we have seen Improvement in the notification and prompt attendance of appropriate adults and commitment from Children’s Social Care to support open children whilst in Custody. Further improvement and continued focus needed in this area to ensure consistency and sustained improvement.</p> <p>Voice of the Child training has been produced by Learning and Development and is to be delivered to Custody Staff during July 2022. This will see every single member of our Custody Staff trained. This will be repeated this calendar year.</p> <p>A checklist has been developed for implementation in June 2022 to be introduced by end of June for Sergeants and Inspectors to complete when children and young people come into the Custody Suite. This will ensure considerations are made in relation to the individual circumstances of how the child presents and the circumstances of detention are given initial consideration by the PACE Inspector. This includes Voice of the Child consideration.</p>
<p>We recommend that within three months, the Constabulary should improve its programme of vulnerability training for staff working in Custody to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recording of information in Custody logs to reflect the individual circumstances of a child and the investigation of the offence they have committed; and</li> <li>• A rationale for the action they have taken to detain and continue to detain.</li> </ul>	<p>Voice of the Child training has been produced by Learning and Development will be delivered to Custody staff during July 2022.</p> <p>As detailed previously, this training will be complimented with the introduction of a Checklist for Sergeants and Inspectors to complete at point of Booking in for children and young people. This will be introduced by the end of June 22 and will help to ensure minimum standards considerations are made and the circumstances of detention are given initial consideration by the PACE Inspector. This includes Voice of the Child considerations.</p>

