



Office of the Police and Crime

Commissioner

PO Box 688

PE29 9LA

Tel: 0300 333 3456

Email: Cambs-pcc@cambs.police.uk

Twitter: [@PCCCambs](https://twitter.com/PCCCambs)

Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

2nd February 2023

Dear Home Secretary

HMICFRS Report: National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review.

Under Section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996, as Police and Crime Commissioner I am pleased to provide my formal response to the report by HMICFRS entitled 'National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review'.

Both the Chief Constable and I welcome the publication of this report. It follows an initial inspection in July 2021 by HMICFRS, who inspected how well Cambridgeshire Constabulary keeps children safe. Following this initial inspection, HMICFRS made nine recommendations for the Constabulary to address. In September 2022, HMICFRS returned to the Constabulary to carry out a post-inspection review.

Overall, HMICFRS found that the Constabulary has taken action to improve outcomes for children in line with their recommendations. This action is welcomed.

However, there are three areas that still require improvement. The Chief Constable's response to these remaining areas for improvement are shown at Appendix 1.

I welcome the Chief Constable's response to the three areas identified by HMICFRS, which still require improvement.

I hope this response, and that of the Chief Constable, provides reassurance regarding the commitment of both myself and Cambridgeshire Constabulary to continue to take action to improve outcomes for children and keep children safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Darryl Preston', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Darryl Preston

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Enc - Appendix 1 – Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to HMICFRS report 'National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review'.

Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to HMICFRS report 'National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection Review'.

Areas still requiring improvement:

- 1. We are concerned about the Constabulary's response to children at risk of online sexual exploitation. It needs to do more to prioritise investigations where children may be at risk.**

Force response:

The force POLIT team are receiving an uplift of resources in the form of three extra posts. The associated training is also being sourced for these officers. POLIT officers' roles have been extended to ensure the searches that are carried out to safeguard children have widened with a set checklist being applied to each case.

Closer working with the Local Authority has been initiated to explore how to better manage POLIT risk assessment referrals to ensure timely referrals and tighter joint working to better protect children.

Closer scrutiny and management of cases has been applied with an improvement action plan and operation to tackle backlogs and ensure strong governance and improvement in ensuring CPS activity is prioritised, and children safeguarded.

The Constabulary has also reached out to other forces, NPCC and the College of Policing to enable us to understand and develop best practice on a national level.

- 2. The Constabulary's response when children are reported missing is still inconsistent.**

Force response:

The design and imminent introduction of a bespoke Child Exploitation (CE) Hub will directly address this issue and provide a longer-term and far more coordinated response across the force, not just to missing episodes and our support of missing children but to the totality of our child protection provision. In essence it will co-locate and integrate our existing MET Hub (one Sergeant, six officers and one Young Person Early Intervention Officer) and our Intelligence (and Specialist Crime) Department. There is a streamlined and clearly governed tasking formula that will be adopted to ensure that MFH episodes are more readily and more effectively responded to (this will be enhanced by continued Vulnerability Focus Desk support and L&D input to frontline officers that has seen marked improvements in our MFH response and recording).

Furthermore, the tasking system will ensure the full array of Force assets and resources are effectively and efficiently employed in identifying, targeting and protecting vulnerable and exploited children through every possible engagement with police and partner agencies, not solely MFH investigations. Overall, the advent of the CE Hub will ensure a more joined up and far-sighted approach with far greater accountability in respect of CCE, CSE and MFH response and investigation. We would highlight that our child missing from home times regularly now show that over 90% of under 18s are found within 24 hours and our median missing time is comfortably under 4 hours for all ages.

3. The Constabulary still keeps children at the police station after charge when it shouldn't.

Force response:

Senior and Executive-level engagement between the Constabulary and Local Authority continues in order to identify the best possible accommodation provision in respect of all children with complex and acute needs within Cambridgeshire. The availability of secure and appropriate accommodation that can be accessed for a child post charge or indeed at other critical times is challenging nationally but we continue to engage and explore all possible

options. We have recently introduced additional senior level monitoring of the most acute cases to reduce demand in both the short and longer terms, identify more effective diversionary techniques and access more effectively our combined resources for holistic care and support including accommodation. We understand that strategic and internal structural elements of the Local Authority are also being remodelled to ensure that accommodation provision is optimised when a child is in custody. Training within our custody officer and staff cohorts continues to be expanded and closely overseen to ensure the clear understanding and recording of any decision made to remand a child in custody and the obligations thereafter.

The children kept in custody are scrutinised at DMM, a fortnightly partnership tactical meeting and reported to the partnership Youth Justice Management Board Quarterly to ensure appropriate oversight and scrutiny.