

Purpose

1. To update members on force progress around the delivery of recommendations laid out by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report (February 2022).

Background

2. A report was presented by the PCC to the Police and Crime Panel on 9th September 2022 which detailed how the PCC holds the force to account for the delivery of all the recommendations in this report. (Appendix 1)

The IICSA report contained information for Durham Constabulary and the Local Authority regarding how child sexual exploitation is facilitated by organised crime networks. The report included recommendations made by HMICFRS in their 2020 Child Protection Inspection. Below contains the areas highlighted by the IICSA report which pertain to Durham Constabulary:

- Ensuring that victim blaming is avoided.
- Child sexual exploitation services available for boys and young men.
- Recognising potentially increased vulnerability due to disability.
- Missing - Children in Care.
- Ethnic minority data.
- Recognising potentially increased vulnerability due to LGBTQ+.
- Child exploitation vulnerability tracker referral matrix.
- Child Abduction Warning Notices.
- Disaggregation of data.

Progress Update

3. Durham Constabulary have established partnerships with Durham and Darlington local authorities through their Safeguarding Partnerships, who participate in the joint strategic Child Exploitation Group (CEG) alongside other partners. Durham Constabulary have a dedicated Child Exploitation Team and as a result of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), Durham Constabulary requested a peer review to ensure that its partnerships are working effectively so that those most at risk are identified and that adequate resources are in place to protect, support and safeguard.

4. In addition, to the original request Durham Constabulary was offered and accepted an expanded peer review which included Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. This part of the review was led by the Modern Slavery Organised Immigration Crime Unit (MSOICU) and ran in conjunction with the Vulnerable Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) peer review.
5. The aims and objectives of the VKPP peer review are indicated below:
 - To complete an independent assessment of the current CSE and CSA service provision and identify any improvements for children and young people to ensure they are better supported and safeguarded.
 - To identify emerging practice in Durham and share good practice from other Forces.
 - To review processes and practice, highlighting inconsistencies to ensure a consistent model is provided across both areas and silo working is avoided.
 - To review how the force is delivering against the National Vulnerability Action Plan in respect of the initial response, safeguarding and multi-agency working.
6. The overall assessment from the review carried out in May 2023 was positive and Durham Constabulary has good internal and external structures in place. Partnership buy in is a strength for the Force as partners are supportive and have a positive view of the Force and its staff. Partner and staff clearly have a good working relationship with a strong focus on striving to achieve the best for children and young people.
7. Overall, the review team found that the multiagency structures and processes that had been established were sound and required minor improvements rather than wholesale change.
8. Considerations for Improvement:
 - Whilst training is available, improvements could be made. The Force could consider a training needs assessment to ensure staff receive pertinent training for their role, with built in refresher training and continuous professional development opportunities.
 - Consider reviewing the challenge and escalation process for cross border handovers to ensure Forces take responsibility for children moving out of Durham.
 - The Force with partners could consider building upon the successful “through the eyes of the child” campaign to include CSE/CSA.
 - The Force and wider partnership to consider a more data driven approach. Analytical work does not appear to be driving business or feeding into long term strategies and there is a lack of regular problem profiles and analytical support within departments.

- In conjunction with partners the Force could consider refreshing governance arrangements, including the terms of reference, attendance, strategic priorities, decision making record, escalation process, outcomes and the performance framework. Once agreed by attendees the Communications Team could raise awareness of the governance structures internally and externally and assist the flow of information between the strategic and operational meetings. The strategic CEG may also wish to reiterate the roles and responsibilities to the chairs of the operational CEG and MEG to ensure a flow of information, updates and feedback takes place between these groups and the strategic CEG.
 - Consider further dip sampling regarding the Victim's Contract to ensure children are not only receiving updates, but that these are delivered in a manner that they are able to understand.
9. The VKPP peer review findings have been shared with the OPCC and emerging good practice across other Force areas is also being considered to support the Force in delivering the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan related to child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.
10. Whilst the PCC is confident that this area of business is being considered appropriately by the Force, progress continues to be tracked on a regular basis. This will allow for greater assurance and a deeper understanding of how well the Force are able to respond and manage recommendations given by independent reports and peer reviews.

Recommendation

11. Police and Crime Panel members are to note the contents of this report.

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

n/a

Staffing

n/a

Equality and Diversity

n/a

Accommodation

n/a

Crime and Disorder

n/a

Children's Act 2004

n/a

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

n/a

Environment

n/a

Collaboration and Partnerships

n/a

Value for Money and Productivity

n/a

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

n/a

Commissioning

n/a

Other risks

n/a