



# Scrutiny & Accountability Board Deep Dive

## Child Exploitation and Vulnerability

South Wales Police Headquarters

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner Team</b>	
Suzi Graham (SG)	Policy & Research Officer
Lee Jones (LJ) - Chair	Chief Executive
Charlotte Amoss (CA)	Strategic Lead for Scrutiny, Assurance & Equality
Lisa Morgan (LM)	Policy Officer Equality Diversity & Inclusion
Tamara Lafferty (TL)	Governance Support Officer
Paula Hardy (PH)	Strategic Lead for Vulnerability & Victims
Naomi Evans (NE)	Policy Officer for Vulnerability & Victims
Jayne Woodward (JW)	Strategic Lead for Quality, Standards and Compliance
Gemma Woolfe (GW)	Strategic Lead for Community Safety & Violence Prevention
Emma Neale (EN)	Policy Officer for Criminal Justice
<b>South Wales Police</b>	
Assistant Chief Constable David Thorne (DT)	Specialist Crime Portfolio
Assistant Chief Constable Joanna Maal (JM)	Head of Territorial Policing Portfolio
Caroline Smart (CS)	Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Carol Woodward (CW)	Assurance and Inspection Manager

.	Agenda Item	Content
1.	<b>Introductions and Apologies</b>	<p>1.1 LJ welcomed attendees and introductions were made.</p> <p>1.2 LJ congratulated JM on her recent appointment as Assistant Chief Constable.</p>
2.	<b>Deep Dive November 2022</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minutes of previous meeting</b></li> <li>• <b>Recommendations report</b></li> </ul>	<p>2.1 The minutes of the previous Deep Dive meeting were agreed as a true record. CW confirmed that she will provide an update on the actions prior to the Escalation meeting in March 2023. <b>ACTION.</b> LJ confirmed he and Mark Stevenson are in ongoing conversations to identify agencies that can help with work on outcome and impact measures and how this can be used in work surrounding prevention.</p> <p>2.2 LJ referred to the Deep Dive Conclusions and Recommendations Report. LJ confirmed that Mark Stevenson has already agreed to the contents of the report. The attendees from the Force raised no objections to the report. LJ stated that this report is important and relates to black and Asian representation in the Force. This work will be ongoing. LJ confirmed that the report will be addressed in the March 2023 Escalations meeting and will likely be revisited as a Deep Dive topic. <b>ACTION.</b> In addition, this was escalated to the last Commissioner's Strategic Board. LJ confirmed that he will continue to report from the Scrutiny &amp; Accountability Board to the Commissioner Strategic Board to demonstrate that the Police and Crime Commissioner's team have had oversight over some of the key priorities for both the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner. <b>ACTION</b></p>
3.	<b>Business Assurance Report: Child Exploitation and Vulnerability – Research Findings.</b>  <b>An overview of the current South Wales Police Position on the progress against the PEEL Inspection Recommendations for Child Exploitation and Vulnerability.</b>	<p>3.1 LJ provided an outline of the background of this meeting, which is a review on the topic of Child Exploitation and Vulnerability. LJ highlighted that there was recently a HMICFRS PEEL Inspection, which resulted in South Wales Police being graded as requiring improvement in Protecting Vulnerable People. The Force were given a few recommendations to improve this area overall within 6 months, 2 of which relating specifically to Missing Children and Child Exploitation. LJ reminded the group that this area is linked to key Priority 3 in the Police and Crime Plan in terms of protecting the most vulnerable in our communities. LJ acknowledged that this is a broad area, but the focus of this meeting will be what led to the HMICFRS recommendations and how the Force has responded.</p> <p>3.2 LJ expressed thanks to DCS Phil Sparrow for producing a very comprehensive report in response to the Commissioner's team scoping document request. LJ proposed that instead of DT giving the presentation, the Board members could use this meeting as an opportunity to discuss the Force and Commissioner reports submitted in more depth to explore this area further. No objections were raised by the Board.</p> <p>3.3 LJ invited SG to present the Commissioner's team's report on 'Child Exploitation and Vulnerability – Research Findings'. SG reiterated LJ's comments that the purpose of this Deep Dive meeting was to give the Commissioner's team an understanding as to what led to the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection grading, what has been done by the Force to progress against the recommendations, and what the next steps are in order to continue improvements in this area.</p>

3.4 SG explained that the purpose of the Deep Dive research by the Commissioner's team was to bring voices from the external scrutiny partners into this forum. SG explained that the Commissioner's team consulted the Police Accountability and Legitimacy Group (PALG) members in their December meeting on the Deep Dive topic and sought views. SJ also held an interview with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) who are contract by the Force to provide Return Home Interviews and child advocacy services. A separate Focus Group session with external partners from the Police Legitimacy and Accountability Group (PALG) and their networks was also conducted, as well as a discussion with GW, the Commissioner's Strategic Lead for Community Safety and Violence Prevention.

3.5 SG confirmed that the research sessions sought to understand the participants' experiences and perspectives on the Force response and service delivery for Child Criminal Exploitation and Vulnerability.

3.6 SG highlighted the feedback from the meeting with PALG members. SG explained the themes from discussions with PALG partners concerned breaking the cycle of missing and exploited children. There was also a request to involve wider partners – for instance, a partner from a domestic abuse organisation suggested young girls did not have much faith in police due to prior experience and this had implications for Child Sexual Exploitation. PALG partners also queried how the Force were sharing information with wider partners and how they addressed issues with County Lines. SG acknowledged and thanked ACC DT for his attendance and responses at the December PALG meeting in relation to the points raised.

3.7. SG highlighted the feedback from the interview with NYAS Cymru. SG explained that the NYAS felt that the contract with the Force contract was progressing well, that they have had a generally positive experience, and that relations, meetings and communications are good with the Force. NYAS believe that they are delivering as per contract agreement and that performance reporting is beneficial. They did highlight a few areas of concern, primarily about expectations from the Force. NYAS felt that the Force has a strong focus on the volume of Return Home Interviews (RHI) over quality, citing the preparatory and follow up work required in order to conduct RHIs. NYAS felt that they are not able to fully implement the flexibility built into the contract to undertake more intervention work that they believe is instrumental to breaking the cycle. An area that did work well is when non-uniformed Police Officers attend RHI's with the project worker. This is helping build rapport and trust with children. They also suggested that any training programme content the force deliver to officers could be aligned with the training NYAS provide to their Project Workers.

3.8 SG highlighted the feedback from wider scrutiny partners. Wider partners queried therapeutic care packages and whether the Force are in conversation with other providers to identify gaps for children who have been missing or exploited. SG explained that partners queried the level of information sharing, and community engagement from the Force to help communities recognise the signs of CCE as well as reassurance around reporting. In addition, wider partners highlighted that police investigations concerning children can be lengthy that children can be over-criminalised. SG also mentioned that a discussion had taken place with the Commissioner's Community Safety Partnerships team and that GM would raise some of the points from the paper within the Board.

3.9 LJ expressed thanks to external partners for providing feedback in the interview and Focus Group sessions. LJ invited DT to comment or challenge the report. DT explained that the contract between the Force and NYAS is relatively new and NYAS have been understaffed. The low amount of RHIs completed by NYAS is therefore not surprising. DT agreed that the Force has been focused on the volume of RHIs but not to the detriment of quality. The Force's view is that if more RHIs are completed, this will hopefully reduce the need for later interventions. DT explained that any issues with the contract between NYAS and the Force will likely be resolved shortly.

3.10 DT referred to the Commissioner's team's report. In relation to the over-criminalisation of children, DT explained that the Force is due to rollout a new project whereby various Police Officers will receive vulnerability training. DT highlighted that this will not be a 'one off' training session but will occur frequently. DT confirmed that there is a vast amount of training now available to Police Officers in this area.

3.11 DT confirmed that the Force no longer use the 'No Apparent Immediate Risk/Absent' (NAIRA) grading for missing people. Since 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Force have reverted to using a 'low, medium, high' risk grading system which is working well. A bigger team now governs this system. DT confirmed that with the new system the number of low-risk children is very low.

3.12 CW explained that the new system is scrutinised and monitored weekly by the Force. CW confirmed that any children not captured by the new system are assessed. CW confirmed that formal review of the system will take place in April 2023.

3.13 SG queried if the issue with Control Works not linking with NICHE has now been resolved to ensure that all risk assessments for missing children are available. DT confirmed that all risk assessments will now be on NICHE, not Control Works. SG queried if the children affected by the NAIRA risk categorisation period from November 2020 to January 2023 is being reviewed. DT confirmed that this would not be reviewed due to HMICFRS guidance. However, a Public Protection Notice has been put in for each of those children.

3.14 CS referred to training available in this area. CS confirmed that DCI Tracy Rankine has taken the lead in the Public Protection area and is focused on operational policing. Specialist individuals have been invited to train Police Officers on how to use the training in practice. DT confirmed that a one-week attachment will occur with Public Protection staff as part of their training to ensure that new Police Officers have exposure to this.

3.15 LJ queried how areas of concern are identified and escalated. CW and CS explained the available scrutiny measures and monitoring. CW confirmed there are weekly meetings Chaired by DT to monitor the progress of the new system. This then feeds into the Programme Board for Safeguarding. Areas of concern will also be escalated to the Chief Constable. There are several Governance meetings and working groups. The Force will be doing a three-month appraisal of the system in April 2023 and HMICFRS will be back to check on the progress. CW explained that there is a Steering Group that looks at this area from a tactical point of view and aims to gain an understanding from everyone involved in the process such as NYAS, the Commissioner's team

and the Public Service Centre. BCU's are looking at this from a local level, especially in missing reports from Care Homes.

3.16 JM thanked SG for producing the report and the feedback from the Focus Group. JM queried the comment in the report from a wider partner that a two-year-old male had been criminally marked. CA confirmed that this was currently being looked in to as part of correspondence received by the Commissioner's Office from the partner agency about criminal markers applied to children, and that this will be discussed with the Force in more detail outside of this meeting. **ACTION.**

3.17 DT referred to the Force contract with NYAS. DT explained that he believes there are conversations between the Force and NYAS happening regarding the contract and any issues NYAS are facing. DT confirmed that he will check these conversations are ongoing and update the Commissioner's Team. **ACTION.**

3.18 SG explained that a common theme that partners were sharing in the Focus Group is that the Force do not do enough partnership working. However, SG noted from DCS Phil Sparrow's report submitted as part of the Deep Dive review that suggests that there is, with structures and mechanisms to support this. SG queried how this is being communicated and where the disconnect is between Force partnership working and wider partner agency awareness. DT agreed that there is a lot of partnership working and multi-agency practice in terms of safeguarding children but recognised that marketing the partnership working has not been a focus since the HMICFRS inspection. DT suggested that this is something the Force could work on.

3.19 GW explained that from the Home Office Violence Reduction Unit Grant, there are a lot of services that deal with children at risk of being exploited. The Commissioner's team and the Force can work together to help NYAS signpost the available services that are required to work within the contextual safeguarding approaches. In addition, there is an opportunity for the Force Community Safety Managers and BCUs to play a role in making those connections with what case falls into which partnership.

3.20 JM agreed with GW and explained that once the Partnership and Commissioning meeting is running, there is a potential to rebrand this to a community safety oversight and pick up and join activities being done by the Force and Commissioner's team.

3.21 JW explained that she has come to this meeting as someone who is not involved in partnerships, and it appears that there is a lot going on, but it is difficult to visualise the organisational structure and so is this the same for some Police Officers.

3.22 DT confirmed that there is an Exploitation team within the Force which is separate from the Missing Persons team. The team looks at a few areas including Child Criminal Exploitation and Modern Slavery. JW queried why there is an Exploitation Engagement Team in Cardiff and the Vale but not in other BCU's. DT confirmed the team was created on Cardiff and the Vale's own initiative and has since been amalgamated into a Forcewide team. This is now one team for the whole Force and will work across all BCU's.

3.23 SG referred to DCS Phil Sparrow's report and the section where it states that there has been concern with the Mid Glamorgan BCU over the last four years due to that area receiving the highest number of missing children reports. SG explained that from the research undertaken, it was noted that NYAS had been in a lengthy process of recruiting a Project Worker for the Mid Glamorgan area at the time of interview, and it was understood from the meeting with GM that discussions were underway to develop a contextual safeguarding approach for that area also. SG queried whether the Force has considered this to be a contributing factor for the high levels of missing children reports in this area.

3.24 CW explained the possible reasons for the high volume of missing children reports in Mid Glamorgan though could not be certain without checking. CW explained that there is a high number of homes where children are housed in this area. PH explained that historically there has been an issue with staff that look after children in these homes contacting the police immediately if a child has not returned to the home on time.

3.25 CS explained that the Force are having conversations regarding a problem-solving approach and trying to engage with homes that house children to reinforce their parental responsibility over the children and take steps to locate children who are missing. CS pointed out that there are ongoing discussions with the Force, wider partners, and staff regarding this.

3.26 SG queried whether these conversations between the Force and homes that house children can be formalised into a Memorandum of Understanding. JM believes that this already exists, and a similar tool is used in Morriston hospital, but will check that this happens at a local level in Mid Glamorgan. **ACTION.**

3.23 CA explained that there have been national cases in the media regarding unaccompanied children, Asylum Seekers, going missing from Home Office hotels. CA queried whether this is being monitored in the Force within our region. JM confirmed that there are mechanisms in place to monitor this and the Force work closely with Welsh Government. However, no instances come to mind but this has now been flagged up for JM to explore and monitor further. **ACTION**

3.24 LJ commented that it is apparent from this meeting that conversations need to be had between the Commissioner's team and the Force to improve partnership working. LJ commented joint working arrangements can feed into the Partnership and Commissioning Board.

3.25 GW clarified that Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot, Cardiff, and the Vale have had dedicated resource from grant funding to establish contextual safeguarding models. GW explained that that she is looking at how to use funding from the Serious Violence Duty to pull together the partners and resources available for Mid Glamorgan. GW confirmed that she is working to move this forward, and this will help to tie in with the community safety arrangements.

		<p>3.26 LJ did note that this has been a barrier with several organisations and partners. LJ reiterated that the partner feedback within SG’s report is that PCSOs are effective, but that there is a lack of intel. This area may benefit from exploring further. JM explained that there was a recent restructure of the neighbourhood policing model and there has been an additional uplift of 46 PCSOs funded by Welsh Government. These PCSOs are being given dedicated roles and have specialism in a particular area.</p> <p>3.27 DT explained that Welsh Government have been doing a National Review on procedures, particularly around multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). The intention of this work is to produce an optimum way of sharing information with partners so that this can be a standardised approach. This is something to revisit with the Force once the review has been completed. <b>ACTION.</b></p> <p>3.28 SG queried with JM whether the Force have considered raising community awareness of the signs of CCE, for example with schools, shopkeepers, businesses, and parents – as mentioned by partners within the report. JM explained areas where the Force are engaging with locals and Schools. JM confirmed that there is an Engagement Portal in place, and it is hoped that the Corporate Communications team will highlight National Campaigns so that the Force can plan engagement.</p> <p>3.29 LJ noted that there has been significant change in this area, and it should be revisited in a future Scrutiny &amp; Accountability Board Escalations meeting to review these changes. <b>ACTION.</b> There is also a wider discussion needed around data and data sharing between the Force and Commissioner’s Team. <b>ACTION.</b> Training and information sharing will need to be revisited at an Escalation meeting. LJ will revisit the organisational structure in an Escalation meeting also. <b>ACTION.</b></p>
4.	<b>HMICFRS update</b>	<p>4.1. CW confirmed that HMIFRCS will be with the force from April 2023 until November 2023. The activity from April – October is about information gathering and understanding what the Force has done to deal with the recommendations from the PEEL 2022 Inspection.</p> <p>4.2 CW confirmed HMICFRS will complete their field work in November 2023 and check if there any emerging areas of concern in more detail. At various points in April, HMICFRS will complete a Victim Service Assessment.</p> <p>4.3 CS explained that this year HMICFRS will carry out a staff survey this year. CS confirmed that CW will share dates for the survey with the Commissioner’s team. <b>ACTION.</b></p>
5.	<b>Conclusions and Escalations</b>	<p>5.1 LJ explained that the Force and Commissioner’s team will go through the actions and notes and agree those that need to be fed up with the Commissioner’s Strategic Board. <b>ACTION.</b></p> <p>5.2 LJ confirmed that a summary of this meeting will go to the Commissioner’s Strategic Board. <b>ACTION</b></p>
6.	<b>Any other Business</b>	<p>6.1 LJ explained that an Action from the Police and Crime Panel was to discuss police integrity with DCC Rachel Bacon and that this will be the reviewed in the next Deep Dive Board. Therefore, a focus is needed on this area. <b>ACTION</b></p>

	Meeting closed.
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Action Table

<b>Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
1.	CW to provide update on Actions prior to March 2023 Escalations meeting.	CW
2.	Deep Dive Conclusions Report to feature in March 2023 Escalations meeting and future Deep Dive meeting.	Commissioner's Team.
3	LJ confirmed that he will continue to report from the Scrutiny & Accountability Board to the Commissioner Strategic Board to demonstrate that the Police and Crime Commissioner's team have had oversight over some of the key priorities for both the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner.	LJ/Commissioner's Team
4.	CA and JM to discuss criminal markers on children.	CA and JM
5.	JM to check if there is a formal recording of understanding between the Force and Care Homes regarding their responsibility over children.	JM
6.	JM to explore the issue regarding unaccompanied children going missing from Home Office appointed hotels for asylum seekers.	JM
7.	Force and Commissioner's Team to review the Welsh Government National Review on information sharing procedures once completed.	Force & Commissioner's Team
8.	The Force Response to the HMICFRS Report in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation to be revisited at an Escalation meeting.	Commissioner's Team
9.	Wider discussions to take place between the Commissioner's Team and Force regarding data and information sharing.	Commissioner's Team.
10.	Information Sharing and an Organisational Structure for Partners to be revisited at Escalation meeting.	Commissioner's Team.
11.	CW to share dates for HMICFRS Staff Survey	CW
12.	Explore Police Integrity in more detail.	Commissioner's Team



