

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

PAPER NO:AP14/56

**SUBMITTED TO: ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
13 AUGUST 2014**

**SUBJECT: PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE - CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE**

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update from the Protecting Vulnerable People Directorate in relation to Children and Young Persons, identifying key performance information and any significant operational or organisational issues.
2. There are no significant financial implications to note within this report.
3. The only significant risk implication relates to the funding of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA).

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the increase in child referrals, and the anticipated increase in investigations involving indecent images of children.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In the twelve month period June 2013 to May 2014 the Central Referral Tasking Unit dealt with 13650 referrals related to child protection. This figure is an increase on last year and 19% up from the number of referrals received in the equivalent period in 2012/13.
- 1.2 The current 12 months referrals led to 536 police investigations and 618 joint investigations with Social Services. These figures represent significant increases on the same period last year.
- 1.3 The longer term trend remains one of increased referrals but it is anticipated that through the more effective and informed decision that will occur in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) there will be better use of police and local authority resources.

Local Children's Safeguarding Board

- 1.4 The Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body with a wide remit to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Suffolk. The Detective Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People represents the Constabulary at the LSCB. In addition, the Detective Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People represents the Constabulary on the Executive Committee Serious Case Review Panel, Child Death Overview Panel and chairs the Strategic Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children group.
- 1.5 The core statutory duty of an LSCB is to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place across agencies to protect children from harm. There are also obligations placed on LSCBs to ensure that the welfare of children is promoted. The work of the LSCB ranges from the development of policies and Procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to communication and awareness raising and a monitoring and scrutiny of safeguarding and child protection work across the county.
- 1.6 The Constabulary presented its full three year audit under Section 11 of the Children Act in May this year.

Working Together

- 1.7 The Serious Case Review into the tragic deaths of Fiona Anderson, her three children and unborn child was published in January 2014 and an action plan is now under scrutiny by the LSCB to measure the impact that the recommendations have had on local practice across all agencies involved.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 1.8 In support of the Police and Crime Plan objective of caring for victims and vulnerable people, the Constabulary Central Referral Tasking Unit has now been superseded by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). There are representatives from a number of organisations now working together to ensure decisions relating to child safeguarding are made on the best information available.
- 1.9 The additional staff have been appointed and have started in this team. Initially, the MASH will deal with child referrals but will soon encompass vulnerable adult referrals and also move to managed Domestic Abuse by the end of the calendar year.

- 1.10 The percentage of referrals relating to the categories of emotional harm, physical harm, sexual harm and neglect remain in similar proportion to the previous twelve months.

Child Sexual Exploitation / Missing Children

- 1.11 The Constabulary has adopted the new Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of 'Absent' when managing missing persons. The new definition encourages an improved, risk-based, police led investigation of individual incidents while supporting and demanding a multi-agency commitment to better safeguard vulnerable children and adults.
- 1.12 An upgrade to the Constabulary system for recording and managing missing persons now allows for recording of absence and missing on the same system. All children are initially graded as high risk and are subject to daily scrutiny at Force Daily Management Meetings. The addition of a Missing Person coordinator is also assisting in the review of Constabulary and LSCB procedures on the management of missing children.
- 1.13 The links to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are recognised and awareness of these issues has been raised with those dealing with missing children. There are strong links into both the LSCB Missing Children and CSE groups. The Missing Person Coordinator chairs a regular multi-agency operational meeting to discuss and manage frequent and high risk missing children.
- 1.14 Problem profiles for missing persons and for CSE have been commissioned.
- 1.15 In the year April 2013 to March 2014 there were 1429 episodes of missing children, these involved 723 children. This compares to 804 in 2012/13 and 852 in 2011/12. Of these, 204 have been missing more than once.
- 1.16 The Constabulary has developed an action plan to enhance its identification and management of child sexual exploitation. One of the Detective Inspectors within the Protecting Vulnerable People Directorate has the strategic responsibility for CSE and own this action plan. This Inspector is held to account through the Vulnerability Management Group.
- 1.17 An Ofsted/ACPO information sharing protocol has been published which will further enhance the working relationships between agencies and ensure more effective and efficient safeguarding measures can be put in place for responding to incidents involving children's homes.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- 1.18 In line with the Police and Crime Plan objective of caring for victims and vulnerable people, plans are now progressing to develop a Child SARC provision within the current County SARC. Building plans have been submitted and funding secured. A Child Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) has been selected. This will ensure that the very best service can be given to child victims of sexual abuse and assault.
- 1.19 The SARC has seen 170 children since it opened in April 2011. In the period of April 2013 to March 2014, 47 children were seen.

Indecent Images of Children

- 1.20 The current 'On-Line Investigation Team' (OLIT) continue a number of investigations arising out of national intelligence led operations, notably Operation Notarise. It is

anticipated that the number of investigations undertaken in respect of this area of criminality will increase over the next twelve months.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications to note.

3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

3.1 There is current uncertainty as to whether the Home Office match funding for the two Adult Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) posts will continue post March 2015.

3.2 No changes are needed to the PCC Risk Register.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No – as no financial implications noted.
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No – there are no issues likely to impact on either diversity or human rights implications.
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes – no HR implications identified.
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes – the report makes reference to Objective 4 – 'caring for victims and vulnerable people'.
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes – Both the MASH and SARC are subject to multi-agency governance arrangements.
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	Yes - increase in indecent images of children has been discussed with the Constabulary Corporate Communications department.
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes