



**Chief Officer Team
Paper for COM**

Title: Safeguarding
Report Author: D/Superintendent Bickerdike
COT Sponsor: ACC Miller
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Summary

The submitted paper seeks to highlight some of the key current areas for West Yorkshire Police in terms of Safeguarding as requested by the Mayor's Office.

Firstly, section one outlines the current position in relation to post-lockdown understanding of CSEA, Child Abuse and Neglect. The paper includes commentary on how services including the police are starting to understand the lessons learned from the pandemic so far and how this is being translated to practice. The King's College have led the way with their report 'Protecting Children at a Distance' which is explored in relation to West Yorkshire Practice.

What is clear is that reports of neglect, abuse and exploitation of children have risen since lockdown has eased. It is also clear that this is strongly linked to the availability of trusted adults in the lives of children in order for concerns to be noted, recorded and actioned. therefore any lessons learned must include how we develop mechanisms to protect children when these safety nets are removed. We are using this information to prepare our response for any further periods of lockdown that may occur.

Secondly, the report provides commentary on the position with regards to the 2021 Strategic Plan for Protecting Vulnerable People. Within this, the two Tactical Plans for CSEA, Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse have been compiled and are currently being implemented and driven through the Tactical Delivery Group chaired by the Detective Supt at Safeguarding Central Governance Unit. Each plan is ambitious and comprehensive in its approach and sets out to tackle key areas in terms of priority to really drive improvement in these areas.

CSEA continues to present a significant challenge for the Force and particularly in relation to demand associated with complex and non-recent offences and to the ever-growing demand in the field of online offending against children.

Online offending presents a challenge in terms of volume and the intrinsic complexity of investigations including the examination of large quantities of digital material. The Force have

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uplifted the resourcing in POLIT teams, are reviewing resourcing in the Abusive Images Assessment Hub and are uplifting resourcing in the Digital Forensic Unit. We welcome the scrutiny that CC Critchley is giving to this area through his Online Child Sexual Abuse Pursue board.

In terms of Domestic Abuse, West Yorkshire Police is working with Local Authority Domestic Abuse leads to develop and improve the understanding around Domestic Homicides and are participating in a forthcoming DHR research conference on 1 December 2021. We are reviewing the use of IDVA support to gain maximum benefit for victims and continue to develop the use of Power BI to ensure that the data available does not contain gaps and allows districts to have a clear picture of the demographic breakdown of Domestic Abuse in their area.

Work continues around the development of the management of offenders and each district is anticipated to have dedicated staff in place by the start of 2022 to manage Domestic Abuse perpetrator cohorts. This will complement the work being driven around the availability of perpetrator programmes to tackle repeat offending.

We are working on our response to stalking, both domestic and non-domestic related and are looking at the work of forces who have dedicated Stalking response units to see what can be learned and to assess their suitability as an option. The low use of Stalking Protection Orders is being addressed.

Domestic Abuse approaches are of course impacted by court delays and a full update to this situation is given. Solutions are being sought by HMCTS. As of October, courts are predominantly operating back within TSJ timelines for first hearings. There remains a backlog of trials for subsequent hearings for which HMCTS have a recovery plan.

This situation has naturally tested the Witness Care Unit who are now solely staffed by West Yorkshire Police with the last remaining funded staff member from the CJ partnership being recently removed. Funding has been recently secure from the WCU Surge funding which is being utilised to elevate the current pressures with an immediate uplift in staff.

In terms of Adult Safeguarding, the Force Adult Safeguarding meeting which is held six-weekly with district ASG leads is now embedded practice to provide a consistent approach across the Force as we continue to develop this area.

Mental Health remains an area of priority with local health partners predicting a 30% increase in their demand over the next 12 months.

SCGU are currently working on a bespoke training package for frontline staff, with partners, regarding neurodiverse conditions and autism and health have also agreed in principle to fund a Police Suicide Prevention Officer.

The MH Improvement Meeting has been refreshed and will recommence under the chair of the Head of Corporate Services, Supt Alisa Newman.

MASA relationships continue to be strong and productive and at Force level we are commencing on an internal MASH review overseen by Safeguarding Central Governance with a dedicated Detective Chief Inspector and working closely with the National working group to

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reflect good practice and develop best ways of working. This review has the buy-in and support of partner agencies and will be multi-agency in nature.

The PPN roll-out is progressing well and three out of five districts are now using this with the remaining two going live in early 2022. Feedback from officers and partners is very positive.

The final section is, as requested, “a detailed section on missing people including those who go missing frequently with a focus on missing young people with detailed figures a interventions in each district showcasing any innovative work/case studies” followed by an outline of wider partnership working across the force in this area.

The Niche Missing Module 2 (NMM) will be released in Calderdale in mid-November 2021, commencing the roll out of the module across the Force and this will allow for better understanding of missing person episodes and an ability to provide clearer audit and data capabilities. The change will be accompanied by refreshed policy which also removes the category of ‘absent-no apparent risk’.

An explanation is provided of the force’s missing person data set which is comprehensive and widely shared including with WYCA on a macro level, with more detailed sets being provided internally to key stakeholders.

In relation to missing children, the 12-month rolling average of children going missing across the Force has steadily decreased since 2018. If the pandemic decreases are discounted, then the current levels of absence are where they would be expected to be taking into account the reduction over the last three years.

The report outlines current and ongoing issues around the provision and suitability of residential home care/support settings in some areas. This issue is being addressed locally at districts but also nationally through NPCC lead, ACC Hankinson.

As requested, the report concludes with a section on current partnership arrangements at districts including some innovative responses and wider partnership work to protect children in this area.

- 1) Please provide detail on the post lockdown current position and plans. Has an upsurge in reports (from the lockdown period) taken place and what lessons have been learned by WYP and partners more specifically related to child neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse.**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an unprecedented change in circumstances not before seen in modern times for children in the UK and globally. Restrictions on movement, social interaction and crucially in terms of contact with trusted adults for the majority of children during lockdown has impacted on all areas relating to the safeguarding of children. We have seen statistical impacts on many areas including referrals, crime recording and contact with organisations such as Childline. We also know through the NCA that online offending against children increased.

It is important that we do not rush too quickly to identify conclusive ‘lessons learned’ without proper analysis and acceptance that the pandemic is far from over although we can draw

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some tentative conclusions informed by emerging and full academic research that is starting to appear. One such report is the 'Protecting Children at a Distance Report' published by King's College London in June 2021¹ which we have sought to put into some context below.

The Detective Superintendent for Safeguarding Central Governance represents the Yorkshire and Humber region on the National Online Child Sexual Abuse Pursue and Prevent Boards as well as the Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Working Group. These are chaired by NPCC Lead CC Ian Critchley and workstreams within this national context are seeking to provide analysis of the lockdown periods. Information received at this board is fed back. In addition, the D/Supt chairs the Regional Multi-agency CSEA Threat Reduction Group which has just commissioned a piece of analytical work to examine the impact (using regional data) of different lockdown points on this area. The Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Portal liaison officer has been tasked with establishing what progress is being made nationally on lessons learned.

Within West Yorkshire specifically, during the last lockdown periods we identified a cohort of children on the periphery of criminality, CSE, CCE etc using a matrix system based on contacts with the police (witness, victim, suspect, present at DA for example). We utilised safer schools officers to liaise with their schools and establish if the child was attending (and therefore subject to monitoring by a professional). On the whole, the majority were accounted for and being supported by trusted adults which was encouraging and pleasing. Those not attending or those with poor attendance were followed up, initially by the schools but where appropriate a welfare check by police was also carried out. The approach was successful for this cohort however the main lesson to be learned is regarding information sharing between partners to ensure a joint understanding of risk to individual children. This will ensure we can all see the bigger picture and direct resources to the most vulnerable where required in every situation and not just in times of crisis.

In terms of our understanding we know the following;

- The end of the second lockdown in March 2021 marked to point at which children physically returned to school. At this period the overall number of child protection occurrences increased and then reduced over the summer holiday period.
- In terms of the immediate period post lockdown when children were in school (between 5th March 2021 and 27th July 2021):
 - child neglect offences increased by 168% with 576 offences.
 - overall child Sexual offences increase by 13.4% with 2123 offences, of which 331 related for familial CSEA. Whilst a clear increase, the anticipated surge did not fully materialise which is to be understood given that victims/survivors often do not feel able to disclose sexual abuse until years or decades later. Reports made post lockdown include not only offences during the pandemic period but also non-recent offences that occurred pre-pandemic.

¹ Protecting Children at a Distance: A multi-agency investigation of child safeguarding and protection responses consequent upon COVID-19 lockdown/social distancing measures (Driscoll et al, 2021, Kings College) [Microsoft Word - Full survey report + conclusion final 2021-05-24.docx \(kcl.ac.uk\)](#)

- Records indicate that physical assaults on children by adults reduced by 20%, of which 27% relate to familial suspects.

Caution needs to be exercised as these figures rely upon victims and suspects being linked to the crimes at the time of extraction as well as the relationship being recorded.

In terms of the current position, so far reports have increased again now children have returned for the autumn term but not to the same level as post lockdown and are now starting to level off again as attendance at schools and other safe spaces stabilise. West Yorkshire Police continue to work with partners to safeguard children and investigate offences of all types of child abuse and are continuing to monitor reporting levels to ensure we are able to provide an effective response.

In terms of lessons learnt by West Yorkshire Police and partners, essentially these centre around effective information sharing to ensure a joint understanding of risk to children and the need for that coordinated response to identify and safeguard those at risk. As can be expected, this is reflected on a national basis. The notable points of the King's College report are assessed in relation to West Yorkshire as follows;

- **Risk assessments** - Most agencies reported conducting their own risk assessments of children and some reported sharing these amongst the partnership during the pandemic but nationally there has been very little evidence of joint risk assessing of children, which it is felt would be more beneficial in the future. The report recommends enhancing local information sharing strategies should a further lockdown take place. This was something that was adopted in West Yorkshire as online meetings were used by professionals and a set approach to identifying the most at risk children was adopted however, there is always room to improve in this area as Information Sharing is one of the most often cited failings in CSPR nationally.
- **Remote Communication** - Policing took a 'why not in person' approach to Safeguarding throughout the pandemic, which other agencies later followed by the end of the third lockdown. In West Yorkshire, we adopted a Business as Usual approach to communication with the vulnerable and this was later adopted by other agencies more closely. We are proud of this approach. However, nationally there are concerns about the reliance on technology for meetings amongst professionals. The report found that
 - 97% of professionals were concerned about not being able to use all senses to pick up on non-verbal cues
 - 95% were concerned about not knowing who else was in the room.
 - 85% were concerned about miscommunication
 - 84% were concerned about the lack of relationship/rapport building

The report recommends guidance be issued to practitioners around when remote contact would be suitable but the use of technology between partners has shown to increase attendance at MASH, strategy/Section 47 meetings and child protection case conferences. It is recommended a blended approach of in person/dial in options moving forwards to ensure increased attendance levels continue. This is something that can be taken forward with partners to balance efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Education** - Education professionals should be more involved in Safeguarding partnerships. Consideration should also be given to ensure school's knowledge of children and families is fully respected during multi-agency discussions. Within West Yorkshire a wide range of strategies have been employed during the pandemic to keep in touch with children not attending school. This has included the schools themselves, Social care and police. The use of Police is seen as controversial nationally, but it has been used by 57% of respondents and all say they would use this as a tactic again (in the context of the pandemic).
- **Health** Future decisions around re-deployment of Health professionals with Safeguarding responsibility and Health professionals who are critical for the early identification of SG concerns (such as midwives and health visitors), should be undertaken in consultation with both Safeguarding leadership within health and Safeguarding Partnerships. At West Yorkshire Police we have raised awareness of professional curiosity and the duty of officers to take into account the circumstances of families that they visit. One example would be promoting the 'Safer Sleep' campaign with health colleagues to frontline officers during the pandemic to give basic advice to families they see around the care of young children. This is not to replace the role of health professionals but to accept there have been gaps.
- **Early Help** Nationally there has been an increase in Early Help needs and there is a concern that some Early Help provision has been cut to benefit statutory services throughout the pandemic, despite the increase in demand. The report recommends that funding for Early help should continue or even be expanded during a pandemic. It also suggests that plans for enhanced 'covid secure' spaces are made to deal to ensure provision is able to continue during any future lockdowns. It is reported that some services have been delivered online (no specific details of these) and these are under review to evaluate the lessons learned and to see if this can provide a broader reach of provision moving forwards. Within West Yorkshire we have seen clear links between the absence of trusted adults in the lives of children and the volumes of crime reports, intelligence submissions and referrals. We welcome the provision of spaces that can remain open to vulnerable children during any further lockdown periods in the future.

We know that inequality makes people and in particular, children more vulnerable to being abused and we continue to publicise campaigns alongside the OPCC and other agencies that encourage people to seek help. The media strategy has been devised through the Safeguarding Communications Group which is attended by representatives from many different partners. This work continues. We believe the impact seen for children is far from over. The Safeguarding Central Governance Unit is committed to taking a long-term view of COVID impact and as part of the Force's ethos of continuous improvement West Yorkshire Police are now in the process of reviewing the response to COVID-19 thus far to ensure any lessons learnt are acted upon, that good practice is retained and that we are prepared for any and all further periods of lockdown that may occur.

2) Children and Child Abuse update

As previously reported West Yorkshire Police have developed its Protecting Vulnerable People Strategic Plan supported by a thorough CSEA, Abuse and Neglect Tactical Plan. This is

managed through a dedicated Threat Reduction Group chaired by the Detective Superintendent head of SCGU. With some 70 actions within the tactical plan aimed at honing our response in this area over the next year, key actions have been prioritised through the identification of phase one. Notable actions commenced under phase 1 include:

- The development of bespoke engagement plans to engage with communities (including C&YP and LGBT+) to build confidence, improve understanding, and increase reporting of CSEA; especially with groups affected by structural inequalities.
- Renewing engagement with retail and service sector businesses partners to ensure staff know to spot the signs and their duties to report abuse as they re-open fully after the COVID19 lockdown periods.
- Embedding Prevent as the 14th strand of Safeguarding
- Undertaking detailed case studies to identify lessons in protecting children at risk of exploitation.
- Work to assess the work of our Children Vulnerable to Exploitation Teams and develop terms of reference for them.
- Work to improve system functionality to support missing person investigations.
- Work to improve data quality around CSE records; work has already been undertaken to ensure the Force's compliance with Home Office 'Annual Data Requirements'.

CSEA continues to present a significant challenge for the Force and particularly in relation to demand associated with complex and non-recent offences. Nevertheless, West Yorkshire Police continue to encourage the identification and reporting of such abuse.

As reported under CSEA Tactical Plan Delivery, the Force are taking an holistic approach to build confidence, increase reporting and respond effectively to safeguard children and bring offenders to justice.

Online offending presents a challenge in terms of volume and the intrinsic complexity of investigations including the examination of large quantities of digital material. The Force have uplifted the resourcing in POLIT teams, are reviewing resourcing in the Abusive Images Assessment Hub and are uplifting resourcing in the Digital Forensic Unit.

In relation to online offending we are currently developing a new prevention campaign to deter offending and guide potential offenders to support agencies and continue to take the role of Regional Lead at the Online Pursue and Prevent Boards as well as the Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Working Groups chaired by CC Ian Critchley.

3) Domestic Abuse update

As previously reported West Yorkshire Police have developed its Protecting Vulnerable People Strategic Plan supported by a thorough Domestic Abuse Tactical Plan. This is managed through a dedicated Threat Reduction Group chaired by the Detective Superintendent head of SCGU. With some 50 actions within the tactical plan aimed at honing our response in this area over the next year, key actions have been prioritised through the identification of phase one. Notable actions commenced under phase 1 include:

- Improving the support given to families through early intervention
- Providing support for victims throughout the CJ journey

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- IDVA provision as supported by WYCA.
- The development of perpetrator programmes
- Developing and formalising learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Developing staff and officer training
- The effective use of legal powers as relates to civil orders

The SCGU are working with Local Authority Domestic Abuse leads to develop and improve the understanding around Domestic Homicides and are participating in a forthcoming DHR research conference on 1 December 2021. The implementation and communication of DHR recommendations is being refreshed with policing districts through a 6-weekly meeting with operational Domestic Abuse inspectors within districts. This is with a view to better ensuring that all districts learn from the recommendations raised by DHRs and in addition to the production of 1-minute-guide style briefings on the recommendation from specific cases.

The SCGU have reviewed the Force's use of IDVAs and the provision within each district to work with the Mayor's Office in providing a more consistent provision across the Force for all victims and to ensure that victims from marginalised, under-represented and emerging communities are receiving the support they need. To aid in understanding this, the Force is developing standard operating procedures for the use of Power BI around Domestic Abuse and for general data quality to ensure that the data available does not contain gaps and allows districts to have a clear picture of the demographic breakdown of Domestic Abuse in their area.

The Force continues to look to develop its use and the scope of programmes for perpetrators that is broader than and will complement the successful use of the CARA programme. A scoping exercise is being undertaken to understand fully what may be available in addition and to discuss this with the Mayor's Office, as it is recognised that education programmes for perpetrators can reduce levels of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse as well as managing demand. Work continues around the development of the management of offenders and each district is anticipated to have dedicated staff in place by the start of 2022 to manage Domestic Abuse perpetrator cohorts. SCGU will look to ensure consistent practice and minimum standards of management in this area.

Training is being fully reviewed and gaps being identified, with plans to upskill all frontline officers in 'DA Matters' training in the coming year. The College of Policing is seeking to develop a Domestic Abuse investigators' training package that caters specifically for those officers not covered by current dedicated Domestic Abuse accredited training. In the meantime, West Yorkshire Police are to provide our own training that is focussed on crimes involving VAWG and misogyny in conjunction with external providers.

Significant work has been done around attendance at Domestic Abuse calls and pilots are ongoing in Kirklees and Leeds around managing appointments and regarding the use of technology to speak to victims face-to-face online in a much more timely way. This aims to ensure better victim focus and safeguarding, and to ensure that risk is managed more effectively.

In addition to this work, the Domestic Abuse Tactical Plan recognises that stalking is a feature of many Domestic Abuse incidents. The Force is reviewing its approach to stalking for both

domestic and non-domestic cases and has commissioned a Problem Profile for Stalking through Force Intelligence. Whilst we recognise that the majority of stalking is related to Domestic Abuse, there are numbers of cases of non-domestic related stalking victims who need support. Both occurrence 'types' disproportionately impact on women and increasingly involve a cyber element or focus as is the case nationally.

The SCGU have a plan of action around understanding the Force's current approach to stalking, including Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs), the use of which continues to be relatively low. Liaison is taking place with other Forces around the country who have higher levels of usage and also to benchmark issues around investigation, charging and victim support. Focus is being given to the use of all orders in Domestic Abuse including the use of DVPOs, which continues to be enhanced and developed across the Force.

Performance on these issues is being monitored more closely now by Performance Review and this will feature in the next round of Force LAMs in December 2021.

4) Adult Safeguarding update

The rollout of PPN across the Force is on schedule with three out of the five districts now using PPN for the referrals of Adults at Risk. As part of this training has been provided for front line officers and continues to develop awareness and understanding of this important and growing area of work. PPN and other work around referrals from Adult Social Care to police is being better streamlined to ensure that West Yorkshire Police have a clearer understanding of the data in this area.

The Adult Safeguarding iLearn which seeks to supplement this is completed but needs to be implemented into the training catalogue and schedule to ensure that learning around this is consolidated. This is imminent.

The Force Adult Safeguarding meeting which is held six-weekly with district ASG leads is now embedded practice to provide a consistent approach across the Force as we continue to develop this area.

5) Mental Health update

Mental Health remains an area of priority for West Yorkshire Police. It is already clear that COVID has had a significant impact on Mental Health related demand, affecting a younger cohort with greater acuity. Local health partners are predicting a 30% increase in their demand over the next 12 months. On top of this it has been recognised nationally that the current CAHMS provision is not able to meet current levels of demand. As such we continue to be actively engaged with partners to ensure we can all respond to the changing demand and provide the best possible service at the earliest opportunity.

SCGU are currently working on a bespoke training package for frontline staff, with partners, regarding neurodiverse conditions and autism. This will ensure staff are fully equipped with the knowledge to recognise and appropriately deal with more complex conditions that may have previously been seen as criminal behaviours.

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Health have also agreed in principle to fund a Police Suicide Prevention Officer. This role will be an integral link between partners in our suicide prevention and real time surveillance work, ensuring accurate data is gathered, maintained and appropriately shared.

The MH Improvement Meeting has been refreshed and will recommence under the chair of the Head of Corporate Services, Supt Alisa Newman. This will ensure that business around MH is given the focus it requires at both district and departmental level.

6) The West Yorkshire area response to court delays for victims

Covid restrictions and social distancing rules inevitably created a backlog in the court system with cases being relisted into holding courts. In response, the courts have since introduced additional court space as the pandemic eases to allow more first hearings. As of October, courts are predominantly operating back within TSJ timelines for first hearings. There remains a backlog of trials for subsequent hearings for which HMCTS have a recovery plan.

In order to provide more courtrooms for first hearings, trial courts have reduced. The HMCTS five-point plan notes that once first hearings are in line with TSJ protocols attention will turn to trials which has now started to happen. West Yorkshire Police are currently still in a position whereby they are charging a similar amount to those which are being finalised within the court system. Discussions are continuing with partners with regards to achieving increased trial capacity. The magistrates court are currently listing Domestic Abuse cases into March 2022.

The Crown Court is working on time in relation to first hearings (PTPHs) and sentencing workstreams. Trials in the Crown Court are being heard, but naturally at a slightly lower rate than pre-covid. There are six Jury trial courts in Leeds and five in Bradford. A business case has been submitted to increase Leeds to nine which will assist greatly. Crown Court are currently listing into 2023 which has been publicised and highlighted in the press. This is reflective of national issues.

This situation has naturally tested the Witness Care Unit who are now solely staffed by West Yorkshire Police with the last remaining funded staff member from the CJ partnership being recently removed. Funding has been recently secure from the WCU Surge funding which is being utilised to elevate the current pressures with an immediate uplift in staff, whilst initiating academic research to determine what West Yorkshire Police can do better to support these victims and witnesses within the current delays.

