

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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10 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC Inspection: 'Online and on the edge: real risks in a virtual world'

In line with my statutory responsibilities I am writing in formal response to the HMIC 'Online and on the edge: real risks in a virtual world' from 2015. Whilst I appreciate that some time has elapsed since the publication of the report this does afford me the opportunity to provide a more considered response now that Dorset Police have had time to fully consider the report recommendations and implement any required changes.

The recommendations from this inspection are owned by the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Board and I can update as follows:

Tenure, succession planning and supervision

The Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) are not subject to specific tenure but do receive three monthly health monitoring and close supervision. Succession planning is also in place to identify suitable candidates and train them to fill any anticipated vacancies.

Further resource has also been placed in the POLIT recently to increase resilience and supervisory support.

Scrutiny of Out of Court Disposals (OoCDs)

Online CSE is included on a specific list (including domestic abuse and knife crime) which is routinely reviewed by the OoCD Scrutiny Panel. Two Detective Inspectors have responsibility for the online CSE crime area and, since October 2015, routinely scrutinise all OoCDs as an additional element of scrutiny.

In October 2015 I also published the findings of an independent review of OoCDs which I had commissioned. A number of recommendations arose from the report which have all been accepted and will further enhance the OoCD arrangements locally once fully implemented.

Social Media applications and IT systems

Training and guidance has been provided to officers with regard to social media and cyber-crime investigations. Student officers also now receive specific cyber-crime training which includes an input from digital media investigators.

Further resources have also been made available across Force and additional training for frontline officers and staff is in development.

The POLIT has access to all relevant IT systems including the CPS and the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID).

Risk assessment

Dorset Police use the Kent Initial Risk Assessment Tool (KIRAT) to categorise risk in relation to relevant cases – this is the approved tool of the National Crime Agency (NCA). Engagement with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) partners also takes place to identify any further relevant information when assessing risk. This specifically assesses any risk around potential or future access to children by offenders.

Where applicable, suspects will be remanded to prevent further offending and to safeguard their own welfare. If bailed, appropriate measures are also taken to prevent offending and manage safety. Post-conviction offenders will generally become Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) and be managed through Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

In terms of prevention, the Public Protection Unit (PPU) of Dorset Police run ongoing prevention campaigns to alert parents and children to the risks and threats in the online environment.

Problem profiling

The Force have developed and regularly update problem profiles across all of the protecting vulnerable people strands using a set model. Redacted versions are also being prepared for partners.

Dorset Police are also collaborating with Bournemouth University to ensure that Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) analysts and researchers have an improved understanding of the risks and outcomes affecting children and vulnerable people in this area. All FIB training courses are also being reviewed to ensure compliance with relevant professional accreditation.

CSE investigation allocation

All cases are risk assessed using the Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF) which categorises victims from minimal to significant risk. All significant risk cases are then managed by the dedicated CSE team and allocated a specific Officer In Charge (OIC).

Moderate and minimal risk cases are managed by a single agency (Social Services) with oversight by the Missing Persons Unit (MPU). This allows for victims of CSE to be provided with a consistent police officer contact to assist in building relationships and trust.

Communicating and engaging with children and young people

The Safer Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) carry out a programme of education for children and parents around the safe use of social media to assist young people in being able to protect themselves online. A Working Group is also examining ways to engage with harder to reach groups of young people to enable early intervention.

Wider safeguarding opportunities

The police and local safeguarding partners have undertaken considerable investment in education to raise awareness of, and prevent, online CSE. One example would be all designated safeguarding leads from schools in Dorset receiving a briefing on the threat and level 3 CSE training by the SSCT in 2015. The SSCT have also undertaken a wider programme of education within schools on this issue.

Work also continues to further develop the MASH to make it fully integrated, co-hosting the three strategic local authorities and health partners locally. It is also planned that the CSE team will be co-located within the MASH as well.

The POLIT operating model has developed an in-house capability to ensure the timely execution of warrants and charges. The examination of high risk cases are kept in-house to support prosecutions and resources have been aligned to facilitate the harnessing of appropriate capability to support high risk CSE cases. Regional work also continues to further develop and improve Hi-Tech Crime Unit (HTCU) submissions and processes.

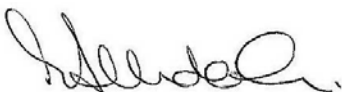
Good practice regime

A College of Policing review has identified the Dorset approach to the management of CSE cases and online child sexual abuse (CSA) as good practice, which has seen a number of other forces visit Dorset Police to learn from this.

The regional coordinator for CSE within the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) has also identified Dorset as an area of good practice and is looking to share this across the South West Region.

I can confirm that I have consulted with the Chief Constable in formulating this response and trust that this provides you with the necessary reassurance around action being taken locally by Dorset Police in response to the relevant HMIC report recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner