

Appendix B



Public Protection response to the publication of the HMIC National Child Protection Inspection

Strategic Resources and Performance Board

9 November 2016

Version 1.0

In February 2015, HMIC published a report, National Child Protection Nottinghamshire Police 1-11 September 2014, following an inspection in September 2014. This was part of a rolling programme of child protection inspections of all police forces in England and Wales.

Overview of the findings:

Inspectors were pleased to find:

Staff responsible for managing child abuse investigations were highly committed, knowledgeable, and dedicated to providing good outcomes for children;

Good management of registered sex offenders;

Neighbourhood officers with good knowledge of those who posed the highest risk to children;

The force has delivered training for frontline officers and staff on vulnerability and safeguarding; and

The force has good relationships with partner agencies and local safeguarding children's boards.

Identified areas for improvement:

- significant delays in some child protection investigations;
- a lack of supervisory oversight and management of cases;
- children were being unnecessarily detained in police custody overnight; and
- lack of awareness of child sexual exploitation in some parts of the force.

Our response:

The report included 10 recommendations in total. 2 of these required no further action (rec 7 & 10)

1 recommendation was deemed to be a duplication of 2 others and has been cross-referenced (rec 9 – cross referenced to 1&3.)

Recommendation1. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police ensures that in domestic abuse incidents, officers see and speak to children (where possible and appropriate) and record their observations of a child's behaviour and demeanour so that better assessments of children's needs are made.

Update Oct 2016: Following the initial recommendation DI Yvonne Dales (30/04/2015) updated the Domestic Abuse Procedure with added emphasis to ensure that the views of children are considered with demeanour noted. In view of this and other significant changes to the Procedure, following consultation, the Domestic Abuse Procedure with updates was published (29.05.2015) with changes notified to staff via weekly orders. The new DA Procedure places a great deal of emphasis upon ensuring the child's voice is not lost. Relevant sections are 4.5, 4.15 and Appendices A, C, D and K. Further guidance was also published via the INTRANET to reinforce the salient message within the HMIC recommendations.

In February 2016 the Police engaged in the NCSCB Multi-Agency audit that examined cases involving children within domestic abuse settings within the City Priority Families Programme. The voice of children was noted as a key area. Despite an area with a high good rating (70 % had a good rating) it identified both a 30 % area for 'requires improvement' and one where there was a greater need for police input in this area.

Within the MASH (County) a daily Encompass meeting presently takes place between police, education and health to ensure that schools are informed the next day of any child identified within households where DV incidents occur. Police provide schools with enough knowledge to understand a child's individual circumstance who then further support children where needed and link in where required with the police via the safeguarding officer. The Encompass Project is being rolled out across the City and conurbation on 31/10/2016.

In May 2016 the force (post NICHE) started to roll out updated Domestic Violence training including coercive control, effective risk assessments and the voice of children.

This input has been followed up by a programme of Public Protection Senior Management Team briefings to every frontline staff member where the need to consider the "voice of the child" is once again focussed upon.

One important feature of both of these inputs is the need for officers to not only include the details of the child on the DASH but also to raise them as nominal on the occurrence and background link them. This is all to be followed up with some video clip messaging to reinforce this point.

A further audit is planned for November 2016 in order to make an assessment of this training and messaging to establish how it has manifested itself in the effectiveness of the police frontline response. The audit will look at sample cases (20 in all) where children have been identified as being present, establishing interaction took place, whether safeguarding measures and referrals were immediately considered and what follow up investigative action was taken. It is anticipated that this should be an on-going audit – carried out annually.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police develops an action plan to improve CSE investigations, paying particular attention to:

- a) improving staff awareness, knowledge and skills in this area of work;
- b) ensuring a prompt response to any concern raised;
- c) undertaking risk assessments that consider the totality of a child's circumstances and risks to other children; and
- d) improving the oversight and management of cases (to include auditing of child abuse and exploitation investigations to ensure that standards are being met).

