

# Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

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## ***Response from Kevin Hurley, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey to the HMIC report 'National Child Protection Inspections – Surrey Police'***

As the HMIC is aware, Surrey Police performance in protecting children is of concern to me since. A combination of the HMIC inspection feedback, performance information and reports from my staff attending force boards have led me to have increased concerns in this area.

In terms of responding to this report and the findings, we have a great deal to update on. Given the gravity of the issue, we have not waited until the report was published to take action.

Upon identifying concerns, I set up a specific scrutiny panel which I commissioned in June and set for early August 2015. At this time, Surrey Police had recently been inspected and were struggling with increased reporting in the area of public protection, including child protection. Due to lack of suitable information provided by Surrey Police, this scrutiny was rescheduled for early September 2015. This scrutiny did not, at that time, provide me with the evidence that Surrey Police had an adequate plan in place to address their shortcomings. I followed up the scrutiny with a letter to the Chief Constable detailing all of my concerns. I also asked HMIC to assist me in improving the force's capability.

Since then, the OPCC has worked with the force in ensuring that a suitable action plan is in place to address my concerns and the HMIC recommendations. A detailed action plan for public protection is now in place. This includes the recommendations made in the HMIC report on Child Protection.

I held a further scrutiny panel in November to receive the final action plan and to begin to monitor progress against the actions set out in the plan. I specifically requested updates against the draft HMIC recommendations. I am pleased to report the following progress:



- Additional staff have been put into local specialist safeguarding units and the Central Public Protection Teams. This will allow Surrey Police to bring workload levels down to those where staff can effectively manage their cases.
- Increased dedicated supervisors - Each geographical base (Staines, Reigate and Guildford) now has a dedicated Public Protection Detective Inspector with eight Detective Sergeants based in Staines, nine Detective Sergeants based in Reigate and seven Detectives Sergeants and two uniformed Sergeants in Guildford.
- An independent team of specialist advisors has been brought in to audit and mentor staff
- Surrey Police is now using CAID (the national Child Abuse Image Database)
- Increased funding for digital forensic examinations
- Investment into training for specialist roles – this has been funded from £1m reserves which I have made available
- I have agreed a retention and reward package for staff working in public protection to make these roles more attractive for staff.
- Funding from the OPCC's Victims Fund for a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Partnership manager and a CSE co-ordinator plus support funding for WiSE (What is Sexual Exploitation) workers to improve partnership co-ordination of activity in Surrey
- A new Detective Chief Superintendent, a proven specialist in this area, has been appointed from an external force

More specifically on the recommendations made in the Child Protection report:

- All the HMIC recommendations are reflected in the force improvement plan
- A presentation has been delivered to Contact Centre staff on their current training cycle. As at the update to me at the beginning of December, 3 rotas have received this input (approximately 90 staff) the 2 remaining rotas will be training in the next 4 weeks. The presentation specifically covered the recommendations around drawing together early information, appropriate grading and escalation.
- Checks on the welfare of children and records of observations made have been included in the standards checklist and when reviewing public protection crimes and has been included in the next DA training cycle
- Clear direction and communication has been given to custody staff that voluntary attendance at police stations is not to be used for suspects of child abuse without the authority of a detective inspector and decisions will be recorded
- With regard to ensuring timely medical examinations for sexual abuse cases involving children, this has been put in the agenda for discussion at the next governance board of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Surrey which deals with all such cases.

The report highlights the priority placed on putting victims at the centre of the criminal justice system and that the then Chief Constable and her team are committed to improving service for children. However, the report found a “*significant disconnect between the ambitions and aspirations of chief officers and child protection practice on the front line*”. This to me is the key area of leadership and management that needs to be addressed and why I consider the inadequate cases to be a failure of strategic leadership.



I have worked with Surrey Police to ensure that the right resources are in place for public protection, including protecting children from harm. I have released £1m of reserves for training and given the Chief Constable a further £1m operational reserve. Taking into account the funding settlement, my proposed precept plans for 2016/17 and savings plans in the force, I am currently considering the business case for an on-going increased investment of £2.9m into public protection. Overall, Surrey Police will be investing an extra £4.9m to protect the vulnerable.

Putting victims at the centre of the criminal justice system and protecting the vulnerable is one of my top priorities. I will continue to scrutinise Surrey Police, the implementation of their action plan and their performance until I am satisfied, on behalf of the public, that children in Surrey are being protected from harm and offenders are being brought to justice.

I am grateful for the diligence and commitment of HMIC staff in providing this report.

I would also like to express my gratitude to those members of Surrey Police who have worked in this challenging area of policing.

Kevin Hurley, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

