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## Devon & Cornwall Police



<b>Name of Meeting:</b> Torbay Overview and Scrutiny Board		<b>Agenda item Number:</b>
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## Lessons learned from the serious case reviews (SCR) and an update on the changes to working practices in respect of county lines and child exploitation in Torbay

### 1. Introduction

This paper serves as a pre brief for Board. During board there will be a multi agency presentation to elaborate on the paper and for all relevant services to provide updates around this critical area of partnership working.

We have specifically been asked to consider what safeguards and actions the police have in place to monitor and ensure the SCR tragedies do not happen to our vulnerable children and adults.

This paper references The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP) paper “It was hard to escape” – Safeguarding children at risk of criminal exploitation recommendations.

The learning and key considerations of the July 2020 vulnerability, knowledge and practice programme paper on these SCRs is also used to shape this brief.

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## 2. Overview

We welcome the opportunity to present to board. The conversations, reflections, work and actions in preparing for board have catalysed further focus and review in this critical area. Whilst broadly confident in our service offering we readily acknowledge we cannot stand still as this activity constantly and rapidly evolves – reflected in our new force mission pillar of being agile. We see further opportunities to improve both internally and in partnership.

## 3. Organisational and local level safeguards and actions

It is important to reflect how the police service and locally Devon and Cornwall Police have developed our focus on vulnerability. Our executive lead for crime was renamed as lead for *vulnerability and crime* in 2019. This is not semantics but indicative of the high level support and cultural change required to engender effective focus and drive change. This is also reflected in National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) roles and resultant activity from various agencies including the College of Policing.

As we move towards a new operating model Chief Superintendent Jim Gale is the force strategic lead for the Vulnerability portfolio bringing together the various departments and partners. It is significant that our criminal justice department is part of this with a real focus on victims and witnesses whether they themselves are involved in criminality or not.

This strategic focus is complemented by tactical substance. We have invested in a *strategic safeguarding improvement hub (SSIH)* to support our delivery. Our safeguarding managers in this hub have responsibility for both adults and children and their role is

- To manage the child safeguarding and adult safeguarding statutory and non-statutory working arrangements and protocols.
- To help identify opportunities to improve the strategic direction of child safeguarding requirements and Adults at Risk safeguarding requirements, managing and implementing Working Together 2018 and S42 Care Act, ensuring a public service that is efficient, effective and meets the aims and objectives of safeguarding children partnerships, whilst also meeting all related legislative requirements.

*This is direct evidence of the force actioning the CSPRP “It was hard to escape” report key learning points for local agencies with specific regard to*

*Tailored support for frontline staff  
Service design and practice development  
Quality assurance*

There is a force governance group represented by all departments which sets strategy, reviews policies and procedures and promotes identified best practice.

Each area including Torbay has a specialist department dealing with County Lines and broader exploitation linked to criminality. In Torbay this is our specialist proactive policing

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team. This team has weekly meetings and daily contact with the intelligence management unit to trigger not just enforcement activity but safeguarding activity. This includes cuckooing visits and sharing of information at local multi agency meetings. This unit has received very positive feedback for the effective way it prevents and protects as well as pursues.

The intelligence directorate has a dedicated County Lines analyst and researcher who produce regular threat assessments and ensure any intelligence is shared with the intelligence manager and is raised locally at daily management meetings as well as tactical tasking and co-ordination meetings.

There is an organisational county lines 4P plan in place and there are regular intensification weeks linked to national activity. The force control strategy features county lines as a priority and therefore there is a regular assessment of threat risk and harm ensuring our resourcing decisions are harm focused, intelligence led, evidence based and prevention oriented.

Our force strategic assessment allows us to plan to fill our gaps against the control strategy. This is aligned with a vulnerability reduction strategy and child centred policing strategy.

The Torbay Community Safety Partnership has exploitation as the first of 3 key priorities and that clearly focuses our attention. Within the CSP governance structure there has been an exploitation governance group, an anti-slavery partnership (ASP) and operational delivery group. The ASP recently commissioned anti-slavery partnership Unseen to deliver accredited training to 376 frontline professionals in the community and voluntary sector.

**MACE meeting (Missing and Child Exploitation)**– This is key to sharing info regarding individuals and locations where CCE (Child criminal exploitation) not just CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) is a concern. This meeting has had excellent support from specialist officers (YIOs and MPSOs) and now has the management support and links into our tasking and management processes.

**MET group (Missing Exploited Trafficked)** – This is being refreshed in light of the recent review and wider learning and is the group that oversees the MACE.

**NAIRA pilot (missing young people) and the Philomena protocol** - In February the NAIRA pilot (No Apparent Immediate Risk, Absent) is being rolled out across Torbay. For 6 hours, missing young persons reports which have been assessed at NAIRA will be held by the control room specialist incident resolution team. Locally this is being led by DS James Dowler who ran such a project in South Wales. It showed positive outcomes for the Police in regards to demand reduction but also enabled a more consistent and effective partnership approach to managing missing occurrences. This was particularly effective with young people placed in care. The Philomena Protocol / Process is for the Care Providers to progress so they and their staff fully understand the risks of their young people.

**Recent good work as a case study** – “L.A” was recently dealt with by the proactive team for County Lines drug supply. He had been placed in Torquay by Devon social services after issues in Exeter where drug supply and exploitation was a concern. Missing incidents had increased in Exeter. Tis was picked up by MPSO Dave Quick who recognised the risks and vulnerability and initiated activity through our tasking processes. Phone enquiries showed

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that L.A was very active in drug supply locally and was still going missing for long periods of time. The proactive team took on enquires and they were able to arrest him in North Devon, with another young male, for drug supply. There was a very high level of risk and the arrest has been a gateway to further support to break the cycle and reduce the risk.

#### **4. Lessons learnt from the 2 specific SCRs**

The force lead (and I) agree with the findings and recommendations.

There were clear opportunities to share more information and we must remain vigilant. If the scenario were presented locally I would expect a ViST to be submitted graded as a red triggering a strategy discussion and referrals to other agencies. If the officer submitting fails to identify the risk as red, the Central Safeguarding Team (CST) act as another gatekeeping function and can re-assess the risk. If the individual was in custody this would be discussed and picked up at daily management meeting without doubt. There is more below reflecting on wider considerations of the findings.

#### **5. Reflecting on the vulnerability, knowledge and practice programme paper key considerations**

*Are officers equipped with the relevant training to identify criminal exploitation and trafficking?*

Yes, but we recognise there is always more to do and to refresh. The force measures described above and indeed the SSIH QA function seeks to further promote learning.

*Do officers know when and how to make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)?*

Yes, particularly the proactive team, however, we recognise the need for oversight. Guidance does state that all CCE and exploitation suspected cases should be referred to the duty detective inspector so this should be picked up either then or through the daily management meeting.

*Is there a clear process for information sharing with partners/other forces?*

The ViST processes described above are clear. There may be further opportunities for improvement by performance managing some of our custody processes which I have highlighted with the SSIH.

*What is our approach to out of force children we arrest?*

We adopt the national guidance change from Feb 2020 in which a national PNC marker (CL) County Lines can be added to a subject so when checked the higher risk can be quickly identified

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*How does our pre release risk assessment manage loss of items from a child that could cause debt and risk?*

This would be picked up by the NRM process in custody.

*Is there a clear process for other statutory / non statutory services to refer intelligence into your force?*

Through the MASH which would generate appropriate risk management meeting, strategy meeting or multi agency discussion.

*Officer mapping and do they know local safeguarding arrangements?*

There are significant resources invested on our sharepoint computer system as well as safeguarding hub and specialists to support.

*How is your force establishing processes to review actions/decisions and practice to ensure the eradication of bias and disparities relating to detention and outcomes for children?*

Within the force independent advice structure feeding into the equality diversity and human rights strategic group there is a legitimacy board. This board pulls together work around stop and search as well as sub groups looking at ethnicity within victims and witnesses as well as criminal justice outcomes.

Every single youth detention is reviewed by a custody inspector to ensure detention was proportionate and appropriate action was taken.

*How do frontline managers ensure frontline staff responses do not become normalised to the type of harm that children involved in CCE are at risk from?*

This is cultural and whilst it does come down to supervision, some of the horrific things our staff see don’t ever become completely normalised and our language, structures, working practices and mission focus us on our role in protecting the vulnerable, albeit on occasions this may be frustrating. Ultimately these are vulnerable people and they could under different circumstances be our loved ones.

*How might our local safeguarding childrens partnership implement learning findings?*

Learning is shared by briefings but the SSIH will have a key role in sharing learning going forward. As can be seen above we are also keen to drive “next practice” eg NAIRA pilot.

**Author - Superintendent Brent Davison - Local Policing and Partnerships, South Devon**

**Sponsor - Chief Superintendent Nikki Leaper – Commander South Devon BCU**