Cumbria Office of Police and Crime Commissioner

**Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections of Cumbria Constabulary published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

*Section 33 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days.*

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| **Inspection Title:** | #27179 An inspection of how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. |
| **Date Published:** |  |
| **Type of Inspection:** | National Inspection |
| **Key Findings** | |
| We inspected the police response to online child sexual abuse and exploitation between February and August 2022.  Our terms of reference addressed the following question:  How effective are police forces, the National Crime Agency and regional organised crime units at identifying and safeguarding children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation?  The inspection also assessed how effectively these organisations prevented and investigated this type of crime.  We have made 17 recommendations aimed at improving the consistency of the police’s approach and the timeliness of their investigations, reducing the availability of child sexual abuse material, and getting better outcomes for children.  This report sets out our findings. | |
| **Recommendations:** | |
| 1. #27236 - By 31 October 2023, the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for child protection should work with chief constables and chief officers with responsibilities for regional organized crime units to introduce regional collaboration and oversight structures to support the Pursue board. This should:  * Improve the link between national and local leadership and the frontline response. * Provide detailed, consistent scrutiny of performance; and * Meet chief constables’ obligations for tackling online child sexual abuse and exploitation, as set out in the strategic policing requirement.  1. #27290 - By 31 October 2023, chief constables, the director general of the National Crime Agency and chief officers with responsibilities for regional organised crime units should make sure they have effective data collection and performance management information. This is so they can understand the nature and scale of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in real time and its impact on resources, and so forces and the National Crime Agency can react quickly to provide adequate resources to meet demand. 2. #27348 - By 30 April 2025, chief constables should make sure officers and staff dealing with online child sexual abuse and exploitation have completed the right training to carry out their roles. 3. #27297 - By 31 July 2023, chief constables should satisfy themselves that they are correctly sharing information and making referrals to their statutory safeguarding partners in cases of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is to make sure they are fulfilling their statutory obligations, placing the protection of children at the centre of their approach and agreeing joint plans to better protect children who are at risk. 4. #27440 - By 31 October 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should make sure their commissioned services for children, and the process for referring them for support or therapeutic services, are available for children affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation. 5. #27486 - By 31 July 2023, chief constables and police and crime commissioners should review the advice they publish, and, if necessary, revise it, to make sure it is consistent with the National Crime Agency’s ThinkUKnow (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) [[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/]] material. 6. #27529 - By 31 October 2023, chief constables in England should satisfy themselves that their forces’ work with schools is consistent with the national curriculum and National Crime Agency educational products on online child sexual abuse and exploitation. They should also make sure this work is targeted based on joint analysis with their safeguarding partners. 7. #27568 - With immediate effect, chief constables should satisfy themselves that their crime allocation policies make sure online child sexual abuse and exploitation cases are allocated to those with the necessary skills and training to investigate them. 8. #27611 - With immediate effect, chief constables should make sure their force meets any existing recommended timescales for activity targeting online child sexual abuse and exploitation, and arrange their resources to meet those timescales. Then, six months after the new prioritisation tool is implemented, they should carry out a similar review. 9. #27654 - By 31 October 2023, the National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for child protection, chief officers with responsibilities for regional organised crime units and the director general of the National Crime Agency (NCA) should review the process for allocating online child sexual abuse and exploitation investigations, so they are investigated by the most appropriate resource. This should include a prompt way of returning cases to the NCA when forces establish that the case needs NCA capabilities to investigate it. 10. #27708 - By 31 October 2023, chief constables should work with their local criminal justice boards to review and, if necessary, amend the arrangements for applying for search warrants. This is to make sure the police can secure warrants quickly when children are at risk. This review should include the feasibility of remote communication. | |
| **PCC & Chief Constable Response to Report and Recommendation:** | |
| Cumbria’s Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has welcomed the inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) regarding how well the police and National Crime Agency tackle the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.  “Within my Police and Crime Plan, a focus on crime and the causes of crime, focusing on victims and preventing offending and reducing reoffending are priorities. I will continue to work with the local community, the Police and partner agencies to develop the Police Cyber and Digital Crime Unit and run public awareness campaigns to help keep local communities safe online, particularly children and vulnerable people. Further to this, I will continue to develop and commission services for victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse.”  “I also commission Get Safe Online which provides information and training sessions to groups in Cumbria, it also provides opportunities for parents who are worried about their child’s online safety to establish early preventative measures and learn further about what their child can be exposed to whilst online.”  “Further to this, in Nov 2022, I attended an event at Carlisle College, as part of the ‘Be Safe Stay Safe’ symposium. Here, agencies were brought together to teach young people about how to stay safe online and the dangers involved with being online.”  “It’s important to continue working with agencies so that young people are aware and are protected from such issues as fraud, various kinds of abuse, recruitment into activities such as money mulling, malware coding or drug-related crimes, or other forms of exploitation.”  “As part of my work to prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation of children, my office commission an early intervention service called PAKMAN. This is a one-to-one intervention for young people who have taken and/ or shared a nude image, as early intervention where there is a perceived risk of repeat incidents (e.g., underlying vulnerabilities). The programme covers awareness of the impact of indecent image taking/ sharing and online safety. A key focus is on helping young people better regulate emotions, deal with stress/ peer pressure etc and communicate better with parents/ carers to address underlying factors that make it more likely for them to take or share images. PAKMAN also includes a parent programme.”  “I also commission services to support children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse of different forms. Services such as Children and Young Person’s Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, who specifically work with children and young people in variety of ways to support them following sexual abuse.”  “I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account through my Public Accountability Conferences and will work with partners agencies to further develop our approaches and services when and where is needed to prevent abuse and provide support to victims.” | |