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Roger Baker, QPM, MBA, MA
HM Inspector of Constabulary

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Mr. Shaun Wright
Police and Crime Commissioner, South Yorkshire Police

Dear Shaun,

Re: South Yorkshire Police's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation Re-visit

I write following our inspection of South Yorkshire Police's response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) commissioned by yourself and published in November 2013. The purpose of this letter is to set out formally Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) feedback from the revisit of this inspection, conducted on 21 and 22 May 2014, and to elaborate on the areas that were covered with you and the force in separate hot debriefs.

The re-visit was undertaken as a result of the findings of our initial inspection conducted in late September and early October 2013 which commissioned 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.

That inspection contained 15 recommendations for South Yorkshire Police to progress either immediately, within three months or within six months. We stated our intention to revisit in Spring 2014 to assess the progress and improvements made by the force.

The terms of reference for the revisit were to conduct a review of progress against the 15 recommendations. The revisit methodology consisted of a document review, fieldwork in the force and liaison with the HMIC National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI) team who were in force at the same time. The NCPI team will report their findings in due course which will complement the findings of this report.

HMIC were grateful for the planning and preparation by South Yorkshire Police for this revisit, particularly as they were servicing the needs of two teams at once.

Since the original inspection, it is clear that South Yorkshire Police and you have invested considerably into the force's response to CSE. This is not just in relation to additional financial and human resources (30.41 additional staff to date at a cost of circa £1.5m), but also in other areas such as enhanced partnership engagement through the pan-South Yorkshire CSE Forum and engagement with other forces and organisations to identify and disseminate good practice.

The pace of change has had to be swift, and HMIC recognises the particular challenge of having to move to a centralised management structure which operates on a local footprint

within four unitary authority geographic areas. South Yorkshire Police has, quite rightly, prioritised its response and appears cognisant of the challenges it faces to reach its self-defined destination of Platinum status by April 2015 with the introduction of a further 26 staff at a further cost of circa £1.15m.

As a result of the revisit, HMIC have assessed progress towards implementation of the 15 recommendations, and a summary of those assessments is provided below, split into the three categories previously mentioned.

1. 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.

Whilst an expeditious audit was conducted after the inspection and supervised by a senior officer, there does not appear to be a systematic process for continuous independent auditing of cases. Whilst there are examples of local practice, the force would benefit from a corporate auditing policy with a clear process including what was expected as part of this process, audited recording mechanisms and analysis of audits to assist with future continuous improvements.

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.

This delay centred on the deployment of officers to a serious, complex and force-wide multi-offender CSE investigation, Operation Klan. Upon the conclusion of Operation Klan, officers were returned to districts to locally-based public protection units. This was communicated to the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and other interested parties.

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.

This post has been filled following the inspection.

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.

A locally-based triage system is in the process of being introduced to prioritise demand which is sent to an external provider for assessment. The force continues to seek to identify further solutions, for example collaboration with regional forces and in-house solutions identified through the recently conducted internal review of the Hi Tech Crime Unit. The force needs to ensure that it monitors timescales so that any increases are identified and managed effectively.

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.

A full audit took place of current CSE investigations and recent prosecutions, under the leadership of a senior officer. This review, Operation Meadow, assists in identifying required

changes to procedures by reviewing previous cases allowing the force to continually develop its approach to CSE. The force also seeks good practice from the College of Policing and has been 'peer assessed' by West Yorkshire Police.

2. 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.

It was clear in the revisit that the focus on CSE as a priority in South Yorkshire Police is clearly understood by staff and partners who are also aware of South Yorkshire Police's strategic CSE leadership. South Yorkshire Police has a comprehensive four year CSE communications strategy with clearly identified key messages and processes for effective stakeholder management and engagement.

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 risk assessment tool has been assessed by a Sheffield City Council children social care manager and declared fit for purpose. Staff have been trained in its use and good evidence was identified of joint partner assessment of relevant cases in a timely fashion. The West Yorkshire Police peer assessment recommended consideration be given for a offender tool which would further assist. It is noted though that the force is exploring partnership Integrated Offender Management (IOM) opportunities in relation to identified offenders.

The force should translate the PCCs strategic priorities into operational delivery on the ground.

Protecting vulnerable people remains a clear strategic priority in the PCC's refreshed Police and Crime Plan (PCP) with a clear articulation of the baseline position, where the PCC and force wants to be and how they will get there.

The CSE Minimum Standards document, published in December 2013, had not been seen by all staff consulted as part of the revisit and the force needs to ensure staff are both aware of this document and fully understand and comply with it.

The force needs to ensure that a clear, robust and corporate implementation plan is initiated around its strategic intention as it strives to Platinum status by April 2015. This plan should not solely be based on structural changes but also include internal and external process improvement to maximise its effectiveness, a quantitative and qualitative business benefits realisation process and risk management. The commissioned LEAN systems based review (and its findings) due to commence by July 2014 will further assist this process.

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.

The introduction of new staff has had a perceived impact on a more manageable workload for CSE staff and, as a consequence, HMIC noted a positive difference in the improved wellbeing of staff. Sergeants monitor the workload of their staff which inevitably at times has to rely on intuition and the complex nature of individual cases. A corporate formal workload assessment for frontline officers would assist in the risk management of cases along with the development of staff.

As the force moves towards Platinum status it needs to ensure it has an appropriate resource allocation model for the additional staff which is based not just on demand but other related factors.

3. 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 has demonstrated a clear commitment to training not only its public protection unit staff but also its wider workforce. The introduction of a full-time dedicated training resource will ensure that training and development continues to be fully embedded and delivered.

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.

Whilst the force has moved expeditiously to make appropriate changes to its structure, it now needs to concentrate on building on a more corporate pan-South Yorkshire approach to CSE. HMIC understand the challenges faced working in a multi-agency environment across four local authority areas, but the force can be clear and corporate in its own operational response. Examples were provided during the revisit of differing practice's district by district, for example, missing from home management. However, it was encouraging to note that PPU staff do see themselves as a central resource and are managed as such during times of high demand.

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

The South Yorkshire Police review of intelligence resulted in each of the four districts, along with the force intelligence cell, having a dedicated 'protecting people desk' with responsibility for child abuse/sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, rape, hate crime and homicides.

There is clear interaction between the new intelligence function and public protection unit teams though there are opportunities for inefficiencies to be driven out to make this relationship more effective, for example, ensuring that intelligence reports are sent to the most appropriate person for assessment.

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

The force has introduced dedicated analytical support (two posts) for CSE. Their roles include assisting public protection unit with ongoing investigations and publishing commissioned problem profiles. The last full CSE problem profile was published in November 2013 with 12 clear recommendations. However, it is unclear how these profile recommendations appear to have been considered to inform the current CSE action plan / strategy.

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

HMIC is impressed with the force's commitment to this area of intelligence management and the development of innovative tactics.

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.

HMIC understands the challenge of sharing information in a secure and lawful manner particularly when there are complex external relationships. The force continues to explore multi-agency platforms to eradicate duplication of effort and has made good ground into the ability for agencies to share information within a proportionate and necessary legal framework. A new multi-agency information sharing protocol has been agreed and has now been implemented.

In conclusion, South Yorkshire Police has reacted well to the recommendations of the original inspection which has had to occur at a rapid pace to ensure that the response in tackling CSE is appropriate and safeguards young people. HMIC recognises that this is a journey with a defined destination, and the force acknowledges there is still some way to go in reaching this destination.

South Yorkshire Police now needs to construct a robust and accountable implementation plan as it moves forward to not just continue to concentrate on 'what' is required but, as important, 'how' it will be done, and 'how' the force know it is being done through appropriate quality assurance. This will further strengthen and build on a corporate pan-South Yorkshire approach.

HMIC will continue to monitor progress through its inspection programme and through our Lead Staff Officer, Superintendent Spedding, who can also provide you with any further information you require regarding the revisit.

Yours sincerely



HM Inspector of Constabulary