In order to free up trial space the use of 'nightingale' courts is being explored for lengthy trials where custody is not a requirement. Trials that have been identified to date are envisioned to take up to six months. This is currently having a minimal effect on the volumes as the remit for these cases to be heard within these courts are narrow.

Within both the magistrate's courts in Leeds and Bradford there are currently running trial blitz and Case Management hearings with a district judge overseeing proceedings. West Yorkshire Police is supporting these being having a physical presence from the prosecution team within the court setting in order to ensure that cases can be dealt with on the day and assisting the court with any last-minute enquiries. West Yorkshire Police are exploring the

reintroduction of fast track Domestic Abuse cases with colleagues at Leeds Crown as one way to ensure that victims are fully supported through the court system.

7) Please provide details of consistent structures and processes across the districts including in partnership relations and what more could we do to improve this? Are there consistent safeguarding structures and processes across the 5 districts of West Yorkshire?

The Force is currently part of a national working group to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding partnership arrangements and functioning of the MASH, chaired by ACC Rachel Jones from West Mercia Police, the new NPCC Lead for MASH and Early Intervention Portfolio. National key issues have been identified for focus which include inconsistent Information sharing/risk assessments, single agency triage, volume, and country wide operating inconsistencies.

At Force level we are commencing on an internal MASH review overseen by Safeguarding Central Governance with a dedicated Detective Chief Inspector and working closely with the National working group to reflect good practice and develop best ways of working. The ACC for Local Policing and Safeguarding as well as the Executives for Adult and Children's Social Care has established that West Yorkshire will develop a mandate for a MASH review which is being developed alongside practitioners, requesting buy-in in terms of resource and commitment so we get a multi-agency review from the offset. An initial meeting has taken place with partners which was widely supported and broad visions for the review agreed by directors. This is fantastic progress and testament to the solid partnership relationships that exist within the five MASA structures of West Yorkshire.

In addition, the Force are progressing well in the rollout of the PPN system. Calderdale, Wakefield and Kirklees districts have all gone live and Safeguarding Central Governance are now working with Bradford and Leeds districts to further the roll-out programme. All districts that have gone live report excellent feedback from the users and from partner agencies with greater accountability and quality of referrals. This is key progress towards consistent processes across the districts.

8) SARC update

Weekly meetings continue with all key stakeholders and SARC services continue to operate as normal following the post-COVID return to normality. The contract with Mountain Healthcare has been extended and the work on recommissioning is continuing. The site still continues to propose being a pilot site for the s.28 hearings but this has not been determined or finalised.

9) A detailed section on missing people including those who go missing frequently with a focus on missing young people with detailed figures and interventions in each district showcasing any innovative work/case studies. She would also like to understand more about wider partnership working involving safeguarding children including any proactive work

NMM2

The Niche Missing Module 2 (NMM) will be released in Calderdale in mid-November 2021, commencing the roll out of the module across the Force. Initially Calderdale will be used to embed, review and trouble shoot the success of the module before releasing it for the remaining four Districts in January and February 2022. In addition to this the iLearn training module linked to this with the user guide aims to addresses identified areas of improvement within missing person investigations. The system will also enable better understanding of missing person episodes and an ability to provide clearer audit and data capabilities.

Force Policy

Force Policy will shortly be amended to remove the 'Absent – no apparent risk' category and give staff clear guidance around the Levels of Intervention model to ensure that those reporting missing persons, especially those with parental responsibility for children have or are, based on risk assessment, making initial efforts to locate the missing person themselves.

Force Data

The Force's data set on missing persons is comprehensive. On a weekly basis, everyone involved in the management, investigation and prevention of missing persons, in both District and Departments, receive the following datasets, which include individuals' details and number of missing incidents:

- All missing persons (child and adult) for the Force over 3 and 12 weeks ranked in order of number of occurrences over those periods and broken down by Adult/Child.
- All 'first time' missing children for the current month
- A rolling 12-week log of missing incidents of Looked After Children from regulated and non-regulated children's homes/care and support settings
- A rolling 12-week log of missing incidents involving those in hospital or medical establishment setting

In addition to this the Force provides quarterly macro management information on its Performance pages of the Intranet and is available to all in the Force (and to the Mayor's Office – see attached documents) and shows:

- Missing incident data, broken down into adult and child with more fine grain demographic data and including CSE and MH markers. This is provided with detail at a Force and District level.
- Data on missing children broken down by whether they are Looked After Children or not. This is also provided at Force and District level detail.

This data is important to Districts in their ongoing daily management of missing people and especially in relation to those who are going missing repeatedly and those children for whom early intervention can be considered, albeit that because of the arrangements in all Districts the Missing From Home Coordinators are fully aware of their persistent missing children aside from this data.

Children going Missing

The 12-month rolling average of children going missing across the Force has steadily decreased since 2018. From Spring 2021 this rolling average has however begun to

rise. Whilst each District across the Force has a different profile, all saw a steeper decrease in recorded incidents during the pandemic started and increases were first seen in March 2021 as the third lockdown began to ease. This is replicated in all five Districts. If the pandemic decreases are discounted then the current levels of absence are where they would be expected to be taking into account the reduction over the last three years.

That being said, both Kirklees and Leeds have seen the most marked increases and at both Districts issues have been raised around the placement of out-of-area Looked After Children with high instances of missing episodes impacting on the number of reports. There have been highlighted problems around the notification and sharing of information regarding these children. This is perhaps compounded by ongoing issues around the provision and suitability of residential home care/support settings (regulated and particularly unregulated) for children from the Local Authority area, some of whom have also shown an increase in missing instances. That being said children who are not LAC have also shown increases in these districts.

Both these issues are however national problems and has been highlighted in David Foster's report into 'Looked after children: out of area, unregulated and unregistered accommodation' (June 2021).²

CI Alan Rhees-Cooper, Staff Officer to the NPCC Lead for Missing People Catherine Hankinson, is undertaking work between police and partners. The aim is to develop a West Yorkshire partnership response to this issue and find agreement across the partnership as to what is considered a suitable location for a children's home and what is considered an unsuitable location. There is a desire to have a consistent approach to Locality Risk Assessments across all Districts. Kirklees especially are keen to encourage the other local authorities to adopt a similar policy in respect of out of area placements to achieve some consistency across West Yorkshire.

District Structures

All Districts use the Force information available as well as their own internal processes to ensure that there are trigger plans, prevention occurrences and multi-agency meetings and discussions in place for all high risk or repeat missing children. This is normal and embedded practice and whilst the specific structures may vary across the Force there is a considerable effort expended in ensuring that all such reports are reviewed and dealt with in a way that safeguards and seeks to signpost and support the child or young person and their family.

Information regarding missing children is shared daily with CSCs and ongoing efforts are being made to ensure that information from return interview service responses are shared and intelligence submitted in order to safeguard, understand and make lives better for children and young people who go missing.

All District have Missing From Home Coordinators who are responsible for ensuring the partnerships and Districts work together to respond to missing persons. In all except Bradford District, missing person are routinely investigated by Response and/or NPTs. Bradford has Missing From Home Investigators, which whilst not the case at other districts, has distinct

² Foster, D (2021) Looked After Children: Out of area, unregulated and unregistered accommodation. Available at <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7560/CBP-7560.pdf>

advantages and benefits to the handling of missing person investigations. High risk missing persons (child or adult) are always investigated by the Safeguarding or Serious Crime Departments, under the investigative oversight of a Detective Inspector.

District Responses

The Force recognises that missing episodes, especially with children, are symptomatic of other underlying issues and are often a rational response to escape the issues they perceive they face. Whilst missing investigations rightly focus on finding children to keep them safe and to minimise the risk they face whilst away from their home setting, partnership work with both the children and their families is critical to addressing the root causes of the absences.

All Districts are encouraged to seek problem solving solutions at a local level and NPTs are very much involved in the engagement and contact with children who go missing.

Wakefield District MFHCs work in the same office as the Children's Social Care missing officer as do the Return Interview Service. They are in turn co-located with the District Child Vulnerable to Exploitation Team

Wakefield District have prevention occurrences for each children's home setting as well as for individual children to ensure clarity around the wider care picture. This is in addition to having dedicated PCSOs working with the homes from an engagement and familiarity perspective.

Kirklees have had issues around the Districts' children's home setting and increased out-of-area children going missing repeatedly, working with the other Local Authorities to seek to problem solve and ensure that in working with Kirklees Local Authority bad placement matches are avoided. Kirklees have done some good work with Locality Risk Assessments in this to ensure that police concerns over specific areas of children's residential accommodation.

The Kirklees MFHCs have been involved in setting up joint training sessions for staff in children's home setting (including and especially making provision for staff working permanent nights). This is to expand knowledge of the Levels of Intervention model and process promoting understanding and ensuring that police are not unnecessarily involved with children and young people as missing people when they don't need to be. This also explains the potential damage that can be done by a child or young person's view of the police and those in authority being. In addition to this, Kirklees are also working hard to continually promote the Philomena protocol, where it is apparent that police have taken reports of missing persons that should not be recorded as such.

Kirklees NPTs have also engaged in problem oriented policing work where exploitation was occurring near to a children's home setting which has reduced the instances of missing as well as reducing potential criminality.

As well as having firmly embedded and applied the Philomena protocol in Bradford, the MFHC attend quarterly placement coordination meetings with Children's Social Care, to support and encourage the appropriate placement of children in neighbourhood locations that do not leave them at risk of further harm. This working relationship is seen as a real positive and has resulted in some changes of living arrangements for the benefit of the children involved.

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The increase in Locality Risk Assessments is very good and beneficial for the overall safeguarding of children but does place a significant resourcing burden on the MFHCs. It is hoped that in a short time the available data will make it clear to all Local Authorities outside of Bradford and Children's Home providers which areas of the District will and won't be considered appropriate for placement of vulnerable children and young people.

NPT staff based at Shipley in Bradford have spent time working with two local children's homes where missing episodes were symptomatic of other problems with the children involved. Working with the Community Manager at Keighley Cougars, they were as a partnership able to engage with some of the children with more persistent missing episodes to build relationships and build respect. This had the result of reducing their individual absences dramatically and giving the young people a different perspective on their actions and a healthier view of those in authority.

The Leeds Early Help Hub structure includes three Hubs across the District in Yeadon, Harehills and Cottingley, with a number of tiers of support for those children going missing. Early Help Officers (3 per locality) within these Hubs are able to visit in the first instance those children or young people who have not engaged with or been in contact with the Youth Service. There is also a focus on those first time missing children or those who look like going missing may become a more regular thing. They also have regular meeting in respect of persistent missing children to open cases where family practitioners can spend some time with the family to help them identify the root cause of the symptom.

Encouragingly Leeds have secured DWP funded for training for practitioners in reducing parental conflict, enabling them to offer parental conflict resolution to those who are at loggerheads with one another and where this may be impacting on the children in the house.

Calderdale's Early Action Team receive referrals of first time or sudden multiple time missing children and young people, using the opportunity with partners to understand the trigger factors for the young person involved, which may have manifest themselves in missing, adolescent to parent violence, DA. The triage meetings bring together police, Youth Justice, L&D and CSC. Through this they try and jointly engage with the children and young people in various enjoyable activities (like climbing, karting, etc) to break down barriers, gain trust and share information with partners to signpost and direct to services with education to help them understand the risks they face. This is having positive impacts on the children involved.

Safeguarding COM Glossary of Abbreviations

ACC – Assistant Chief Constable	MFHC – Missing From Home Coordinators
ASG – Adult Safeguarding	MH – Mental Health
C&YP – Children & Young People	NCA – National Crime Agency
CAMHS – Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	NMM – Niche Missing Module
CARA – Cautioning & Relationship Abuse project	NPCC – National Police Chiefs’ Council
CC – Chief Constable	NPT – Neighbourhood Policing Teams
CCE – Child Criminal Exploitation	OPCC – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (former, now replaced by Mayor’s Office)
CI – Chief Inspector	PCSO – Police Community Support Officer
CJ – Criminal Justice	POLIT – Police OnLine Investigation Team
CSC – Children’s Social Care	Power BI – Data collection and analytics system used by West Yorkshire Police
CSEA – Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse	PPN – Police Protection Notice – police referral system
CSPR – Child Safeguarding Practice Review	PTPH – Plea & Trial Preparation Hearing
DA – Domestic Abuse	s.28 hearing – special measures hearings under s.28 Youth Justice & Criminal Evidence Act 1999
DHR – Domestic Homicide Review	s.47 meeting – child strategy meeting under s.47 Children Act 1989
DVPO/N – Domestic Violence Protection Order/Notice	SARC – Sexual Assault Referral Clinic
DWP – Department of Work & Pensions	SCGU – Safeguarding Central Governance Unit
HMCTS – HM Courts & Tribunal Service	SPO – Stalking Protection Order
IDVA – Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor	TSJ – Transforming Summary Justice
iLearn – West Yorkshire Police online training system	VKPP – Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Portal
L&D – Liaison & Diversion	WCU – Witness Care Unit
LAC – Looked After Children (sometimes CLA – Child Looked After)	WYCA – West Yorkshire Combined Authority
LAM – Local Accountability Meeting	
MASA – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	
MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	