Update Oct 2016: DSU Griffin has now signed off a new internal CSE Plan, which is cognisant of:

- The 2011 National Action Plan
- The Jay report (Rotherham 2014)
- National report from HMIC (national plan on child protection 2014)
- The East Midlands CSE framework
- The Local and Regional CSE Profile

The plan is now with partners for feedback etc.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police takes steps to ensure that all relevant information is properly and uniformly recorded, and is readily accessible in all cases where there are concerns about the welfare of children.

Update: This recommendation has been met with the embedding of NICHE, which now holds all the information that was formerly held across a number of systems (CATS for example.)

Recommendation 4. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police undertakes a review, together with children's social care services and other relevant agencies, to ensure that the police are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children. As a minimum this should include:

- a) attendance at, and contribution to, initial child protection conferences; and
- b) recording decisions reached at meetings on police systems to ensure that staff are aware of these and of all relevant developments.

Update: A multi- agency review has taken place which involved practitioners from Police, County Children's Social Care and Health. The results of the review were collectively analysed and reported on 11th February 2016.

Working Together (HM Government 2015), Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings (Ministry of Justice 2011) and the Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (July 2015) were used as references.

The following conclusions were drawn;

1. The police do not attend all ICPC within Nottinghamshire.
2. It was agreed by all partners that the Police do attend ICPC's where it is appropriate for them to do so.
3. Following strategy discussions, Nottinghamshire Police categorise ICPC invites in two ways. Type 1 – those that result in a Joint Police and Social Care Investigation. The Police aim to attend all ICPC in this category. Type 2 – those that result in a single agency investigation. It is agreed with partners that the Police will not ordinarily attend single agency ICPC where there is no police role and no significant contribution can be made. (This is compliant with the statutory guidance in working together as we continue to effectively share information and target resources to protect children from harm).
If, during the strategy discussion where single agency is agreed, but it is identified that an officer may be able to make a contribution to the ICPC, those officer details are shared (contact number/e-mail address) so that Social Care can consider inviting that officer, eg DV incident dealt with by officer resulting in S.47 strategy discussion which takes place in the MASH.
4. Any review of Police figures surrounding ICPC attendance should be cognisant of single agency figures as non- attendance by police as these unfairly skew figures in the negative.
5. All requests received in the MASH for S.47 strategy discussions that lead to an ICPC are recorded and logged in the MASH.
6. Regardless of single agency or joint working, minutes of the ICPC meetings are requested and at present are recorded on CATS or NICHE for any officer to view. Currently there is no officer tasked to review any ICPC minutes (single agency) that are received due to resourcing.

Separate discussions with City CSC reveal similar conclusions.

Following discussions between Senior Representatives with both LA's with the Head of PP in July 2016, a further joint review is being commissioned for the Autumn 2016. It will focus on a) Ensuring recording process as described above is accurate and fit for purpose b) To ensure that the Police and CSC are applying a consistent criteria and are in agreement over decisions on the appropriate attendance C) the quality of any paperwork submissions submitted to the single agency ICPC d) determine whether or not sufficient rigour and escalation policy exists to challenge the initial decision making and e) what further improvements can be made to ensure greater compliance with Working Together.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police undertakes a review of the level and quality of supervisory activity in cases involving children missing from home;

Update: As a result of this recommendation, a process has been put in place for MFH coordinators to conduct a review of sample children cases on a 6 monthly basis.

Audits completed so far:

- 1) **May 2015** (Missing more than 24 hours in the period Feb – May 2015)
- 2) **November 2015** (This was completed in **February 2016** due to staffing and commitments - Missing more than 24 hours in the period 1st of August 2015 – 20 November 2015.)
- 3) **September 2016** (Missing more than 24 hours in the period Mar – August 2016.)

In summary, each period has demonstrated an improvement in performance on the earlier period.

MFH management is now a very much joint venture between Response and PP, with the policy being jointly owned.

The model is based on the former City model (which has a coordinated and dedicated MFH team, with coordinators embedded,) and brings a consistency and improvement to the overall performance.

A performance Dashboard is also now fully embedded.

Recommendation 6. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police undertakes a review, together with children's social care services, of how it manages child protection referrals to ensure a timely response to initial concerns, that action is subsequently taken, concerns are followed up and cases are regularly reviewed.

Update: Reviews have been and continue to be undertaken between both the police and City and County CSC.

Analysis had identified that additional resources were required to deal with increasing demand surrounding safeguarding referrals. Extra resources have been provided to the MASH following a recruitment process to improve their process.

A restructure surrounding ISO's has also eradicated any delays for external requests surrounding third party information, with greater resilience now provided by MI and data protection teams.

Timely and regular strategy discussions take place between CSC managers and Sgts in the MASH who respond to initial concerns raised. Actions taken are recorded (NICHE), including whether the case approach will be one of joint working or single agency.

Audits:

In February 2016 a multi-agency audit was undertaken by the NCSCB regarding domestic abuse and child protection. The majority of referrals were classified good, with effective management oversight and information sharing. Issues raised concerning follow up investigations (EG CP medicals) are being addressed resulting in marked improvement. In June 2016 a further multi-agency audit was undertaken by the NCSCB regarding child sex abuse referrals that identified good / outstanding grades regarding the police referrals audited. (See Attached)

An audit is presently taking place following liaison with County CSC. It will determine the effectiveness of initial actions and decisions undertaken following MASH referral, including whether the correct response was made (Police, JW or single agency), subsequent attendance at ICPC and determination for escalation policies in the event of inter-agency disagreement. (See attached).

It is recognised that the police do not attend all ICPC's when it's determined and agreed a single agency approach will progress matters and they cannot add value to proceedings.

This review (and others) will remain on-going.

Recommendation 8. We recommend that Nottinghamshire Police undertakes a review (jointly with children's social care services and other relevant agencies) of how it manages the detention of children. This review should include, as a minimum, how best to:

- a) improve custody staff awareness of child vulnerability and child protection;
- b) improve risk assessments to reflect the needs of children and the support they require at the time of detention and on release;
- c) ensure that all staff act within the law so that all children are only detained when absolutely necessary and for the absolute minimum amount of time;
- d) assess at an early stage the likely need for secure or other accommodation, and work with children's social care services to achieve the best option for the child;
- e) ensure that children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act are only detained in police custody as a last resort, for a minimum amount of time, are regularly checked and receive the services of the mental health nurse; and

f) ensure specific additional consideration is given to using family members as appropriate adults for children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act, and parental support and personal attendance at the custody suite are encouraged.

Update: A review was undertaken, and compliance with the National Concordat agreement is now governed by a meeting attended by EMCJS and relevant agencies (which included senior representatives from CSC.) The following is the current position:

a) All custody staff have now received training on child vulnerability and protection. Two specific areas that are covered in this training are:

- Is detention necessary (consider if the investigation can be conducted in a different way)

- If remand is likely, early conversations with LA over the need for accommodation

b) The risk assessment that currently takes place is still a generic one, but this is now being reviewed as part of the vulnerability strategy being developed by the Regional Lead (C/I Phil Gilbert), working with the national custody, lead to ensure that vulnerabilities in relation to children are identified. A draft Vulnerability Strategy is available.

c) We have an absolute policy in Nottinghamshire that means custody suites will refuse to accept S136 children, and so every child goes to the S136 suite.

d) A Section 38 agreement has been signed by Police and the LA which mandates (in line with the Concordat) that all children who are charged and have their bail refused will go into LA accommodation.

e) Performance Data (NB - the reliability of it is still being tested) is available to demonstrates what proportion of children go to LA accommodation rather than remain in police custody PS.

f) Compliance is routed into the LSCB's for scrutiny