

# **National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review**

**Cambridgeshire Constabulary  
5–9 September 2022**

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# Introduction

## Our 2021 inspection

In July 2021, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected how well Cambridgeshire Constabulary keeps children safe.

We made nine recommendations in the [Cambridgeshire – National child protection inspection report](#).

## The 2022 post-inspection review

In September 2022, we returned to the constabulary to carry out a post-inspection review.

During this inspection we:

- examined force policies, strategies and other documents;
- interviewed senior leaders, managers, supervisors, officers and [staff](#);
- carried out case sampling; and
- audited 24 child protection cases (6 cases were good, 5 required improvement and 13 were inadequate).

## Summary of findings from the post-inspection review

Cambridgeshire Constabulary has taken action to improve outcomes for children in line with our recommendations.

The constabulary responded quickly to review the diary appointment system in the demand hub ([force control room](#)) to make sure children are appropriately safeguarded.

It has changed the agenda of daily management meetings to focus on child protection. The meetings now give better oversight of cases in which children are [missing](#), in police protection, or in custody.

The constabulary is working to improve its oversight of performance and improvement activity by strengthening its vulnerability performance group. This is a monthly meeting that oversees performance and improvement activity, particularly in relation to [domestic abuse](#) and people reported missing. It has representation from across the constabulary, including leaders from neighbourhood policing, the demand hub, [intelligence](#) and investigations.

The vulnerability focus desks, introduced last year, have become well known and understood among those we spoke to. The desks are run by officers and staff experienced in working with [vulnerable people](#). They provide real-time advice and guidance to frontline staff on issues such as domestic abuse and missing people.

The constabulary has provided all officers and staff with additional training on speaking to children, understanding their experiences and recording them, so they can make better decisions. As a result, we have seen an improvement in officers and staff speaking to and recording the [voices of children](#), including their living environment.

We also saw improvement in:

- the use and recording of police protection powers; and
- managing registered sex offenders and sharing information with frontline staff.

However, we found some areas that still require improvement.

- We are concerned about the constabulary's response to children at risk of online [sexual exploitation](#). It needs to do more to prioritise investigations where children may be at risk.
- The constabulary's response when children are reported missing is still inconsistent.
- The constabulary still keeps children at the police station after charge when it shouldn't.

# Initial contact

## Recommendations from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary acts to make sure that children's concerns and views are consistently obtained and recorded (including noting their behaviour and demeanour).

We recommend that Cambridgeshire Constabulary immediately reviews the application of the diary appointment system used within the demand hub in domestic abuse incidents. This is to ensure children are appropriately safeguarded.

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary reviews its missing persons arrangements and practices to ensure that there is an effective response to vulnerable children throughout any incidents involving missing children.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

Officers and staff are better at speaking to children and understanding and recording their experiences.

The constabulary has improved oversight of the diary appointment system in the demand hub, but not all children are seen when they should be. It only uses telephone appointments when appropriate.

The response when children are reported missing is still inconsistent.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### **Officers and staff are better at speaking to children and understanding and recording their experiences**

The constabulary has taken action to encourage staff to speak to and listen to children. It developed an easy-to-follow VOICE mnemonic to help officers think broadly about the child and record their experiences.

- V – vulnerability
- O – observation
- I – intelligence
- C – curiosity and communication
- E – environment

All officers and staff have been trained in how to use VOICE. When they speak to children, officers use the mnemonic to record their interactions. The constabulary has changed its forms to help them to do this.

We saw VOICE being used regularly:

- in cases of domestic abuse;
- when children returned from a missing episode;
- when officers used their protective powers; and
- in the custody environment.

These improvements in speaking to children and understanding their lived experience are an important first step in making better decisions and assessments of need.

### **The constabulary has improved its oversight of the diary appointment system but not all children are seen when they should be**

The constabulary acted quickly to review its diary appointment system after our 2021 inspection. As a result of this review:

- the demand hub inspector must authorise all appointments;
- call takers must complete a [THRIVE risk assessment](#);
- appointments for domestic abuse incidents are booked for three hours to allow enough time for [safeguarding](#), risk assessments and a thorough investigation; and
- children who are present at a domestic abuse incident must, as far as possible, be seen and spoken to.

We sampled five domestic abuse cases with allocated diary appointments. They all followed the expected risk assessment process and were appropriate in the circumstances. However, in four of the five cases, children who were present at the time of the incident weren't seen or spoken to. This was because they were at school or unavailable at the time of the appointments.

### **Telephone appointments are usually only used when appropriate**

We found that telephone appointments for domestic abuse incidents should now only be used in exceptional circumstances. We sampled 23 incidents and found that 21 were appropriate. This is positive and shows staff in the demand hub understand the constabulary's expectations.

The other two telephone appointments involved estranged partners. In one case, the caller was worried that their children might be exposed to further domestic abuse. The other said their ex-partner was abusing drugs in front of their children. The constabulary didn't visit the children in either case.

The constabulary should make sure that children are seen whenever a safeguarding risk is raised.

### **The response when children are reported missing is still inconsistent**

When someone calls to report a child missing, staff complete a comprehensive questionnaire with them. This helps to determine risks and vulnerabilities. Call handlers then check the police systems and carry out a THRIVE risk assessment.

We found that the constabulary responded well when it identified a high risk, as shown in this case study.

#### **Case study**

A father reported his 15-year-old son was missing. The call handler identified the child had special educational needs. Checks of police systems revealed that he may be vulnerable to exploitation from a drug dealer.

The call handler identified the incident as high risk. They made a local supervisor aware.

The supervisor identified lines of enquiry and allocated resources to the search within 90 minutes.

However, the response is inconsistent when the risk is lower or less obvious. In some cases, we still saw delays allocating resources to look for children. Force guidelines say that a supervisor and the duty inspector should be informed when a child is reported missing. But, in many of the cases we audited, there was no indication that this happened. This can result in a lack of investigative direction.

In high-risk cases, the constabulary uses the command-and-control system to manage the response. In lower-risk cases, or when the person remains missing over a longer period, it uses the [COMPACT](#) system.

We saw that call handlers created a COMPACT record promptly when a case was reported. But, in many cases, investigating officers didn't create an investigative plan, or a record of what action they had taken.

Frontline officers we spoke to told us that they were unable to access COMPACT on their [mobile data terminals](#). This limits their ability to investigate and manage missing person cases properly. It also means important information may not be recorded.

### **Case study**

A care provider reported a 17-year-old boy missing when he didn't return at night.

He was known to be at risk of exploitation and the care provider suspected he was being used to transport drugs.

Call handlers recognised the boy was at high risk. But we saw no evidence that a local supervisor was co-ordinating enquiries, or that the duty inspector was aware of the incident.

The care provider called back in the early hours of the morning to say they had spoken to the boy on the phone but didn't know where he was.

The constabulary didn't make any further enquiries until after the case was reviewed at 8am, nine hours after he was first reported missing.

# Assessment and help

## Recommendations from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary improves its missing persons practices to make sure that its response is consistent with the risks identified in relation to children who are regularly missing, and that the supervision of these enquires are effective.

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary reviews its arrangements and practices to ensure that officers responding to domestic abuse incidents implement appropriate risk assessments, so that all children affected are seen and spoken with and their vulnerability is recorded, fully assessed and acted upon.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

The constabulary has improved its response when children regularly go missing, but more work is needed. It doesn't always take opportunities to prevent children going missing.

We saw some improvement in cases of domestic abuse, but more work is needed to make sure children are seen and spoken to.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### **The constabulary has improved its response when children regularly go missing, but more work is needed**

The vulnerability focus desks, which were introduced just before our inspection in 2021, have become well known and understood within the constabulary.

The desks are run by officers and staff who are experienced in working with vulnerable people. They provide real-time advice and guidance to their frontline colleagues on issues such as domestic abuse and missing people.

When a child regularly goes missing, their case goes to a named member of the vulnerability focus desk. This officer develops a [trigger plan](#) and gives advice if that child goes missing again.

We saw some good, comprehensive trigger plans and some officers we spoke to told us that they valued the advice when a child was missing.

But we also saw examples where officers didn't know there was a trigger plan or didn't use it to prioritise their enquiries. The constabulary needs to work harder to make sure trigger plans are used consistently.

Missing children are discussed at daily management meetings. This can help the constabulary to respond and make decisions on extra resourcing. However, children reported missing in the evening may not be discussed until the next morning's meeting. As discussed in [Initial contact](#), local supervisors are often not informed of cases during this period. These factors may delay or restrict the response.

### **The constabulary doesn't always take opportunities to prevent children going missing**

When call handlers create a missing child record on COMPACT, the system automatically notifies children's social care services. This happens quickly in most cases.

We found that officers often carry out good [prevention interviews](#) with children when they are found. The VOICE mnemonic helps them to record important information about the child's experience. This can help to better understand their reasons for going missing.

In many cases, we saw that the local authority didn't complete [return home interviews](#), or didn't share the details with the police. These interviews can uncover information that will help prevent the child going missing again. The constabulary should work with the local authority to make sure it receives this information.

None of the cases we reviewed resulted in a [strategy discussion](#) with the constabulary's [statutory safeguarding partners](#). This misses an opportunity to create joint plans that could help protect children in the longer term.

### **We saw some improvement in cases of domestic abuse**

The constabulary introduced an early intervention domestic abuse desk (EIDAD) shortly before our inspection in 2021. Officers and staff in the EIDAD team carry out reviews of domestic abuse incidents. They check the previous history of those involved, help determine risk factors, and add their research to the incident log. This can help officers to recognise when children are connected to an address, even if they aren't present when officers attend.

EIDAD is particularly useful in cases that appear complex or have a longer history. The team prepares a detailed information pack, which helps attending officers make better decisions.

We found frontline officers and staff understood the role of the EIDAD and generally valued the team's input.

We also saw that officers consistently completed [DASH risk assessments](#) when they attended domestic abuse incidents. However, they don't always provide enough detail.

The constabulary consistently shares DASH assessments with its safeguarding partners. But we found they didn't always add them to the [Athena](#) intelligence and case management system. This means that important information may not be available to officers attending future incidents. At the time of our post-inspection visit, the constabulary was about to introduce a new system that automatically adds DASH risk assessment records to Athena.

We were encouraged that officers and staff now consistently use their [body-worn video](#) when attending domestic abuse incidents.

### **More work is needed to make sure children are seen and receive timely support**

As explained on page four, some children who were present at domestic abuse incidents aren't seen during follow-up diary appointments, often because they are in school. This means children's experiences aren't understood in those cases.

The constabulary does share information with local schools, colleges and nurseries to help them support children. As part of [Operation Encompass](#), the [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) information manager reviews all of the domestic abuse incidents recorded on Athena. If a child was present, the constabulary provides their school with information.

However, this isn't always timely. The Athena record may not be made until several days after a diary appointment. This misses opportunities to support children when they need it most.

# Investigation

## Recommendation from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that Cambridgeshire Constabulary acts immediately to improve its approach to investigations related to the exploitation and abuse of children via the internet, paying particular attention to:

- making better use of the intelligence systems available to locate offenders;
- the risk assessment process; and
- sharing information sooner with safeguarding partners.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

The constabulary still doesn't make best use of intelligence tools to locate offenders and protect children. It now uses a nationally recognised prioritisation tool but doesn't keep to recommended timescales.

The constabulary has begun to work closely with its safeguarding partners but more needs to be done.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### **The constabulary still doesn't make best use of intelligence tools to locate offenders and protect children**

The constabulary has trained additional officers, including supervisors and managers, in how to use intelligence systems to identify and locate people who have a sexual interest in children. These are people who may be actively sharing sexual abuse images of children.

However, this hasn't resulted in significant improvement. We found 47 cases that the constabulary hadn't progressed in the past year. This means that the identities of possible suspects remain unknown when they needn't be. Unless possible suspects are identified, officers can't assess their access to children, whether they are in a position of trust, or the level of risk they pose.

The constabulary gives priority to cases sent to it by the National Crime Agency. These are usually referrals of concerns from tech companies. This means officers prioritise cases based on the source of the information rather than the apparent risk.

### **The constabulary now uses a nationally recognised prioritisation tool but doesn't keep to recommended timescales**

In 2021, we found that the constabulary wasn't using the nationally recognised [KIRAT](#) risk assessment tool. This tool helps officers to prioritise cases when suspects are known to be in possession of child abuse images and videos, and may go on to commit contact offences.

The constabulary now uses the tool. However, it doesn't follow the recommended timescales for action. For example, the KIRAT recommended time to act on a medium priority case is 14 days. Cambridgeshire has set itself a target of six weeks.

At the time of our visit only two cases graded high priority were awaiting activity. But there were 48 medium-priority and 56 low-priority cases where the suspect hadn't yet been visited.

### **The constabulary carries out limited research to find children at risk**

In a further 62 cases, the constabulary was working to identify the suspect and those at risk from them, in a process known as intelligence development. However, the constabulary has only allocated one officer to this work and hasn't provided them with accredited training for the role.

The checks being carried out in these cases are basic. Potential sources of information are being overlooked. For example, we found that the constabulary didn't ask health and education services to help find out if children were living with the suspect. Not knowing whether children are present affects the priority grading. This means some cases may incorrectly be graded as a low priority.

### **The constabulary has begun to work more closely with its safeguarding partners but more needs to be done**

The constabulary's child protection obligations are the same whether a person reports a concern, or the concern is identified through police intelligence.

Following our inspection, Cambridgeshire Constabulary agreed to hold regular meetings with local children's social care services about cases involving child sexual abuse material. This would help to ensure a consistent response and appropriate referrals in all cases, however they are identified.

We observed this meeting during our post-inspection review. We found that the constabulary used the meeting to get information about households it was investigating, rather than to refer cases to children's social care and agree joint plans. Instead, officers usually refer cases at the time they execute a search warrant. This practice doesn't fulfil the constabulary's obligations. More importantly, it doesn't take account of the risks to children.

The meeting can also lead to delay. Officers only take cases to it when they already know a child lives with the suspect. However, as we have discussed, the checks to find this out are basic and some cases may be missed as a result.

The constabulary waits for the meeting to ask children's social care services for information during intelligence development, though there is sometimes a gap of up to a month. Staff may be able to get the information much more quickly by checking with the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

The constabulary needs an approach to working together that:

- places the needs of children at the forefront of joint decision-making;
- doesn't delay the police response; and
- helps officers to discuss cases with other organisations and decide how to move forward.

We asked the constabulary to carry out an urgent review of those cases where it is aware of a risk to children.

### **Case study**

In March 2022, the constabulary became aware that a suspect had at least 17 videos of the worst category of child sexual abuse.

The suspect was a married man with two daughters aged 8 and 11. The constabulary graded the response as a medium priority. In April 2022, it mentioned the case at the weekly meeting with children's social care services. But no formal referral was made.

We visited the constabulary almost six months after it first knew of the risk to the children, and to unknown other children who may visit the suspect's home.

No activity had taken place to safeguard the children, search the home or arrest the suspect.

### **The constabulary plans to increase the size of the specialist team dealing with online child sexual abuse and exploitation**

We are pleased that the constabulary has recognised the need to increase the size of this specialist team. We were told it plans to add three investigators.

We found the team members we spoke to were committed, enthusiastic officers. They have to examine indecent images, read graphic descriptions of abuse and interview people who are actively sharing sexual abuse images of children about their offending. This is stressful and exposes them to trauma.

We found they didn't have enough time to complete some important tasks. For example, the officer responsible for uploading images to the [national child abuse image database](#) can't always do so because they are working on investigations. Cambridgeshire Constabulary has a backlog of 300 cases waiting to be uploaded. This means that database isn't as effective as it should be in helping forces investigate child sexual abuse offences nationally.

# Decision-making

## Recommendation from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary issues guidance to staff in instances where children are taken into police protection. This should include:

- advice on what information they should record (and in what form) on their systems to support good-quality decisions; and
- an emphasis on the importance of ensuring that records are made promptly and kept up to date.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

The constabulary has improved the forms for recording use of the police protection power. It has better oversight of how officers use the power, which has led to improvement. However, officers still don't consistently record the circumstances and time when the power ends.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### **The constabulary has improved the forms it uses for recording use of the police protection power**

Since our inspection, the constabulary has developed a template to help [designated officers](#) understand their powers and obligations, and what they need to record. This has had a positive impact and we saw real improvement in the cases we audited.

We saw that officers were now good at recording their reasons for authorising use of the power. They also understand that they need to discuss cases with their colleagues at shift handovers. We found the process was consistently documented while the power was in use, and that officers were making records promptly.

### **There is better oversight throughout the use of the power**

Use of the police protection power is now an agenda item at the constabulary's daily management meetings. Officers have ongoing discussions with children's social care services to make sure the power isn't used for longer than necessary. These discussions are recorded.

Officers also consistently record strategy discussions, including any outcome from the discussion – for example, if a [joint investigation](#) is agreed.

### **Officers still don't consistently record the circumstances and time when the power ends**

Although the constabulary is much better at recording the use of the police protection power, we found that they didn't always record how it ends. For example, the time the power ended and why it ended. This might be because it was replaced by another legal protection power given to the local authority, or the constabulary reached an informal agreement with the family.

Whatever the circumstances, it is always important to record the details to help officers dealing with future incidents make better decisions.

We were encouraged that the constabulary responded quickly to this feedback during our review and was already working to make improvements.

#### **Case study**

The mother of a four-year-old girl reported the child's father had threatened to kill them both.

Officers attended quickly and arrested the man. They established the child's mother wasn't fit to care for her and decided to use the police protection power.

The officers spoke to the child and took the time to understand her concerns. They checked on her living conditions and made a good record of her circumstances.

The designated officer authorised the decision to use the power and quickly spoke with children's social care services. They held a strategy discussion and placed the child with foster carers within three hours.

The police and children's social care services agreed a safety plan for the child. This was well recorded on police systems.

# Managing those posing a risk to children

## Recommendation from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that Cambridgeshire Constabulary immediately reviews its [public protection unit](#) arrangements and capabilities to ensure that appropriate information about risk from offenders in the community is shared consistently with frontline officers.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

Offender managers have closer working relationships with frontline staff.

Frontline staff now receive more information about registered sex offenders. More information is already available on force systems, and the constabulary is working to make that even more accessible.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### Offender managers have closer working relationships with frontline staff

The constabulary has renamed the team responsible for managing registered sex offenders as the [management of sexual offenders and violent offenders \(MOSOVO\)](#) unit. This makes its role and purpose much clearer to frontline staff.

The unit has expanded with four additional offender management staff. This means they each have fewer offenders to manage and more time to work with their frontline colleagues.

The MOSOVO team offers frontline staff the chance to work alongside them for short periods, sharing skills, knowledge and experience. This has helped raise awareness of the team and their work. It also helps frontline staff to learn more about offenders who pose a risk to the public in the areas they patrol. We heard that some frontline officers had been encouraged to apply for offender management roles as a result of going on these placements.

The constabulary has also provided the MOSOVO team with extra training in the [active risk management system](#) and risk management planning.

### **Frontline staff receive more information about registered sex offenders**

The constabulary now adds details of some registered sex offenders to its briefing and tasking system. This informs local officers, so they know who to be aware of while they are on patrol. A detective inspector reviews the information weekly.

The offenders being added to the system are the ones MOSOVO is most concerned about. The constabulary could consider adding lower-risk offenders to encourage local officers to gather intelligence about them.

We heard the MOSOVO detective inspector contributed to the constabulary's daily management meeting once a week. This is an opportunity to ask local officers to collect intelligence. It also raises the profile of the team and encourages closer working relationships.

### **More information is available on force systems**

We saw that all registered sex offenders in the constabulary area were flagged on the Athena system. This has many benefits:

- Call handlers can quickly see if a known offender lives close to an incident and can pass this on to attending officers.
- Officers can quickly identify if someone involved in an incident is a registered sex offender.
- The MOSOVO team is immediately alerted about intelligence and crime reports involving a managed offender.

The constabulary is developing a new map-based system that will make this information more accessible to those who need to know.

We were pleased the neighbourhood teams we spoke to knew about the registered sex offenders living in their areas. We were told that the amount of intelligence passed on by neighbourhood officers was still quite low, but the constabulary was working to improve this.

# Police detention

## Recommendations from the 2021 inspection report

We recommend that, within six months, Cambridgeshire Constabulary reviews the monitoring and effectiveness of arrangements for children in police detention with its safeguarding partners.

Within six months, the constabulary should strengthen its working practices with local authorities to ensure that children charged and refused [bail](#) are moved to appropriate [alternative accommodation](#) and not held in custody overnight.

Within six months, the constabulary should improve its programme of [vulnerability training](#) for staff working in custody to improve:

- the recording of information within custody logs to reflect the individual circumstances of a child and the investigation of the offence they have committed;
- the rationale for the action they have taken to detain, and continue to detain, a child; and
- how to obtain and record the voices of children by speaking to them and recording their wishes and demeanour.

## Summary of post-inspection review findings

The constabulary now works closely with its safeguarding partners to improve the experience of children in detention. Custody officers and staff have had additional training.

Staff support children when in custody, but they often don't share important information with children's social care services. The constabulary still keeps children at the police station after charge when it shouldn't.

## Detailed post-inspection review findings

### **The constabulary now works closely with its safeguarding partners to improve the experience of children in detention**

We were told that the constabulary had a monthly meeting with managers from children's social care services and the youth offending service to discuss cases and resolve issues. This reports into a quarterly joint performance meeting.

In that meeting, senior leaders review performance data and case audits, and discuss cases where necessary.

We found the audits tended to focus on data, rather than the experiences of children. For example, they review the number of requests made for alternative and secure accommodation, but not whether the reasons for the requests were good.

### **Custody officers and staff have had additional training**

The constabulary allows regular [continuing professional development](#) time for full-time custody officers to enhance their knowledge. Continuing professional development can help to address some of the themes that come out of the audit process. Custody officers and staff had received VOICE and vulnerability training at the time of our post-inspection visit.

To reinforce this training, the constabulary has created a vulnerability and care plan form. This makes it easier for the custody sergeant to ask arresting officers for information about the detained child, such as their vulnerabilities, risks they are exposed to, or their living conditions. This is encouraging. However, we found that most arresting officers didn't add any information when asked. More work should be done to encourage officers to provide more information when they have it.

### **Staff support children when in custody, but they often don't share important information with children's social care services**

From our audits, we found that inspectors reviewed the detention of children promptly. They made detailed records of these reviews. In some cases, they specifically recorded what children had to say, and their concerns.

We saw that children could access the [liaison and diversion](#) service in appropriate cases. [Appropriate adults](#) also attend promptly when called. This allows children to see and speak to adults other than the police.

But inspectors still regularly review detention over the phone, rather than face to face with a child, often without an appropriate adult. They are missing opportunities to communicate effectively with children and make decisions in their best interests.

We saw several cases with clear child safeguarding concerns, such as a risk of criminal exploitation, that weren't referred to children's social care services.

## **The constabulary still keeps children at the police station after charge when it shouldn't**

In our 2021 inspection, we found the constabulary didn't always transfer children to alternative accommodation appropriately.

Children shouldn't be kept in police custody after charge. They should be released into the care of the local authority and stay in alternative accommodation arranged by the local authority. The only exception is in rare cases when secure accommodation is needed – for example, if the child is at high risk of causing serious harm to others.

We saw examples when the constabulary continued to detain children after charge when the high bar for secure accommodation wasn't met. We found custody officers routinely asked for secure accommodation, rather than alternative accommodation, even though secure places were very limited. In some cases, this means that children aren't transferred to alternative accommodation and remain in police detention by default.

We also found that the issue was discussed at the time of charge. Earlier discussions would give officers more time to find suitable accommodation. It would also allow time to assess whether secure accommodation is needed and escalate the decision to senior leaders if needed. This would prevent some children being detained unnecessarily.

When the constabulary detains a child, it should complete a juvenile [detention certificate](#). We saw only one certificate in the five cases we audited. Custody officers we spoke to believed it was up to the inspector to complete them. The absence of certificates means that local courts often aren't aware of the reasons for detaining a child at the police station.

All of this results in children being detained at police stations when they shouldn't be. This has a traumatic impact on them. It is made worse because the constabulary doesn't have separate child detention facilities. Children are therefore exposed to the sights and sounds of adults being detained around them.

We were encouraged that some of these points were identified at the constabulary's most recent performance meeting. We are reassured the constabulary will be taking action.

## Next steps

Cambridgeshire Constabulary has made some progress in response to our 2021 recommendations. But the constabulary recognises that it still needs to improve in some areas, to provide consistently better outcomes for children.

We are confident that the constabulary understands where it needs to improve. We are also satisfied that senior leaders have plans to make these improvements and monitor progress.

As part of our routine monitoring of all police forces, we will continue to evaluate Cambridgeshire Constabulary's performance in relation to these recommendations and instigate closer scrutiny if necessary.

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