

RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT

An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency (NCA) tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children

Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

All victims of all sexual offences need, and deserve, prompt safeguarding, quality investigations with perpetrators swiftly brought to justice through the criminal justice system. I welcome this inspection and have made it clear to the force I expect the greatest tangible improvements across all measures to be delivered by the Force in relation to sexual abuse and the exploitation of children.

A strong strategy and governance structure is paramount, for delivery. I recognise the regional and force strategies complement one another with the Strategic Governance Group (SGG) and will seek assurances the control strategy delivers, and performance is measured.

I will also monitor the forces' ability to meet HMICFRS expectations which stipulate sufficient staff are trained to carry out their responsibilities, KIRAT risk assessments are completed and that processes are in place to share information with partner agencies and safeguard children effectively.

It is imperative Wiltshire Police work in an effective and efficient manner with SW ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit), and so the NCA. The recommended collaboration can only function effectively through the timely exchange of information enabling the expected frontline response in Wiltshire from Central Pursue boards. I will scrutinise force crime allocation for its effectiveness to ensure cases are allocated to those with the necessary skills and training to investigate them.

The forces CIET and early intervention input in schools will enable prevention before a crime can occur and must meet the national curriculum educational standards. Enabling protection through education must become a role embraced by all partner agencies to maximise the impact.

I have commissioned First Light, Child Independent Sexual Violence advisors a service which allows referrals for all types of online grooming and exploitation type offences. Allowing OIC (officer in the case) and self-referrals be made direct through the First Light Website, with performance measured by the MOJ (Ministry of Justice).

To prevent sex offenders using the internet to groom, exploit and abuse children, the force and partner agencies must work closely and to the highest of standards collectively protecting children from harm.

