

Scrutiny & Accountability Board

Deep Dive

Child Protection

Microsoft Teams

5 May 2021

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| Attendees |  |
| Police & Crime Commissioner Team |  |
| Laura Armitt (LA) | Executive Advisor & Support Officer to Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner |
| Suzi Graham (SG) | Policy and Research Officer |
| Paula Hardy (PH) | Strategic Lead for Vulnerability and Victims |
| Hannah Jenkins-Jones (HJJ) | Strategic Lead for Scrutiny, Assurance and Equality |
| Lee Jones (LJ) **(CHAIR)** | Chief Executive |
| Sarah Keefe (SK) | Policy Officer |
| Nia Scourfield (NS) | Governance Support Officer |
| Jayne Woodward (JW) | Strategic Lead for Quality, Standards and Compliance |
| South Wales Police |  |
| Deputy Chief Constable Rachel Bacon (RB) | Deputy Chief Constable |
| Superintendent Tim Morgan (TM) | Head of Partnerships and Safeguarding |
| Caroline Smart (CS) | Corporate Services – Corporate Management |
| Detective Superintendent Phil Sparrow (PS) | Head of Public Protection Department |
| Assistant Chief Constable David Thorne (DT) | Head of Specialist Crime |
| Carol Woodward (CW) | Assurance & Inspection Manager |
| External Agency |  |
| Pat Duke (PD) | Barnardo’s |

