



RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION INSPECTIONS, 2019 THEMATIC REPORT (FEBRUARY 2020)

Chief Constable's comments

The Chief Constable of Wiltshire notes the NCPI report and is committed to addressing the recommendations highlighted. A comprehensive overview of each recommendation, detailed below, demonstrates progress in the area of Child Protection and the strength of partnership working.

Business area lead; Wiltshire Police works well in the area of child protection and notes the NCPI report and recommendations held within it. Wiltshire Police has strong working protocols in place that facilitate good partnership working and safeguarding arrangements. Below provides an overview of current position in terms of recommendations.

| Recommendations | Wiltshire response |
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| <p>We recommend that chief constables take steps to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children. Such steps could include (but don't need to be limited to) considering fully a child's circumstances when making decisions; more effective use of legislation to discontinue prosecutions not in the public (or child's) interest; the development of more effective non-criminal justice pathways for vulnerable children who commit lower level crimes.</p> | <p>Wiltshire Police has a Youth Restorative Intervention Panel (YRIP) in place to reduce unnecessary criminalisation of children, which works well to track children away from criminalisation. Launched in February 2019, this panel offers diversion, support and intervention to young people that are coming to police attention but are yet to receive a statutory disposal (Youth Caution).</p> <p>YRIP is a multi-agency decision making process that allows further information to be captured about the young people (static/ dynamic factors), and will also be able to identify the most appropriate professionals to work with and deliver targeted intervention. Agencies include; Police, YOT, Youth Engagement Service, Substance Misuse services, Education, Social Car and Restorative Together.</p> <p>The first annual report details 258 referrals into the YRI Panel. Each referral has been subject to a multi-agency discussion, in order to find alternatives to statutory disposal options.</p> |

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| | <p>A review of Child Exploitation activity was completed in November 2019 and a proposal paper drafted with recommendations to form an Exploitation Team. Once in place this team will focus on identifying and diverting children away from crime. The recommendations have been incorporated into the overarching FIM review activity, which is currently on hold during Covid-19. Business Continuity and alternative solutions to identifying those at risk are being tested. For example; working with Early Intervention and OPCC to pilot youth workers in the community during government lockdown.</p> <p>The CE Assessment Tool Working Group chaired by Head of PPD provides governance. The group consists of Intelligence, Early Intervention, Missing, CE officer (Swindon), and partnership including contextual safeguarding leads to review processes, gateway referral criteria and pathway options available for those at risk of CE currently.</p> |
| <p>We recommend that chief constables should review performance management and quality assurance approaches to ensure that assessments of the nature and quality of decision making are routinely made. The purpose of this would be to reinforce the understanding that compliance with policy or process is only one part of effective practice.</p> | <p>Wiltshire Police has the VOB (Vulnerability and Operations Board) in place, which meets monthly and looks specifically at all areas of vulnerability, presentations of performance data have been included for Child Sexual Exploitation. This board reviews quality assurance across vulnerability areas.</p> <p>Regular audits are conducted into long term child abuse investigations to identify any learning processes, which are then integrated for improvement. Wiltshire utilises 'working together' as a good partnership approach, co-ordinating this and APP together to ensure best possible service.</p> <p>A dedicated Practice Review Manager role is in place to oversee 'practice reviews' on serious case reviews (SCR), Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) domestic homicide reviews (DHR) with learning also being integrated where needed. Where police learning is identified the portfolio lead and operational staff are included for any improvement activity and reported to VOB and the Quality Assurance and Performance meeting structure for both Local Authority areas. At the end of the last reporting period there were 32 reviews active; four DHR's, 19 CSPR's and 9 SAR's.</p> <p>MASH Audit process - multi-agency audit of safeguarding responses is performed on a weekly basis each Friday, involving representatives from police, health and social care. Up to 8 cases are randomly selected from that week some reaching threshold for multiagency intervention and some where the threshold was not reached. For children where the threshold to proceed to section 47 investigation has not been reached actions can be reviewed to ensure that interventions are effective, responses proportionate and families signposted to appropriate services. Where the threshold has been reached, multiagency partners can ensure the decision is appropriate and clearly documented, and the referrer notified of the outcome.</p> |

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| <p>We recommend that chief constables on those forces not yet inspected by the NCPI or JTAI take steps to identify and implement good practice and the learning highlighted from these programmes. This may include engaging with those forces who have been inspected, direct contact with the HMICFRS child protection lead or participating in a regional or national learning event.</p> | <p>Wiltshire Police is a continuous improvement organisation, reviewing processes and ensuring self-assessments to support checking and testing processes utilising information from other force areas to inform, for example North Wales report in relation to the Child Protection self-assessment completed in October 2019 and preparation activity with both Local Authorities for the Children’s Mental Health during December 2019/January 2020 utilising learning from Plymouth’s JTAI. This is demonstrated in a number of continuous improvement plans detailing areas of focus. A College of Policing peer review is being considered to further inform activity.</p> <p>Wiltshire participate in a number of regional meetings and national conferences, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEIT regional meetings to review new technology, compare processes and share best practice opportunities for improvement. • Regional MASH meetings to identify issues experienced and opportunities to problem solve. • Regional Child Death meeting • Annual CSE Conference • Annual Hydrant Conference • Annual Child Death Conference |
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Police and Crime Commissioner’s comments

I welcome the “National Child Protection Inspections” thematic report which comprehensively builds on the findings of the previous report from 2015 and further draws on the key themes identified from all 64 inspections. I also welcome and support Her Majesty’s Inspector, Wendy Williams’ call for leaders in all agencies to come together to form “clear local strategies to reduce risk and protect children at risk from abuse and exploitation”.

Whilst, a local strategic approach is vital to ensure that all partners and agencies are fully aligned and supportive of the same strategy which needs to be further embedded in their operational activities, I recognise that the national leaders need to showcase their commitment to support early intervention. In this regard, I endorse the recommendation that the Home Office jointly with other government departments should consider the development of a new national early help and prevention strategy to more effectively address the root causes of harm for vulnerable children. The earliest indicators of risk and vulnerability can be easily missed in relation to complex investigations, therefore a coherent whole system approach would be beneficial to make sure that cumulative trauma can be prevented.

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19, my office - Commissioning team - were in the process of working with Wiltshire Council and partner agencies to engage in Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) and Trauma informed training. Due to the impact of COVID, it is the intention to source additional training for the force once

we are in the stages of recovery. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) and Trauma informed training, will support the workforce to adopt a consistent, evidence based approach to support secure attachment; promote resilience and be trauma informed.

The key aims will be to upskill the workforce supporting children, young people and families to promote self-regulation and resilience; to be trauma informed; and understand the impact of adult responses to the behaviour of children, young people and families to improve outcomes. A partnership approach will support continuity of common language and understanding amongst agencies working with children and families.

As already indicated, I am responding to this report during the times when we are facing a global pandemic of coronavirus disease. During times of governmental lockdown, we all must recognise how easy is to turn to the internet for social interaction, education and work. With increased time online comes increased risk, therefore Wiltshire Police, Public Protection Department has proactively wrote an open letter to parents to appeal to them to talk to their children about risks they are facing online. As we increase our activity online so do those who seek to cause us harm through fraud, scamming, grooming and child sexual exploitation. I have been re-assured by the Force Digital Investigations and Intelligence Unit, which I specifically allocated the money from the precept increase in 2019/2020, that they are closely monitoring any developments and continue offering guidance on social media.

Recognising these unprecedented times, the Wiltshire Police Early Intervention team have ensured that the parents can easily access and view the signposting and resourcing information on the Wiltshire Police website including agencies offering help with information on children's safety, children's mental health, e-safety, a parent's guide to technology.

I would also like to highlight the close collaboration between the Early Intervention team and my office which has led to extra support for the communities during government lockdown. Under my strategic leadership, the Commissioning Team works in a successful partnership with both local authorities and their Youth Offending Teams to help young people stay away from crime and provide them with opportunities to ensure that they feel valued and productive members of the community. The YOTs form part of the wider Early Help Service provided by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. My office has also contributed to SMASH which is a pilot scheme offering mentoring service for children in schools. These projects showcase an excellent partnership work with local authorities and contribute to the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan. One of the priorities in the Plan is to protect the most vulnerable people in society and I feel very strongly that vulnerable children receive the utmost support and protection.

I am pleased to hear that the report informs the public that the understanding of child sexual exploitation has improved. In the Wiltshire Council local authority area, council staff and police officers work collaboratively in a multi-agency group called

the Emerald Team which delivers direct interventions with children and their families to reduce the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation and other types of exploitation such as criminal exploitation and county lines. A similar multi-agency group exists within the Swindon Borough Council area, and is called the Opal Team. Both teams are building on 'contextual safeguarding' on how people address concerns for young people when they are vulnerable to harm coming from outside of their home and family.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that to recognise signs of vulnerability promptly and effectively in order to protect children requires all partners to take responsibility for their own work and to work collaboratively with each other to support the whole system approach.

Cc: Wendy Williams, HMI
Chief Constable Kier Prichard, Wiltshire Constabulary