



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

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

Published on: 24th October 2025

Inspection types: Child protection

Recomendations: National

Report summary

This report reviews progress since the 2023 inspection into policing and law enforcement responses to group-based child sexual exploitation (CSE). Significant improvements include widespread adoption of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) definition by most police forces, enhanced training through the Hydrant Programme, and better safeguarding practices. Forces increasingly use prevention orders, cultural change initiatives have reduced victim-blaming language and partnerships with businesses under Operation Makesafe have strengthened prevention efforts.

However, critical gaps remain. The Home Office and Department for Education have not fully adopted the IICSA definition in key guidance, and data collection remains inconsistent. Only 37% of CSE cases are accurately flagged on police systems, and many forces fail to include partner data in strategic assessments. National solutions for reliable data and consistent application of definitions are urgently needed.

The report closes one previous area for improvement, notes partial progress on several recommendations and issues six new ones. These focus on universal adoption of the IICSA definition, mandatory use of Hydrant Programme templates, improved data quality assurance, and consistent implementation of Operation Makesafe.



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Recommendations from Inspectors and Constabulary response

<p>Recommendation 1 By 31 March 2026, the Home Office, Department for Education and all police forces and law enforcement bodies that are yet to do so should adopt the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation. And they should make sure they use this definition in all relevant policies, training products, procedures, and guidance.</p>	<p>Cheshire Constabulary has adopted the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation. It has been incorporated into our problem profile; monthly CSE threat assessments and our Child Protection Delivery Plan. The constabulary's training department has confirmed that the definition will be referenced within all future training products.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 By 31 March 2026, all police forces should fully adopt and use the Hydrant Programme's child sexual exploitation problem profile template as a minimum when preparing their 2025/26 child sexual exploitation problem profiles.</p>	<p>The constabulary's Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) implemented this recommendation in November 2025 which means that the constabulary is now presenting its problem profile in the required format.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 By 31 July 2026, all chief constables should use the Hydrant Programme's guidance so forces can efficiently and accurately identify child sexual exploitation and group-based child sexual exploitation in their police record management systems.</p>	<p>We are awaiting the guidance, but we will work proactively with colleagues from the Hydrant programme to ensure that the constabulary complies with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 By 31 July 2026, all police forces should devise a strategy to implement Operation Makesafe consistently and include this in their child sexual exploitation data returns to the Hydrant Programme. This strategy should include the adoption and use of the rebranded Operation Makesafe police and partnership marketing materials.</p>	<p>Cheshire Constabulary launched Operation Makesafe in May 2025. We will ensure that we include Operation Makesafe data in our child sexual exploitation returns to the Hydrant programme.</p>



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Commissioner's Response:

I welcome HMICFRS's findings on the policing response to group-based child sexual exploitation. While progress has been made, particularly in adopting the IICSA definition and strengthening problem profiles, further work is needed to ensure consistent case flagging, completion of specialist training, and the removal of victim-blaming language. I will hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering these improvements and for the full rollout of Operation Makesafe with partners. Through our scrutiny arrangements, we will monitor delivery against these priorities and report transparently to the public.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Price".

Dan Price

Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner

