



31st May 2023

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to:

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

It was concerning to read the report on how well the police and National Crime Agency (NCA) tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. While this is a complex area of work, it is clear that there is a need for nationally agreed minimum standards of practice. Dyfed-Powys was one of the police forces that were involved in the inspection, and I was pleased to see that the Force had been identified as an example of promising practice.

The Force employs an analyst to identify children at risk and suspects. Analysts review webchat information from suspects to identify potential offenders and child victims. Analysts also prioritise cases so that the Force can investigate the highest risk cases in the first instance. They also refer children identified to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

Dyfed-Powys Police is also working with a local university to devise an artificial intelligence programme to help alert children when they are being groomed.

In my Police and Crime Plan, I shared that Dyfed-Powys Police anticipated a rise in child exploitation, online protection issues and violence against children (in relation to the Removal of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment). I made it my priority for the vulnerability of children and young people, as victims or perpetrators, to be recognised and responded to in a child-centred, trauma-informed way.

I am confident that Dyfed-Powys Police have a significant focus on tackling online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Nine recommendations within the report were specific to police forces and/or Police and Crime Commissioners:

Recommendation 1

By 31 October 2023, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for child protection should work with chief constables and chief officers with responsibilities for regional organised crime units to introduce regional collaboration and oversight structures to support the Pursue board. This should:

- **improve the link between national and local leadership and the frontline response;**



- **provide detailed, consistent scrutiny of performance; and**
- **meet chief constables' obligations for tackling online child sexual abuse and exploitation, as set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement.**

A quarterly regional Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) meeting is chaired by the Detective Superintendent with the responsibility for the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA), which includes child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. This meeting includes representation from the four Welsh forces and the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU). It has a live regional delivery plan and is responsible for the collation of regional CSAE data, which is then analysed to provide intelligence for police forces and external agencies. An example of the work that is currently being supported by this group is the response to vape shops which are linked to exploitation and CSAE.

A regional representative also attends the PURSUE board on behalf of the region and is the conduit between the national bodies and local police forces.

Recommendation 2

By 31 October 2023, chief constables, the director general of the National Crime Agency and chief officers with responsibilities for regional organised crime units should make sure they have effective data collection and performance management information. This is so they can understand the nature and scale of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in real time and its impact on resources, and so forces and the National Crime Agency can react quickly to provide adequate resources to meet demand.

The Force provides data to the regional CSAE analyst so that information can be collated, and intelligence packages can be produced. The Tarian region (Tarian operates across three police force areas in Wales: South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed-Powys) is one of the first regions to produce a problem profile on CSAE which has been prepared for dissemination to forces with a version for partner agencies. Regional CSAE information is shared at each quarterly meeting and shared with SchoolBeat (Wales Schools Police Programme) staff across Wales.

Recommendation 5 *[please note that this recommendation relies on recommendation 3 and 4: the creation of interim guidance by NPCC, NCA and CoP; the creation of sufficient training material by NPCC, NCA and CoP by Apr 2024]*



By 30 April 2025, chief constables should make sure officers and staff dealing with online child sexual abuse and exploitation have completed the right training to carry out their roles.

Whilst awaiting the new training requirements, the Force is ensuring that all investigators are required to undertake the Op Modify training. All new police recruits and Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP) attendees receive an input on online investigations. Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) staff receive bespoke training to utilise products and systems which are intrinsic to their role including the Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool (KIRAT) training. All Detectives in the Force Intelligence Bureau will also receive this training during 2023.

Recommendation 8

By 31 July 2023, chief constables should satisfy themselves that they are correctly sharing information and making referrals to their statutory safeguarding partners in cases of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is to make sure they are fulfilling their statutory obligations, placing the protection of children at the centre of their approach and agreeing joint plans to better protect children who are at risk.

Dyfed-Powys Police's processes were acknowledged by HMICFRS in the Force's 2021 PEEL inspection as reflecting this practice and were discussed positively during the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) online thematic inspection in 2022.

A dip sample was conducted earlier this year confirming that the referrals are being received in a timely fashion by the Central Referral Unit (CRU) who are then able to share the information with partners in accordance with legislation.

A further dip sample of the timeliness of information shared with Local Authorities has shown that the Force shares almost all referrals within 24 hours, enabling the Local Authority to convene a prompt strategy discussion.

Recommendation 9

By 31 October 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should make sure their commissioned services for children, and the process for referring them for support or



therapeutic services, are available for children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation.

My commissioned Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) service provides specialist Children and Young People ISVAs and crisis workers. These can support children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation as well as contact offences.

Recommendation 11

By 31 July 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should review the advice they publish, and, if necessary, revise it, to make sure it is consistent with the National Crime Agency's ThinkUKnow (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) material.

The Force is currently reviewing this recommendation and any remedial activity, and they have assured me that this will be completed by the deadline.

Recommendation 13

With immediate effect, chief constables should satisfy themselves that their crime allocation policies make sure online child sexual abuse and exploitation cases are allocated to those with the necessary skills and training to investigate them.

The Force's Crime Allocation Policy states explicitly that crime reports are assessed using the THRIVES (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigative opportunities, Vulnerability, Engagement, Safeguarding) model, and subsequently allocated to the appropriately trained member of staff. Whilst it does not mention specific crime types, the Force has assured me that this policy applies to CSAE.

Recommendation 14

With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure their force meets any existing recommended timescales for activity targeting online child sexual abuse and exploitation, and arrange their resources to meet those timescales. Then, six months after the new prioritisation tool is implemented, they should carry out a similar review.



I have been advised that an audit has recently been undertaken of the timeliness of enforcement activity in response to online packages. There is a 2–3-week average timescale from when a referral is received to a KIRAT (risk assessment tool) being completed. This timeframe is where enquiries are completed to identify the likely suspect of the offending. Where a likely suspect cannot be identified, the KIRAT is completed with all adult nominals linked to the address and the highest risk considered.

Of the 67 cases audited, based on the KIRAT risk assessment, all but 16 met the recommended criteria. The delays were mainly attributed to resourcing issues, which are being reviewed.

Recommendation 16

By 31 October 2023, chief constables should work with their local criminal justice boards to review and, if necessary, amend the arrangements for applying for search warrants. This is to make sure the police can secure warrants quickly when children are at risk. This review should include the feasibility of remote communication.

I am informed there are no known issues with obtaining urgent warrants, but the Force will continue to monitor whether there is an issue.

Whilst I am satisfied with Dyfed-Powys Police's focus on online child sexual abuse and exploitation, I will follow up the recommendations from this report with the Chief Constable in due course, to seek assurance that progress continues to be made.