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| No | Item | Content |
| **1.** | **Introductions & Apologies** | * 1. LJ welcomed attendees and introductions were made. LJ welcomed ACC Bacon and provided an overview of the format for the board. |
| **2.** | **Minutes of previous meeting: Escalations December 2020** | 2.1 The minutes of the previous escalations meeting were agreed as a true record. It was agreed that the actions and recommendations would be dealt with outside of the meeting.  2.2 HJJ referred to an action in relation to wider learning from HR grievances. There has been a suggestion that the solution to this could lie in the Lessons Learned meetings, however HJJ had received the Terms of Reference for these meetings and could see grievances were not included. She queried how else wider learning from grievances could be shared. CW stated that grievances and complaints were discussed in CALG meetings and that options were being explored to include them in the Lessons Learned meetings. |
| **3.** | **Partner Input: Case Studies** | 3.1 HJJ outlined feedback received from Victim Focus through case studies relating to child protection, which highlighted the service provided by South Wales Police in relation to dealing with victims. HJJ underlined the main points from the feedback, including that lack of police updates had an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the families affected.  3.2 HJJ invited PB to share Barnardos’ views on Child Protection services in South Wales Police. PB provided an overview of Barnardo’s and the services offered. He also shared his views on working in partnership with the force and highlighted good practice as well as issues he felt needed to be considered. PB felt that officers needed further training in order to enable them to provide the appropriate level of service and responses to victims and perpetrators. PB referred to the completion of Public Protection Notices (PPNs) and felt this was an area that required improvement in some cases. He also felt that there was a lack of awareness of processes, and for example, Barnardo’s were sometimes not made aware of a case until was too late. PB felt that for safeguarding purposes, improvements such as communication between the force and partner agencies needed to improve.  3.3 LJ referred to the lack of contact highlighted by PB and the importance of raising awareness amongst officers. JW queried whether officers were aware of the range of services available for referrals to be made and whether this had an impact on the lack of contact. LJ felt that these issues could be addressed in other forums and possible digital training could be explored via regional safeguarding boards. He felt that this was important to address in order to re-engage and create better future partnership working. |
| **4.** | **Child Protection Presentation and Data** | 4.1 LJ invited DT to present on Child Protection from the force perspective. DT provided the board with an overview of data on Child Protection and Child Sexual Exploitation occurrences and outcomes from 2016 to date. DT highlighted that referrals had decreased in the last year and felt that this was due to various lockdowns and restrictions in relation to Covid-19.  4.2 DT shared the force’s ongoing work around Child Protection, including improvements in the use of flags and local qualifiers to ensure consistency and accuracy on police systems. He also stated that the force were looking at the drive to prevent unnecessary criminalisation of children and increasing positive outcomes.  4.3 DT shared data around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) related incidents and stated that the number of incidents had declined since 2016. However data recording methods were largely responsible for this, in that the force were more selective and accurate in terms of flagging individuals at risk and managing them with a tiered approach. DT stated that there were now CSE teams embedded in every sector of the force and were linked with Missing Persons teams. He stated that each team had well-established processes which continued despite the challenges of Covid-19. He also stated that there were Barnardo’s advocates working closely with these teams and conducting ‘Return Home Interviews’ with children at risk of CSE. DT shared that the force contract with Barnardo’s would come to an end in March 2022. A tendering process would take place this year to consider extending the contract with Barnardo’s or exploring alternative providers.  4.4 DT shared the force’s future plans and challenges, including an increased focus on CSE as a threat and understanding the criminal exploitation of children first encountered in the County Lines model. He also shared that the force would be improving front-line understanding and use of Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) and developing relationships with partner agencies such as St Giles Trust.  4.5 PS wanted to highlight that the force were working on awareness raising amongst front line officers and shared with the board that Sector Vulnerability documents were circulated in order to make officers aware of individuals in their area at risk. He also added that the force was planning events for front line supervisors to improve services and working jointly with Swansea University on a digital app that would help to identify online predators.  4.6 HJJ referred to the force’s rate for outcomes with regards to victims not supporting prosecution. Given the quantity of victims not supporting a prosecution, she queried how that compared to other crimes within the force. She also questioned how victim decisions were made about not supporting a case when the victim in a case was a child. DT stated that sexual offences and violent crimes had similarities in terms of victims choosing whether to support a prosecution or not. He also stated that where a child was a victim of crime, that their age and their ability to make an informed decision were factors in taking the case forward, as well as the support of an appropriate adult for example.  4.7 PH referred to the contract that was ending for advocates for children and queried whether there were any other aspects in terms of supporting children from a safeguarding perspective, which could be considered as part of that contract and whether the force could build on the learning from this programme of work in relation to other aspects of safeguarding. For example whether work on early intervention could be done in an attempt to identify young people before they get to a crisis point. DT acknowledged PH’s points and agreed that safeguarding arrangements between the force and agencies funded by the Commissioner need to be joined up and that this was being explored. Both agreed to consider a joint piece of work in relation to helping to inform safeguarding approaches in the future.  4.8 SG queried what did and did not qualify as a positive outcome and what happened to the remaining cases. DT provided examples and stated that in some cases prosecutors might not find it in the public interest to criminalise children or young people. |
| **5.** | **Conclusions & Escalations** | 7.1 LJ concluded by summarising key points including the importance of data quality, the need to keep reviewing outcomes data, and the detailed completion of Public Protection Notices (PPNs) to ensure what was being captured was providing a true reflection of activity on the front line. There was also a need to use joint resources between the force and Commissioner’s team and to effectively utilise partner agency input, which would be followed up after the meeting.  7.2 RB offered to share an operational update with the Commissioner’s team on plans and future developments regarding child protection issues in order to ensure that work was not being duplicated by both the force and the Commissioner. She suggested she would take away the points from the meeting and come back with how the force may currently be looking to deal with them. |
| **6.** | **AOB** | 8.1 LJ thanked the board for their contributions during the meeting and to PD from Barnardo’s for his input. He confirmed that any actions would be circulated following the meeting and key themes would be revisited in future meetings. |

**Action Table**

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| **Date** | **Meeting** | **Action** |
| 5.5.21 | Child Protection | DCC Bacon to share an operational update with the Commissioner’s team on operational plans and future developments regarding child protection. |
| 5.5.21 | Child Protection | HJJ to contact PB from Barnardo’s to discuss his detailed feedback. |