

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMICFRS) - The multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment (February 2020).

[The report can be found here](#)

Between September 2018 and May 2019 six joint targeted area inspections, focusing on the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment were carried out. Inspectorates Ofsted, HMICFRS, Care Quality Commission and HMI Probation targeted Bracknell Forest, Cornwall, Derby City, Islington, Shropshire and York.

On 4th February 2020 their joint report was published with the following key findings:

- Practice is too police-led, focusing on the criminal investigation at the expense of children
- Poor-quality criminal investigations
- Preventative work is absent or focused on known offenders
- Professionals rely too heavily on children to speak out about abuse
- Some initiatives are working well, but these are too piecemeal

This is a national report which excludes Nottinghamshire Police but nevertheless there are some useful findings to consider and respond to locally.

The report identifies that familial abuse accounts for some two thirds of all child sex abuse, though the true figure could be even higher due to under-reporting. The report shows, that despite the likely extent of the problem, local and national strategies to tackle it are virtually non-existent.

Furthermore, the Inspectorates expose a worrying lack of knowledge and focus on familial abuse from all local partners. While agencies have improved their response to child grooming outside the home, the less high-profile issue of familial sex abuse is not getting the priority it needs, the report finds.

The report does not make any specific recommendations but concludes that child sexual abuse in the family environment needs to be a priority across government departments and local areas. Too often, responses leave children repeatedly victimised, perpetrators unidentified, who therefore remain a risk to children, and known victims not supported well enough.

Inspectors call for greater priority to be given to child sexual abuse both locally and nationally. Evidence-based strategies need to be in place to support agencies and professionals in improving the prevention, identification and response in this challenging area of practice. Strategies need to include:

- A focus on prevalence
- The reasons why perpetrators sexually abuse children in the family
- Impact on children
- Evidence-based responses
- Long-term holistic therapeutic response.

The Chief Constable has established a dedicated team to protect children and officers are heavily involved undertaking familial investigations.

The Force will continue to use its dedicated 4ACTION database for tracking and responding to all HMICFRS recommendations and areas for improvement overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable. The Force also provides regular HMICFRS update reports to my Joint Audit and Scrutiny Panel (JASP) who provide additional scrutiny in these important areas.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner