



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**
for Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland
Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Date: 15th January 2024

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
6th Floor Globe House
89 Eccleston Square London
SW1V 1PN

Dear Mr Wilsher,

I write to you in response to your report "An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales" published on the 8th December 2023.

This is a particularly poignant topic, in light of the findings from the independent assurance review commissioned by the Mayor of Greater Manchester regarding the Rochdale case, which have been published on the same morning I write this response.

I welcome this report in this incredibly important area of policing - protecting children and young people in England and Wales with effective, intelligence lead policing and sufficient services to support victims across the country.

Due to the seriousness of this area of policing, I requested a meeting with Assistant Chief Constable ACC Kerr, Crime, Intelligence and Criminal Justice lead with whom the HMICFRS portfolio sits to gather Leicestershire's picture currently, and also Leicestershire's current position against the recommendations outlined within your report.

Within the meeting held on 12th January 2024, ACC Kerr provided me with the following assurances:

- Investigations and Intelligence held by Leicestershire Police have not indicated a significant local issue with group-based CSE at the time of this meeting and the force has strong systems, processes and both internal and partnership arrangements in place to identify and respond to group-based CSE
- Leicestershire Police have adopted the IICSA's definition of an 'organised network' as a definition of group-based child sexual exploitation.
- At the time of writing this letter, Leicestershire Police does not have a bespoke CSE problem profile. However, as CSEA has been identified as a force priority under the Strategic Assessment and Force Management Statements, the Force Intelligence Department will be completing a comprehensive profile which will feed into the Force Vulnerability Board and Strategic decision-making forums and inform the policing and partnership response. This Profile will include locations, victimology, demographics such as age and gender, plus offender



demographics, among other measures. Through these problem profiles, re-occurring locations identified will be investigated.

- Leicestershire Police have excellent existing relationships with partner organisations through the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) attended by ACC Kerr. Through this board, requests are being made for an annual multi-agency CSE problem profile, encompassing data and insights from the key agencies across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to inform a partnership approach to tackling issues identified.
- ACC Kerr chairs the Adolescent Safety and Diversion Sub Board which feeds into the SPB.
- There are markers for CSE on Niche which is the force-wide record management system, and is the central repository for Leicestershire's crime investigation, intelligence and Public Protection reports. Any victim, offender or location which is identified as being linked to or at risk of CSE is flagged on Niche using the force CSE marker and any subsequent searches, entries or activities linked to them will immediately result in that marker being highlighted.
- When a CSE marker is added to an incident, a referral is immediately made to the multi-agency assessment team who agree the risk level and appropriate single or joint agency response.
- Where a child is identified as being at High Risk of CSE, a Detective from the force dedicated exploitation hub is assigned as the police single point of contact for that child and actively monitors intelligence, progresses investigative opportunities and is responsible for maximising every opportunity to protect and support that child.
- When a CSE marker is added to a child, this remains on their Niche record (including into adulthood) to ensure that any future intelligence and opportunities to protect and support them are maximised. This also ensures that Leicestershire officers and staff, including call-handlers, are informed, empathetic and trauma-aware in any interactions with or decision making around them.
- There is active intelligence gathering in the Force via the police and partner agencies.
- Children's services for LLR are co-located with the CSE team. This close proximity of working allows for better communication and ultimately a better service for victims.
- The College of Policing's authorised professional practice is directly referenced in force policy locally. Leicestershire Police will monitor updates to this practice and amend force policy accordingly at earliest opportunity.
- The Force hold daily risk management meetings in which Police Protection Notices and CSE markers are discussed.



- Leicestershire Police are members of and make full use of the Hydrant Programme.
- Leicestershire Police work to eradicate victim-blaming language by incorporating this topic into officer training with all new recruits. The training involves the sharing of case studies and good practice, using Lived Experience and Survivor Stories and open discussions about inappropriate language and trauma-informed practice. The force has run a number of campaigns in line with other forces nationally to help eradicate inappropriate language and behaviour in policing.

Leicestershire Police must continue to ensure that policing is reflective and representative of the demographic which it serves. This consideration must be at the forefront of all policing across the force area. The demographic landscape across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland requires a tailored approach of policing for providing a high-quality, inclusive service for every community in LLR.

The events which unfolded in Rochdale were shocking, devastating and unacceptable. The failures in policing highlighted in the review findings provide learning which should be acknowledged by all forces nationally regardless of local position. The importance of listening to the voices of victims, listening to the concerns of partner agencies and pursuing these with the upmost sense of urgency is vital to protecting young people from the most horrific offences thinkable.

I am assured by ACC Kerr that appropriate considerations are consistently being made by Leicestershire Police, and that there is an existing structure in the Force which is effective at protecting children and young people across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. I will review progress against this report with ACC Kerr in 12 months-time.

Yours sincerely,

Rupert Matthews
Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland