



Inspecting policing  
in the **public interest**

# National Child Protection Inspections

South Wales Police  
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## Foreword

All children deserve to grow up in a safe environment, cared for and protected from harm. Most children thrive in loving families and grow to adulthood unharmed. Unfortunately, still too many children are abused or neglected by those responsible for their care; they sometimes need to be protected from other adults with whom they come into contact and some occasionally go missing, or are spending time in environments, or with people, harmful to them.

While it is everyone's responsibility to look out for vulnerable children, police forces, working together and with other agencies, have a particular role in protecting children and ensuring that their needs are met.

Protecting children is one of the most important tasks the police undertake. Only the police can investigate suspected crimes, arrest perpetrators, and they have a significant role in monitoring sex offenders. Police officers have the power to take a child who is in danger to a place of safety, or to seek an order to restrict an offender's contact with children. The police service also has a significant role working with other agencies to ensure the child's protection and well-being, longer term.

Police officers are often the eyes and ears of the community as they go about their daily tasks and come across children who may be neglected or abused. They must be alert to, and identify, children who may be at risk.

To protect children well, the police service must undertake all its core duties to a high standard. Police officers must talk with children, listen to them and understand their fears and concerns. The police must also work well with other agencies to ensure that no child slips through the net and that over-intrusion and duplication of effort are avoided.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is inspecting the child protection work of every police force in England and Wales. The reports are intended to provide information for the police, the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and the public on how well children are protected and their needs are met, and to secure improvements for the future.

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# 1. Introduction

This report is a summary of the findings of an inspection of child protection services in South Wales Police which took place in late February/early March 2015. The report comprises nine chapters in three main parts. The first part provides information on the background to the inspection and to South Wales Police. The second part focuses on the inspection findings, and the third part looks to the future and makes recommendations for improvement.

# 2. Background

Between October 2011 and March 2013, HMIC was involved, on a multi-agency basis, in a number of child protection inspections. Along with evidence of strengths and effective practice, these inspections highlighted areas for improvement, in particular: the quality of joint investigations; the identification of risk; dealing with domestic abuse; and the detention of children in custody.

To address these issues, HMIC decided to conduct a programme of single agency inspections of all police forces in England and Wales. The aims of the inspection programme are to:

- assess how effectively police forces safeguard children at risk;
- make recommendations to police forces for improving child protection practice;
- highlight effective practice in child protection work; and
- drive improvements in forces' child protection practices.

The focus of the inspection is on the outcomes for, and experiences of, children who come into contact with the police when there are concerns about their safety or well-being.

The inspection methodology builds on the earlier multi-agency inspections. It comprises self-assessment and case audits carried out by the force, and case audits and interviews with police officers and staff and representatives from partner agencies, conducted by HMIC.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Details of how we conduct these inspections can be found at Annex A.

### 3. Context for the force

South Wales Police has approximately 5,120 staff. The workforce includes:

- 2,845 police officers;
- 1,849 police staff; and
- 427 police community support officers<sup>2</sup>.

The force area covers ten percent of the landmass of Wales and provides policing services to 42 percent of the population – around 1.3 million people. Cardiff is the major city in the force area with a population of approximately 346,000. Other significant towns within the force area are Swansea (population c. 300,000) and Merthyr Tydfil (population c. 60,000).

There are seven local authorities in the South Wales Police force area: Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend and Cardiff. They are responsible for child protection within their boundaries. The force has four policing divisions, known as basic command units (BCUs): Northern (covering Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf), Western (covering Neath Port Talbot and Swansea), Central (covering Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend) and Eastern (covering Cardiff).

In South Wales Police, the central public protection department (PPD) provides governance and oversees safeguarding across the force. Its remit includes the strategic development of child protection (including child sexual exploitation); domestic abuse; vulnerable adults; multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA); missing persons; rape and serious sexual offences; honour based violence; female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Public protection services as a whole are led by an assistant chief constable. The central PPD is led by a detective superintendent, supported by a detective chief inspector and a detective inspector.

The PPD also provides strategic support to the four public protection units (PPUs), based in the four BCUs. Operational delivery of the PPUs is the responsibility of the chief superintendent (BCU commander) in the BCUs. The BCU commander is supported by a superintendent and a detective chief inspector (child protection lead) who has management responsibility for the PPUs.

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<sup>2</sup> *Police workforce, England and Wales, 30 September 2014*, Home Office, January 2015, available at this link: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-30-september-2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-30-september-2014)

Three of the BCUs (Central, Western and Eastern) operate dedicated referral units for child protection while the Northern BCU has a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

At the time of the inspection, late February to early March 2015, South Wales Police was considering extending the MASH model across the force area.

## 4. The police role in child protection

The Welsh Government is responsible for child protection in Wales. The Welsh child protection system is similar to the system in England.

Under the Children Act 1989, the police service, working with partner agencies such as local authority children's social care services, health services and education services, is responsible for making enquiries to safeguard and secure the welfare of any child within their area who is suffering (or is likely to suffer) significant harm.<sup>3</sup> The police are duty-bound to refer to the local authority those children in need they find in the course of their work.<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government guidance<sup>5</sup> outlines how these duties and responsibilities should be exercised.

The specified police roles set out in the guidance relate to:

- the identification of children who might be at risk from abuse and neglect;
- the investigation of alleged offences against children;
- their work with other agencies, particularly the requirement to share information that is relevant to child protection issues; and
- the exercise of emergency powers to protect children.

Every officer and member of police staff should understand their duty to protect children as part of their day-to-day business. It is essential that officers going into people's homes on any policing matter recognise the needs of children they may encounter. This is particularly important when they are dealing with domestic abuse and other incidents where violence may be a factor. The duty to protect children extends to children detained in police custody.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a general duty on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are believed to be 'in need'. Police may find children who are 'in need' when they attend incidents and should refer these cases to the local authority. A child is 'in need' if he or she is disabled, unlikely to achieve or have the opportunity to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development, or if their health and development is likely to be impaired without local authority service provision.

<sup>5</sup> *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*, Welsh Government, February 2007 (latest update), available at this link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance1/safeguardingunder2004act/?lang=en>

Many teams throughout police forces perform important roles in protecting children from harm, including those who analyse computers to establish whether they hold indecent images of children and others who manage registered sex offenders and dangerous people living in communities. They must visit sex offenders regularly, establish the nature of risk these offenders currently pose and put in place any necessary measures to mitigate that risk.

To ensure that agencies co-operate to keep children safe and look after their welfare, each local authority in England and Wales must establish a local safeguarding children board (LSCB)<sup>6</sup>. These arrangements will change in Wales in April 2016 when the LSCBs operating in each of the 22 individual local authority areas in Wales will be replaced with 6 safeguarding children boards<sup>7</sup>. In preparation for this change, three regional safeguarding children boards operate for the South Wales Police area, encompassing all seven local authority administrative areas. The boards are made up of senior representatives from all agencies with responsibilities for child protection (including the police). They promote safeguarding activities, ensure that the protection of children remains a high priority across their area, and hold each other to account.

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<sup>6</sup> LSCBs have a statutory duty, under the Children Act 2004, to co-ordinate how agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. The functions of LSCBs in Wales are set out in the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006, 2006 No. 1705 (W. 167), available at this link: [www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2006/1705/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2006/1705/made). The *All-Wales Child Protection Procedures*, All Wales Child Protection Procedures Review Group, 2008, provides guidance and informs child protection practice for LSCBs in Wales. The procedures are available at this link: [www.awcpp.org.uk/home/wales-protocols/](http://www.awcpp.org.uk/home/wales-protocols/)

<sup>7</sup> Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, 2014 anaw 4, available at this link: [www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents).



## **5. Findings: the experiences, progress and outcomes for children who need help and protection**

During the course of the inspection, South Wales Police assessed 33 cases in accordance with criteria provided by HMIC. The force was asked to rate each of the 33 self-assessed cases. Practice was viewed as good by the force assessors in 27 of the cases and adequate in 5 cases.<sup>8</sup> One case did not receive a specific grading and none were assessed as inadequate. HMIC inspectors also assessed these cases, rating 21 as good, 2 as adequate, 7 requiring improvement and 3 as inadequate. Inspectors selected and examined a further 52 cases where children were identified as being at risk. Fourteen were assessed as good, 9 as adequate, 21 requiring improvement and 8 inadequate.

### **Initial contact**

Inspectors found the force responded well to incidents when specific concerns were raised about children. Officers attended promptly, undertook a range of preliminary tasks such as ensuring the immediate safety of children, secured evidence and made an assessment about how best to proceed. When further action was necessary, such as a joint visit with children's social care services, this was arranged quickly. Officers undertook thorough initial enquires and used their powers to arrest when necessary. For example:

- the action taken when a man, concerned about his wife's mental health, feared she would harm herself and their children. Officers attended promptly and checked on the welfare of the children. They immediately contacted specialist child protection officers and the mother was arrested. Protecting the children was at the forefront of the decision making process. Appropriate referrals to relevant agencies and a timely strategy discussion were undertaken with children's social care services.

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<sup>8</sup> The case types and inspection methodology are set out in Annex A

- the steps taken when a mother found her 9-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son alone in a bedroom. She was pulling up her underwear and said that her brother had sexually assaulted her. The initial response by frontline officers was good and they sought specialist advice as to the correct course of action. Her brother was immediately arrested which protected the girl from further harm. Officers gave careful consideration to her needs, and the recovery of forensic evidence was handled sensitively. Early contact was made with children's social care services to ensure that longer-term safeguarding measures were initiated promptly.

Inspectors found that staff in the force control room were alert to risk and vulnerability and generally knowledgeable when dealing with calls that clearly related to a child protection concern. There were good examples of control room staff acting quickly, obtaining as much information as possible and passing the case to frontline officers or a specialist child protection officer. Control room staff had been trained to assess children at risk of sexual exploitation. The force had recently introduced 'flags' on police systems identifying children who were at risk of sexual exploitation. Although not fully embedded, we found evidence that this practice had protected vulnerable children. For example:

- a 16-year-old girl was reported missing by staff at her care home. The police call-taker asked relevant questions and established she had been reported missing from the care home on numerous occasions, and was at risk of child sexual exploitation. Information was immediately passed to a neighbouring force where her family lived and she was quickly located. Officers attending engaged with her well, and gained information to consider future safeguarding measures to protect her.

South Wales Police had invested time and resources in training for frontline officers on their role in safeguarding children. This had translated into better awareness and a sense of responsibility for child protection matters. For the most part, officers worked well with other agencies to protect children and ensured their needs were met. They regularly submitted public protection notification forms (when a child is at risk), and these were generally of a good quality.

Police usually attended incidents of domestic abuse promptly, and in most cases, recorded whether they had checked that children present were safe and well and ensured their immediate safety. Frontline staff attending domestic abuse incidents routinely recorded observations about the demeanour or behaviour of children.

## Assessment and help

The three BCU referral units and the recently developed MASH in the Northern BCU are the focal points for information exchange and inter-agency planning. The units manage large volumes of information and for the most part, they do so quickly and efficiently. Initial enquiries and strategy discussions<sup>9</sup> were usually held promptly. Inspectors were pleased to see the robust supervision of cases referred into the referral units and the MASH by trained and experienced child protection supervisors. Child abuse concerns were quickly identified and this enhanced the early investigative and safeguarding response. Inspectors were told that the establishment of the referral units and the MASH had eased some of the pressure on child abuse investigators in the early stages of assessment and safeguarding, and enabled them to give more attention to investigations.

There were many examples of agencies working well together – identifying risks, making plans to reduce these risks and supporting children and families. Most of the initial enquiries were timely and thorough with specific investigation and safeguarding plans agreed. Initial assessments and immediate protective measures were often good and there was evidence of police being involved in longer-term plans for children who were most at risk. PPU had specialist child protection detectives whose role it was to attend strategy meetings and all initial child protection case conferences<sup>10</sup>. However, staff indicated that in the Eastern BCU, officers attended only around 70 percent of strategy meetings and initial case conferences because of the workload pressures in the PPU. This had been identified as an area for improvement and the force was taking steps to assess workloads and review staffing across the force area in order to address the problem. However, we found occasional delays in recording the outcomes of case conferences on police records.

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<sup>9</sup> Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm there should be a strategy discussion involving local authority children's social care services, the police, health services and other bodies such as the referring agency. This might take the form of a multi-agency meeting or phone calls and more than one discussion may be necessary. A strategy discussion can take place following a referral or at any other time, including during the assessment process. *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*, Welsh Government, February 2007 (latest update), chapter 8, paragraphs 8.77 – 8.87.

<sup>10</sup> Following section 47 enquiries (see chapter 4 above), an initial child protection conference brings together family members, the child where appropriate and those professionals most involved with the child and family, to make decisions about the child's future safety, health and development. If concerns relate to an unborn child, consideration should be given as to whether to hold a child protection conference prior to the child's birth. *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*, Welsh Government, February 2007 (latest update), chapter 8, paragraphs 8.110 – 8.142.

Inspectors found that officers did not always display thorough awareness of the risks associated with the identification of child sexual exploitation. In those cases where young people had disclosed information either to the police or to a trusted worker in another agency, officers did not necessarily incorporate that information into their thinking or into protective plans. For example:

- the case of a 15-year-old girl whose mother suffered from mental health problems. Her mother's behaviour was often erratic. Whilst there was significant partnership activity to develop a safeguarding plan, much of it related to her mother's mental health. The police held information that the girl was at risk of sexual exploitation but there was no plan to protect her from perpetrators.
- a case involving two 16-year-old girls identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation in 2014. Police and partners expressed concerns in police reports that they had met older men for sex and were frequenting fast food restaurants in the city centre. There was significant multi-agency activity to protect both girls; however, there was little evidence of an assessment of the risk of harm to other girls or the efforts expended to manage the risk posed by the perpetrators

Inspectors had concerns about the protection of some children who regularly go missing from home. Inspectors assessed eight cases and judged four as inadequate and three as requiring improvement. Only one was found to be good. Although the initial response to locate the child was often prioritised, opportunities for early intervention and long-term inter-agency planning to protect children had not been considered. Nor did the force have trigger plans (a plan to locate a child quickly when he or she goes missing frequently), which would help to locate the child sooner by using information held by police from previous 'missing' episodes.

In some cases, children – most notably those in the care of the local authority – were reported missing over 20 times without any action being taken to protect them. In the majority of cases examined, officers promptly conducted 'safe and well' checks (to check their immediate safety) after a missing child was located, although some records contained scant information. Inspectors found that independent return interviews<sup>11</sup> for children missing from home (which may be provided by a children's charity) did not always take place.

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<sup>11</sup> When a child is found, they must be offered an independent return interview. Independent return interviews provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in their home. Further information can be found in *Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care*, Department for Education, January 2014, available at this link: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307867/Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Missing\\_from\\_care\\_3.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3.pdf)

Interviews with children at this stage can provide a wealth of information about the reasons why they are running away, particularly where this is becoming more frequent and the child is reluctant to speak to police or other agencies.

Inspectors also found that officers did not always recognise that children who regularly go missing from home may be at risk of being groomed for sexual abuse. In six of the eight missing from home cases assessed by inspectors, there were signs that the children involved could be at risk of sexual exploitation. While inspectors saw evidence of sensitive engagement with children, this often focused on the most recent episode rather than taking account of information held by police about previous occurrences. For example:

- a 13-year-old girl had been reported missing more than 40 times since 2008 and was known to display sexualised behaviour. Police records from 2012 indicated that the girl had been talking to an unknown man on the internet who had exposed himself to her. A strategy discussion had not taken place, nor had a longer-term safeguarding plan been considered to protect her from harm.
- a 16-year-old girl had been reported missing on numerous occasions from local authority care. She had previously engaged in sexual activity with other children and older men (recorded since 2011). The girl was not 'flagged' as being at risk of sexual exploitation until February 2015 and no plan was put in place to deal with long-term problems.

South Wales Police refers domestic abuse cases that are assessed as 'high risk' to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) for longer-term safeguarding plans to be put in place. Inspectors examined minutes of MARACs and assessed six cases involving children. MARACs were well attended by senior representatives from the force as well as from a wide range of agencies. Information was routinely shared to protect both victims and any children affected by domestic abuse. Immediate safeguarding measures were put in place for children who were living in families at high risk of domestic abuse, such as those bearing 'flags' and on 'police watch' (where local neighbourhood officers regularly visited vulnerable victims). However in some of the cases examined, strategy discussions did not take place prior to the MARAC meeting. This could leave children at risk because information was not shared and possible joint action was delayed. In some areas, protective measures relied solely on children's social care services rather than all relevant agencies making a contribution, such as police officers undertaking home visits jointly with children's social care services.

## Recommendation

We recommend that South Wales Police immediately takes steps to improve practice in cases of children who go missing from home. As a minimum, this should include:

- improving staff awareness of their responsibilities for protecting children who are reported missing from home and, in particular, those cases where it is a regular occurrence;
- improving staff awareness of the links between children going missing from home and the risk of sexual exploitation;
- improving staff awareness of the significance of drawing together all available information from police systems, including information about those who pose a risk to children, better to inform risk assessments;
- ensuring that staff are aware of the need to pass this information on to other agencies; and
- identifying the range of responses and actions that the police can contribute to multi-agency plans for protecting children in these cases.

## Investigation

Inspectors found some very good examples of police child protection work with child abuse investigators displaying a good mix of investigative and protective approaches. This ensured that the safeguarding of children remained central to their efforts while criminal investigative opportunities were pursued. For example, police attended the home of three children aged 10, 14, and 15 following concerns of neglect. The children were taken into police protection and their mother arrested. There was good supervisory oversight while the investigation progressed. There was effective joint working and long-term safeguarding plans developed with other agencies.

Investigations by child abuse investigation teams were generally good. However, inspectors were told that in some BCUs the work of child protection officers in the PPUs was difficult to manage because of high workloads. Similarly, there was some good supervisory oversight, but this was not consistent because of the heavy workloads of supervisors. Inspectors noted that lack of supervision in a number of the cases examined had contributed to delays in the investigation. This was more evident in busier BCUs such as Cardiff with higher demand. Staff reported difficulties in managing the expectations of victims, and that their ability to give families and children information and guidance on what would happen next was constrained. Officers told inspectors that delays adversely affected the confidence of families and children in the police.

We also found some serious cases – for example, rape and other sexual offences – which were dealt with by non-specialist officers and were of a poorer standard with some drift in investigations. For example:

- a case concerning the rape of a 15-year-old girl by a pupil at her school. The initial response was good but the girl was not interviewed for five months after the initial report. The suspect was not arrested for a further two months and, at the time of the inspection, remained on bail.
- a 16-year-old girl alleged that she was raped by her ex-boyfriend. The initial response was good; however, the investigating officer recorded that delays in enquiries were the result of a high workload. The officer requested additional support on a number of occasions but this was not provided. A strategy discussion did not take place despite wider concerns about the girl's sexualised behaviour.

Inspectors were also told by staff that delays of up to six months were common in cases sent to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for review and prosecution decisions. There was evidence that senior officers had intervened in an attempt to improve the timeliness of decision making and were working towards a solution with the CPS. While this had improved, challenges remained in relation to the timeliness of decision making in some cases. We examined a number of cases where delays of over three months were not unusual. For example, a case file relating to the neglect of three young children was submitted to the CPS in September 2014, but no decision was received until February 2015, some six months after the initial report.

South Wales Police had recognised the need to improve its response to tackling child sexual exploitation but, at the time of the inspection, the force's response remained largely reactive. The force did not have a dedicated specialist team to tackle child sexual exploitation and cases were investigated by child abuse detectives in the PPU's or by non-specialist teams. Inspectors examined 16 cases involving child sexual exploitation and found 8 to be inadequate. Poor practice was more evident in Eastern and Central BCUs which together accounted for six (three each) of the cases graded as inadequate. In most of the cases assessed, the immediate safeguarding measures were good but there was often a failure to identify wider risks. For example:

- a case concerning a 15-year-old girl who was sexually exploited by men over a 4-year period. Over 40 child protection forms had been completed, and although an inter-agency approach had been considered for her immediate protection, there had been no investigation to identify the men and protect other children.

- pupils at a school were enticed into posting inappropriate sexual images of themselves on social media. Police contacted one girl who did not wish to pursue the allegation and the matter was closed. Despite having an email address for the suspect, no further investigation was undertaken to identify him, nor was there any consideration of the wider risks to other children.

Internet child abuse investigations were handled well, and of the six cases examined by inspectors, four were assessed as good, one as requiring improvement and one as inadequate because no attempt had been made to identify or locate the suspect or to consider wider risks to other children. The force had recognised the need to improve its ability to routinely search for children being abused or exploited online and was planning to create a dedicated cyber-crime unit.

We found most mobile phones and tablets were examined by divisional officers. This approach was potentially promising as a means of speeding up investigations and reducing delay. However, many had insufficient specialist knowledge and were not up to date with changes and advances in technology, potentially compromising opportunities to gather evidence. This could impact adversely on the outcome of an investigation or prosecution.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police takes action to improve child protection investigations by ensuring that, as a minimum:

- every referral received by the police is allocated to a team with the skills, capacity and competence to undertake the investigation;
- investigations are supervised and monitored and, at each check, the supervisor reviews the evidence and any further enquiries/ evidence gathering that may need to be done;
- until such time as these changes are embedded, the force should conduct regular reviews of practice that include the quality and timeliness of investigations; and
- further steps are taken with the Crown Prosecution Service to monitor and improve the timeliness of case reviews and charging decisions.

## **Decision making**

The police response was good when the case was clearly defined as a child protection matter from the beginning. Referrals from other agencies were assessed promptly, with consideration given to the support other agencies could provide. There were many examples of effective decision making to protect children. Officers handled incidents well when there were significant concerns about the safety of children, such as parents leaving children home alone or being drunk while looking



after them. It is a very serious step to remove a child from their family by way of police protection<sup>12</sup> and, in the cases examined, decisions to take a child to a place of safety were well considered and in the best interests of the child.

With the exception of cases involving children at risk of sexual exploitation and missing from home, there was clear evidence that frontline staff made effective decisions in the early stages of child protection matters. They took protective action, recorded the information correctly and sent it promptly to the relevant referral unit or MASH. This information was assessed by specialist trained child protection supervisors who made well-judged and timely decisions about referrals and strategy discussions. They initiated investigations promptly and ensured that other agencies were involved. The recording practices on police systems were generally of a good standard. Inspectors found that relevant documents such as minutes of strategy meetings and initial case conferences were routinely attached to records, although as noted previously, there were occasional delays in doing so.

Inspectors found consistently good practice across the force in relation to the management of risk on a daily basis for immediate and urgent child protection matters. The daily management meeting in particular was considered to be very effective and supported good decision making.

## **Trusted adult**

When the concern was serious and immediately recognised as a child protection matter, the approach to the child or parents (or social worker when the parent was a suspect) was carefully considered, and the best ways to engage with the child were explored. This sensitive approach resulted in stronger relationships between the child and police. For example:

- a case referred from a school that a 13-year-old girl had been sexually abused by her 39-year-old uncle. A joint visit was made to the girl by police and children's social care services. The girl was spoken to and safeguarding actions were agreed. The suspect was arrested and charged. Throughout the case there was continued support from children's social care services and the girl's school which arranged ongoing counselling.
- an emergency call to a domestic incident involving a 10-year-old boy. Officers found him living in filthy conditions and, despite his mother's objections, they persisted in speaking to the child to make an assessment about his welfare.

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<sup>12</sup> Section 46(1) of the Children Act 1989 empowers a police officer, who has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, to (a) remove the child to suitable accommodation and keep the child there, or (b) take such steps as are reasonable to ensure that the child's removal from any hospital, or other place in which the child is then being accommodated, is prevented.

Officers were concerned for his immediate safety, and he was taken into police protection and a joint safeguarding investigation commenced. Throughout the investigation the views of the child were recorded and considered in decisions taken. The mother received a caution for neglect and the boy was placed on the child protection register. At the time of the inspection, he was living with his grandparents and continued to receive multi-agency support.

Good engagement was not limited to specialist investigators, and inspectors were pleased to find the commitment of the force to engaging and building trust with children at both primary and secondary schools through dedicated schools' liaison officers<sup>13</sup> who were alert and responsive to risk.<sup>14</sup>

Inspectors found a number of cases where the decisions reached clearly took account of the needs of children, but there was very little information in the majority of case files on the views of the child, the impact of the issues in the case on the child or the outcomes of police intervention for the child.

We also found that insufficient consideration was given to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those who went missing from home. The examples referred to in previous sections of the report are indicative of an underdeveloped response to these cases.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that, within six months, South Wales Police ensures that:

- staff record the views and concerns of children;
- staff record the outcome for the child at the end of police involvement in a case;
- staff inform children, as appropriate, of any decisions that have been made about them; and
- information about children's needs and views is made available, on a regular basis, for consideration by the police and crime commissioner and to service managers to inform future practice.

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<sup>13</sup> A police officer who works closely with schools, staff and pupils to promote positive relationships between the school and police service, with the aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime by focusing on early intervention and prevention.

<sup>14</sup> The All Wales School Liaison Core Programme is a crime prevention programme funded jointly by the Welsh Government and the four Welsh police forces. Further information on the programme can be found in a review of the programme conducted by the Welsh Government in 2011 and available at the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/all-wales-school-liaison-core-programme-evaluation-report/?lang=en>.

## Managing those posing a risk to children

Multi-agency public protection meetings for registered sex offenders were generally good and well attended by agencies. Risks to children were identified and plans were put in place. Inspectors examined minutes from the most recent meetings and assessed five cases as good, one as adequate and two as requiring improvement.

South Wales Police has a dedicated unit – the sex and dangerous offender unit - to manage registered sex offenders. Inspectors found that information and intelligence were handled well and that plans to manage risks were proportionate and kept up to date. The unit was dealing with a caseload in line with the ratio for sex offender managers recommended by national guidance<sup>15</sup>. Monitoring visits to check that registered sex offenders were keeping to their registration requirements were timely. However, there was little capacity for proactive surveillance work as a result of an increase in the number of sex offenders requiring supervision.

Staff working in the team were clear about their responsibilities, generally undertook prompt and detailed enquires, assessed risk well and took action to reduce it. They used their powers to arrest those who failed to keep to their registration conditions or other requirements, such as prohibitions on contact with children. For example:

- a registered sex offender had failed to inform police of his new address. Officers conducted prompt enquiries and discovered the offender was also having unsupervised access to his eight-year-old granddaughter. A thorough investigation with appropriate safeguarding measures was put in place by supervisors, and a joint visit to the child's family was undertaken that evening with children's social care. The offender was arrested, charged and later imprisoned.

We found good links between the sex and dangerous offender unit and neighbourhood policing teams<sup>16</sup>. Officers were made aware of registered sex offenders living in their area through regular intelligence updates that provided detailed information on those who posed a risk to children.

Recognising the need for better arrangements to deal with child sexual exploitation, the force has taken steps to review its processes and resourcing aligned to public protection. Nevertheless, at the time of the inspection, we found that there were too few staff with specialist knowledge and a good understanding of disruption tactics to

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<sup>15</sup> Registered sex offenders are managed under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). National guidance on these arrangements was issued in 2012: MAPPA Guidance 2012, Ministry of Justice, available from [www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/mappa/mappa-guidance-2012-part1.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/mappa/mappa-guidance-2012-part1.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> A team of police officers and police community support officers who predominantly patrol and are assigned to police a particular local community. Teams often comprise specialist officers and staff with expertise in crime prevention, community safety, licensing, restorative justice and schools liaison.

identify and deter perpetrators. The force had made some progress, such as the introduction of flags placed on the records of children at risk of exploitation, but this had not yet been extended to perpetrators (although we were told this was being developed).

The force had recently developed a 'vulnerability assessment tool' to enable officers to identify children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation and perpetrators who may pose a risk to them. While intelligence gathering and tactics to improve enforcement and disrupt offenders had improved in the months leading up to the inspection, the force still had much to do to understand and tackle child sexual exploitation effectively within its communities.

### **Recommendation**

We recommend that South Wales Police, within six months, evaluates the impact of its investment in tackling child sexual exploitation – in particular, the extent to which the new approaches lead to improved investigations, improved protective plans, and the disruption of offenders, and thereafter implements the results of that evaluation with a view to improving practice.

## **Police detention**

Inspectors examined 16 cases of children in detention. The youngest was 14 years old and the oldest, 17. Fourteen of the children were boys and two were girls. They had been detained on suspicion of offences that included burglary, criminal damage and assault. Four children had been detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. Inspectors judged six of the cases as adequate while ten required improvement.

South Wales Police self assessed three of these cases, all featuring boys. They assessed one as good and two as adequate. Inspectors assessed all three as requiring improvement.

In the 12 criminal cases examined by inspectors, all the children were charged and refused bail by the custody sergeant. In these circumstances, the local authority is responsible for providing appropriate accommodation if a child is to be detained overnight.<sup>17</sup> It should only be in exceptional circumstances (such as during extreme weather) that the transfer of the child to alternative accommodation would not be in their best interests. In rare cases – for example, if a child presented a high risk of serious harm to others – secure accommodation might be needed.

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<sup>17</sup> Under section 38(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 a custody officer must secure the move of a child to local authority accommodation unless he certifies it is impracticable to do so or, for those aged 12 or over, no secure accommodation is available and local authority accommodation would not be adequate to protect the public from serious harm from him.

In the cases examined by inspectors, none of the children detained overnight were transferred into the care of the local authority. In five of the cases, custody records showed that no request was made to the local authority for accommodation after a decision to refuse bail. In some cases inspectors noted that this was because the custody staff assumed that no accommodation would be available without seeking confirmation.

Detention certificates, which outline to a court the reason for a custodial remand, are essential for police accountability and enable forces to monitor how well they are doing in terms of their responsibilities under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. There were four cases where a detention certificate was not completed.

Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 allows a police officer to remove an apparently mentally disordered person from a public place to a place of safety. Although a place of safety can include a police custody suite, these should only be used in exceptional circumstances and it is preferable for the person to be taken directly to healthcare facilities such as a hospital<sup>18</sup>. Almost half (12 cases) of children detained under this power in South Wales were taken to police custody suites in 2013-14 compared to a quarter (5 cases) in 2012-13. Although the numbers are relatively small, this nonetheless represents an upward trend in children being detained under this power at police stations.

Healthcare practitioners provided services to detainees in custody suites throughout the force area 24 hours a day. There was also a dedicated mental health nurse to support children and young people with mental health problems.

However, inspectors were very concerned about a case involving a 15-year-old girl with a history of self-harming and drug use. She was violent when detained under the Mental Health Act, and on her arrival in the custody suite, it was recorded that she should be checked in her cell every 30 minutes. At each check, staff recorded that she was shouting and screaming at them. She was seen by the nurse six hours after her arrival, but the nurse was unable to complete an assessment because of her violent behaviour. At midnight, the nurse requested that an appropriate adult attend but it was not until 10am the following morning that one was contacted. The child was assessed again by a nurse at midday who requested a full mental health assessment which took place at 3pm. She was eventually transferred to a mental health facility at 6pm - 24 hours after her arrival in police custody. No reason was recorded for the child's continued detention, despite it being apparent that the situation had increased her distress.

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<sup>19</sup> *Code of Practice: Mental Health Act 1983*, Department of Health, 2008, paragraph 10.21, available at this link:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130123193537/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_084597](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130123193537/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_084597)

Inspectors were told by custody staff that they had not received training in child protection and sexual exploitation. Nor was information about children, such as risks of sexual exploitation or whether a child was subject to a child protection plan, readily available to custody staff. Inspectors reviewed the most recent custody refresher training plan and found there was no reference to the action that should be taken when child protection concerns were suspected or apparent.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police undertakes a review (jointly with children's social care services and other relevant agencies) of how it manages the detention of children. This review should include, as a minimum, how best to:

- ensure that all children are only detained when absolutely necessary and for the absolute minimum amount of time;
- assess, at an early stage, the need for alternative accommodation (secure or otherwise) and work with children's social care services to achieve the best option for the child;
- ensure that custody staff comply with their statutory duties to complete detention certificates if a child is detained for any reason in police custody following charge;
- ensure that custody staff make a record of all actions taken and decisions made on the relevant documentation;
- ensure that children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act are only detained in police custody as a last resort, for a minimum amount of time;
- ensure specific additional consideration is given to using family members as appropriate adults for children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act, and that parental support and personal attendance at the custody suite are encouraged; and
- improve awareness among custody staff of child protection (including the risk of sexual exploitation), the standard of risk assessment required to reflect children's needs, and the support required at the time of detention and on release.

## 6. Findings: leadership, management and governance

Protecting vulnerable people is a priority for the force and the police and crime commissioner and is reflected in the police and crime plan.<sup>19</sup> The chief constable, his command team and the PCC all have a strong commitment to child protection. A review of public protection services is currently underway, further underlining the force's determination to improve child protection practice.

Inspectors were pleased to see the force's investment in improving child protection practice through the establishment of a new protecting vulnerable people manager role. The manager co-ordinates and disseminates the lessons learned from child practice reviews<sup>20</sup>. Improvements had been made as a result of multi-agency learning events (such as the requirement to include minutes of initial child protection case conferences in police records). Recommendations from the reviews were implemented and progress monitored through the force's crime and safeguarding meeting (a governance meeting for public protection matters, including child protection), chaired by the assistant chief constable responsible for child protection.

There was visible leadership of child protection at all levels in the force, including in BCU command teams where child protection was recognised as a priority. We saw examples of force leaders demonstrating a keen awareness of the importance of safeguarding vulnerable children. This had a positive impact on operational staff and inspectors considered that it had been instrumental in the establishment of child centred safeguarding practice at the front line.

Inspectors found that different levels of resources and demands within child abuse teams had resulted in some inconsistencies in practice across the force area (for example, attendance at case conferences, and non-specialist teams investigating child protection cases). The public protection review currently underway provides the force with opportunity to match resources better to demand and to design services to ensure consistently good standards of practice across the force area to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

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<sup>19</sup> The South Wales police and crime plan for 2014-17 is available at this link: [www.southwalescommissioner.org.uk/Document-Library/Plan-Related/Plan-2014-17---FINAL-version.pdf](http://www.southwalescommissioner.org.uk/Document-Library/Plan-Related/Plan-2014-17---FINAL-version.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> A multi-agency child practice review is conducted in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected. The criteria for child practice reviews are laid down in the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006 (see footnote 6, above), as amended 2012, 2012 No. 1712 (W. 222) available at this link: [www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2012/1712/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2012/1712/contents/made).

As noted earlier, the force operates referral units in three of its four BCUs and had recently established a MASH in the Northern BCU. Inspectors found some good evidence of inter-agency work in the Northern MASH. Although this was in the early stages of development, and at the time of the inspection children's social care staff were not yet fully co-located with police, it was evident that this environment was enabling officers, social workers and health professionals to discuss cases promptly and determine the best approach for children. The force was actively considering the development of further multi-agency hubs with partner agencies.

Throughout the inspection, it was apparent that staff responsible for undertaking child abuse investigations were knowledgeable, committed and dedicated to providing good outcomes for children identified as being at risk of harm. All child protection staff were trained in, or in the process of completing, the specialist child abuse investigator development programme.

The force had invested time and resources in training frontline officers, and those spoken to by inspectors had a good understanding of their role in safeguarding, and when and how to refer incidents to the MASH or relevant referral unit. Inspectors also observed the effectiveness of the daily management meeting process for assessing and managing risk. The information pack supporting the meeting provided intelligence on vulnerable children at risk of harm and specific sex offenders in local areas. Supervisors allocated tasks, tracked activity and moved resources to meet priorities for the day.

South Wales Police was in the process of developing a strategic and operational response to tackle child sexual exploitation, but the response had been slow to develop, and inspectors found limited evidence of effective practice. However, we were pleased to find that the force, together with the police and crime commissioner and partner agencies, was taking steps to improve arrangements. The force had commissioned a College of Policing peer review<sup>21</sup> and was developing a problem profile to improve understanding of the nature and extent of sexual exploitation in its area and improve decision making. The force had also delivered further training to frontline staff – which now needs to be extended to custody staff. Inspectors were encouraged by these developments but at the time of the inspection they had yet to result in better outcomes for children at risk.

Performance information to inform the force's understanding of outcomes for children at risk of harm was underdeveloped and inconsistent across the force.

Consequently, the quality of work, outcomes for children and demands for service were not well understood by senior leaders. The focus of performance measures was on the quantity of child protection incidents and cases, not the quality of

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<sup>21</sup> The College of Policing peer review process is used for evaluating the work of police forces. It is carried out by a group of people who have expertise in the field (peers) to ensure the work meets specific standards.



practice. The force needs to do more to understand and record outcomes in order to improve and further develop services. Although inspectors found BCU command teams and senior leaders were committed to improving management information and developing a performance framework, more work is required to develop this across the force.

Children and young people were being unnecessarily detained in police custody post-charge when they should be transferred to the care of the local authority. Inspectors were informed that there was a lack of secure and unsecure accommodation available but were unable to find any evidence that senior officers had taken steps to resolve the issue. Children were also being detained in police cells under the Mental Health Act 1983, which is not in the best interests of the child.

Arrangements for managing high-risk sex offenders were effective, and inspectors found good inter-agency plans to manage risk. There was regular attendance at meetings by officers of appropriate seniority and the force and probation services had provided funding for a dedicated MAPPA co-ordinator post and support staff. This was to ensure the effective administration of the process and was considered to be good practice.

Three regional safeguarding children boards cover the seven local authority areas served by South Wales Police. Chairs of the boards (who are also directors of children's social care services) praised the commitment of the force, but reported some difficulties in progressing the boards' work at a regional level due to the high turnover of officers representing the force. Similarly, command teams in some areas, most notably Central and Eastern, reported difficulties in committing to meaningful representation at two regional boards and related sub-groups. However, the assistant chief constable meets regularly with the chairs of the boards and inspectors considered this to be as good practice, with potential to provide an effective forum for addressing concerns and making progress with shared priorities.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police leaders and managers should:

- further develop and improve force planning in respect of the response to child sexual exploitation and missing children to protect children at an earlier stage and;
- develop a performance framework that reports on the outcomes of the service provider to children, and use this information to bring about improvement.

## **7. Findings: The overall effectiveness of the force and its response to children who need help and protection**

South Wales Police demonstrated a strong commitment to improving child protection services. The chief constable and the PCC have prioritised child protection and it is clear that there is a force-wide focus on delivering good outcomes for children.

The force is generally protecting children who are most in need of help and protection with good multi-agency work and a child centred approach. While there are inconsistencies in levels of demand and resources, resulting in variations in practice across the force, the public protection review provides a real opportunity for services to be re-configured to match resources better with demand, and ensure consistently good standards of practice across the force area to improve outcomes for children. Alongside this, a performance framework that focuses more on outcomes for children who need protection (rather than the number of cases processed) should be developed and introduced to enable the force continuously to monitor and improve its child protection work.

The response to children who regularly go missing from home requires improvement – with a focus on early intervention and ensuring that officers and staff understand the link between children who regularly go missing and sexual exploitation.

South Wales Police has recognised that its response to child sexual exploitation is underdeveloped and is taking steps to address this. Nevertheless, the force still has much more to do to understand the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation in the communities it serves. Equally, further work is needed with partner agencies to develop an effective force-wide response which protects vulnerable children and young people from harm.

South Wales Police has good working relationships with the seven local authorities and other services that operate across the force area. However, more needs to be done through joint working to deliver better services, particular for children in custody, children with mental health problems and those at risk of child sexual exploitation.

## 8. Recommendations

### Immediately

We recommend that South Wales Police immediately takes steps to improve practice in cases of children who go missing from home. As a minimum, this should include:

- improving staff awareness of their responsibilities for protecting children who are reported missing from home and, in particular, those cases where it is a regular occurrence;
- improving staff awareness of the links between children going missing from home and the risk of sexual exploitation;
- improving staff awareness of the significance of drawing together all available information from police systems, including information about those who pose a risk to children, better to inform risk assessments;
- ensuring that staff are aware of the need to pass this information on to other agencies; and
- identifying the range of responses and actions that the police can contribute to multi-agency plans for protecting children in these cases.

### Within three months

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police takes action to improve child protection investigations by ensuring that, as a minimum:

- every referral received by the police is allocated to a team with the skills, capacity and competence to undertake the investigation;
- investigations are supervised and monitored and, at each check, the supervisor reviews the evidence and any further enquiries/ evidence gathering that may need to be done;
- until such time as these changes are embedded, the force should conduct regular reviews of practice that include the quality and timeliness of investigations; and
- further steps are taken with the Crown Prosecution Service to monitor and improve the timeliness of case reviews and charging decisions.

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police undertakes a review (jointly with children's social care services and other relevant agencies) of how it manages the detention of children. This review should include, as a minimum, how best to:

- ensure that all children are only detained when absolutely necessary and for the absolute minimum amount of time;
- assess, at an early stage, the need for alternative accommodation (secure or otherwise) and work with children's social care services to achieve the best option for the child;
- ensure that custody staff comply with their statutory duties to complete detention certificates if a child is detained for any reason in police custody following charge;
- ensure that custody staff make a record of all actions taken and decisions made on the relevant documentation;
- ensure that children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act are only detained in police custody as a last resort, for a minimum amount of time;
- ensure specific additional consideration is given to using family members as appropriate adults for children detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act, and that parental support and personal attendance at the custody suite are encouraged; and
- improve awareness among custody staff of child protection (including the risk of sexual exploitation), the standard of risk assessment required to reflect children's needs, and the support required at the time of detention and on release.

We recommend that, within three months, South Wales Police leaders and managers should:

- further develop and improve force planning in respect of the response to child sexual exploitation and missing children to protect children at an earlier stage and;
- develop a performance framework that reports on the outcomes of the service provider to children, and use this information to bring about improvement.

## Within six months

We recommend that, within six months, South Wales Police ensures that:

- staff record the views and concerns of children;
- staff record the outcome for the child at the end of police involvement in a case;
- staff inform children, as appropriate, of any decisions that have been made about them; and
- information about children's needs and views is made available, on a regular basis, for consideration by the police and crime commissioner and to service managers to inform future practice.

We recommend that South Wales Police, within six months, evaluates the impact of its investment in tackling child sexual exploitation – in particular, the extent to which the new approaches lead to improved investigations, improved protective plans, and the disruption of offenders, and thereafter implements the results of that evaluation with a view to improving practice.

## 9. Next steps

Within six weeks of the publication of this report, HMIC will require an update of the action being taken to respond to the recommendations that should be acted upon immediately.

South Wales Police should also provide an action plan within six weeks to specify how it intends to respond to the other recommendations made in this report.

Subject to the responses received, HMIC will revisit the force no later than six months after the publication of this report to assess how it is managing the implementation of all of the recommendations.

# Annex A

## Child protection inspection methodology

### Objectives

The objectives of the inspection are:

- to assess how effectively police forces safeguard children at risk;
- to make recommendations to police forces for improving child protection practice;
- to highlight effective practice in child protection work; and
- to drive improvements in forces' child protection practices.

The expectations of agencies are set out in the statutory guidance *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*<sup>22</sup>. The specific police roles set out in the guidance are:

- the identification of children who might be at risk from abuse and neglect;
- investigation of alleged offences against children;
- inter-agency working and information-sharing to protect children; and
- the exercise of emergency powers to protect children.

These areas of practice are the focus of the inspection.

### Inspection approach

Inspections focused on the experience of, and outcomes for, the child following its journey through child protection and criminal investigation processes. They assessed how well the service has helped and protected children and investigated alleged criminal acts, taking account of, but not measuring compliance with, policies and guidance.

The inspections considered how the arrangements for protecting children, and the leadership and management of the police service, contributed to and supported effective practice on the ground. The team considered how well management responsibilities for child protection, as set out in the statutory guidance, were met.

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<sup>22</sup> *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*, Welsh Government, February 2007 (latest update), available from: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance1/safeguardingunder2004act/?lang=en>

## Methods

- Self-assessment – practice, and management and leadership.
- Case inspections.
- Discussions with staff from within the police and from other agencies.
- Examination of reports on significant case reviews or other serious cases.
- Examination of service statistics, reports, policies and other relevant written materials.

## The purpose of the self-assessment is to:

- raise awareness within the service about the strengths and weaknesses of current practice (this formed the basis for discussions with HMIC); and
- serve as a driver and benchmark for future service improvements.

## Self-assessment and case inspection

In consultation with police services the following areas of practice have been identified for scrutiny:

- domestic abuse;
- incidents where police officers and staff identify children in need of help and protection, e.g. children being neglected;
- information-sharing and discussions regarding children potentially at risk of harm;
- the exercising of powers of police protection under section 46 of the Children Act 1989 (taking children into a 'place of safety');
- the completion of Section 47 Children Act 1989 enquiries, including both those of a criminal nature and those of a non-criminal nature (Section 47 enquiries are those relating to a child 'in need' rather than a 'child at risk');
- sex offender management;
- the management of missing children;
- child sexual exploitation; and
- the detention of children in police custody.

Below is a breakdown of the type of self-assessed cases we examined in South Wales Police.

Type of case	Number of cases
<b>Child protection enquiry (s. 47)</b>	5
<b>Domestic abuse</b>	5
<b>General concerns with a child where a referral to children's social care services was made</b>	5
<b>Sex offender enquiry</b>	3
<b>Missing children</b>	3
<b>Police protection</b>	3
<b>At risk of sexual exploitation</b>	3
<b>On-line sexual abuse</b>	3
<b>Child in custody</b>	3



## Annex B

### Glossary

child

person under the age of eighteen

multi-agency risk assessment conference  
(MARAC)

locally-held meeting where statutory and voluntary agency representatives come together and share information about high-risk victims of domestic abuse; any agency can refer an adult or child whom they believe to be at high risk of harm; the aim of the meeting is to produce a co-ordinated action plan to increase an adult or child's safety, health and well-being; the agencies that attend will vary but are likely to include, for example: the police, probation, children's, health and housing services; there are over 250 currently in operation across England and Wales

multi-agency safeguarding hub  
(MASH)

entity in which public sector organisations with common or aligned responsibilities in relation to the safety of vulnerable people work; the hubs comprise staff from organisations such as the police and local authority social services; they work alongside one another, sharing information and co-ordinating activities to help protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse

Office for Standards in Education,  
Children's Services and Skills  
(Ofsted)

a non-ministerial department,  
independent of government, that  
regulates and inspects schools,  
colleges, work-based learning and skills  
training, adult and community learning,  
education and training in prisons and  
other secure establishments, and the  
Children and Family Court Advisory  
Support Service; assesses children's  
services in local areas, and inspects  
services for looked-after children,  
safeguarding and child protection;  
reports directly to Parliament

multi-agency public protection  
arrangements  
(MAPPA)

arrangements set out in the Criminal  
Justice Act 2003 for assessing and  
managing the risk posed by certain  
sexual and violent offenders; require  
local criminal justice agencies and other  
bodies dealing with offenders to work  
together in partnership to reduce the risk  
of further serious violent or sexual  
offending by these offenders

police and crime commissioner  
(PCC)

elected entity for a police area,  
established under section 1, Police  
Reform and Social Responsibility Act  
2011, responsible for securing the  
maintenance of the police force for that  
area and securing that the police force is  
efficient and effective; holds the relevant  
chief constable to account for the  
policing of the area; establishes the  
budget and police and crime plan for the  
police force; appoints and may, after due  
process, remove the chief constable  
from office

registered sex offender

a person required to provide his details to the police because he has been convicted or cautioned for a sexual offence as set out in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, or because he has otherwise triggered the notification requirements (for example, by being made subject to a sexual offences prevention order); as well as personal details, a registered individual must provide the police with details about his movements, for example he must tell the police if he is going abroad and, if homeless, where he can be found; registered details may be accessed by the police, probation and prison service