

## **Joint Targeted Area Inspections: The multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment (thematic inspection)**

### **Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire**

While Hampshire Constabulary was not a part of this thematic inspection, we value the findings and outcomes, and any learning points on which we can implement. Child sexual abuse in the family environment needs to be talked about more. While we hope all children and young people in our communities are safe in the family environment, we know this is not the case for all, it is those most vulnerable who need our help and support, essential intervention and a voice.

Child sexual abuse is a complex area, and the devastating impact this can have on individuals, families and communities is extensive. We recognise that child sexual abuse is often hidden and any reporting can take time and trust. With our investment into training front line practitioners into adverse childhood experiences, this is a step to better understanding harmful behaviours displayed; 'sometimes, the first sign that a child has been sexually abused is when they begin to exhibit harmful sexual behaviour towards others<sup>1</sup>.' As with many areas of safeguarding, it is not solely a police response that is required. Preventing and protecting those from child sexual abuse in the family environment requires a multi-agency response. We hear time and time again for the need of better partnership working and information sharing, with the report highlighting 'local partnerships do not always work together to respond to child sexual abuse, information is not shared, and decisions are made that leave children at risk of further harm<sup>2</sup>.'

We do not shy away from the challenges surrounding child sexual abuse in the family environment, in working with our partner agencies we strive to keep victims at the heart of all we do. Safeguarding and protecting those who need it is essential, by closely monitoring the decisions made by Hampshire Constabulary we can ensure through scrutiny that all child sexual abuse cases continue to be assessed with rigor and senior officer oversight.

Recommendations: While no recommendations have been made for the OPCC or local forces, areas for improvement across agencies has been highlighted.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/862454/Multi\\_agency\\_response\\_to\\_child\\_sexual\\_abuse\\_in\\_the\\_family\\_environment\\_joint\\_targeted\\_area\\_inspections\\_JTAIs.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862454/Multi_agency_response_to_child_sexual_abuse_in_the_family_environment_joint_targeted_area_inspections_JTAIs.pdf)