



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

police and communities together

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: Monday 23 December 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 5C PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

SUBJECT: Other Sexual Offences

Background

The context of the current public protection portfolio is outlined below, with additional information to provide context of the current crime recorded in these areas.

Changes from the first Criminal Investigation Department (CID) / Public Protection Unit (PPU) organisational review (OR) have now been implemented. These have included the creation of two centrally owned Sex Offender Management Hubs at Darwen & Preston (managing over 1500 registered sex offenders across the county). All rape investigations are now being conducted from within PPU's and the creation and development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The MASH ensures that, together with our partner agencies, we work from a single location to assess information on vulnerable children and adults and then determine the intervention required, be that statutory safeguarding procedures or early action to reduce the risk of harm. By dynamically sharing information and making risk based decisions on the totality of information held on an individual and their family by all agencies, we can determine the most appropriate response that reduces risk and prevents cyclical abuse. This will not only reduce the cost to services and frontline demand but reduce the significant human costs that come from tragedies that we continue to seek to learn lessons from through Serious Case and Domestic Homicide Reviews. Developing our service to reduce the harm caused by areas such as child abuse, rape, domestic abuse, vulnerable adult abuse and repeat missing from homes will be a key outcome of the MASH.

Nationally there has been significant focus on historical child and adult sexual abuse offences with the Savile investigation, the investigation into Cyril Smith within GMP and the investigation into allegations made against Stuart Hall. We must ensure that victims of such traumatic offences are confident of the services that we provide in Lancashire, including access to counselling services. We must also give a clear message to offenders that if they

commit sexual offences, then there will be absolutely no time limit by which the police will seek them out and bring them to justice.

We have also seen continued focus on the issues surrounding Child Sexual Exploitation, with a recently concluded government public inquiry (which referenced the Lancashire multi agency based teams) and significant media reporting of cases particularly in Rochdale. Lancashire continues to be identified nationally as an area of best practice and this is something we should be proud of, and also seek to build on and develop.

The internet continues to carry an increasing threat of grooming to vulnerable children, and our work will focus on targeting offenders as well as providing up-to-date safety information to children, parents and carers. A significant area for us requiring both cultural and legal change is how victims of exploitation, particularly those that have been in care, are both perceived and treated by services including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) or Children's Services, which have at times failed to recognise the vulnerability of victims.

Slide 1 - All recorded Sexual Offences Victims Aged 0-15

The table of statistics shows a steady increase in the reporting of all sexual offences against children from October 2012 - this is a significant date as the Savile programme was aired during October 2012 which led to the commencement of Operation Yewtree and the subsequent publicity. It also shows that the percentage of crimes reported that are historic (i.e. are reported 12 months after the date of commission of the offence) has increased year on year from 30% in 10/11 to 35% for the 12 months ending October 2013. So far this year sexual offences against children that are reported have increased by 26.3% (positive outcomes are similar to last year at 37.2%)

The increase in reports could be attributed to:-

- An increase in public confidence to report such crimes. In the months following the TV programme there was a significant increase in reports of historic sexual offences, both nationally and locally - the red line on the graph depicts reporting 12 months or more from date of offence.
- Continued proactivity through our approach to tackling child sexual exploitation
- Our approach to policing the internet (i.e. Operation Toledo and Operation Nausika) leading to the identification of offenders for sharing & distributing child sex abuse images, which often leads to the identification of live contact sex offences.

From July to October there has been a further spike in the reporting of sexual offences against children. These months were in the wake of some successful outcomes of celebrity court cases and there is still a lot of media coverage namely Travis, Savile's chauffeur, Hall, Roache etc., so the issue of reporting historic sexual offences is still very much in the media which may have increased public confidence and thus the reporting of sexual abuse.

We are clearly seeking to prevent such impactful crimes occurring and are continuing to develop our approach to early action and support with our partners to identify early risk factors associated with vulnerability. However this will not necessarily translate into reductions in reported crimes. Many of these crimes have previously gone unreported due to the trust / power that offenders have over their victims as well as the perception of victims of how they will be dealt with by the police/CPS. As such the increase in one sense

should be viewed as a positive, it shows an increase in public confidence, more victims are receiving the support they require, other potential victims are being safeguarded, and more offenders are being brought to justice.

The CPS Guidance on prosecuting child sexual abuse was published in October 2013. The guidance focuses the investigator and CPS lawyers on the Credibility of the Complaint and NOT the Credibility of the Victim ensuring the vulnerabilities of the victims are understood.

Slide 2 - All recorded rapes victim aged 0 – 15

As on the previous slide the number of recorded crimes of rape on children Under 16 has continued to increase during the summer months, again this could be attributed to the positive outcomes of high media cases encouraging victims to report the crimes sooner.

Year on year the historic offences making up the all crime reporting has increased from 45% in 10/11, to 52% for the 12 months ending October 2013.

Slide 3 – All Recorded Rapes - Victims of all Ages

So far in 2013/2014 there has been a 25% increase in rape offences being reported to Lancashire Constabulary. The percentage of those being reported historically has increased (as can be seen by the red line) from 25% in 10/11 to 33% for the 12 months ending October 2013. This provides a similar picture to child sexual abuse offences reported with an increase in total reports, of which there is an increase in the percentage of those reported that are over 12 months between report and the offence taking place.

For the period April to October 2013, 30% of these crimes reported have been detected. In relation to attrition for the same period Lancashire is at 32.5% (better than the national target of 39% and placing the Constabulary 16th out of 42 nationally), meaning that almost 70% of offenders put before the court for offences of rape plead or are found guilty.

There has been a lot of progress made in the compliance of recording and investigating complaints of rape. To enable the constabulary to analyse the reports of rapes in a more accurate manner, along with then determining appropriate preventative strategies all rape offences recorded between 01/04/2013 and 28/10/2013 have been coded within specific categories.

- 1a) Stranger: Adult victim (over 18)
- 1b) Stranger: Child victim (under 18)
- 2) Acquaintance 1: Offender met victim that day
- 3) Acquaintance 2: Offender met victim within last 5 days
- 4) Acquaintance 3: Offender known victim for over 5 days but no relationship (e.g. school friend)
- 5) Domestic: Some form of partner relationship in place between victim and offender
- 6) Familial: Offender is relative of victim
- 7) Breach of trust: Offender is in position of trust / authority over victim (e.g. teacher, doctor)
- 8) Historic: Offence is over 12 months old before being reported
- 9) Other: Any other relationship that does not fit into any of the above categories

The research has identified that:-

- stranger rapes have increased when compared to previous years. Stranger rape offences have shown an increase during 2013/14 with 21 offences recorded to date. The main increase has been during the months of October (n = 6) and August (n = 5). 19 of the 21 offences were reported within 4 days of the incident occurring with the majority reported on the same day. Two offences have been reported during 2013/14 which occurred 150 days and 303 days prior to the report. These were both third party reports and the victim in both cases refused to provide any detail to the Police. The majority of offences during 2013/14 have occurred during the hours of darkness when the victim has been walking home alone. 6 of the 21 offences recorded during 2013/14 to date have been detected and 4 further offences have suspects currently on bail.
- 66% (n=14) of the victims were already known to Lancashire Constabulary at the time of the reported stranger rape, with prior entries on the PVP database relating to vulnerabilities including DV, drugs misuse, mental health and child cruelty. Similarly, most of the 14 victims known in Lancashire had known vulnerabilities relating to mental health and many had been reported missing from home.
- Domestic related rapes and where the offender is an acquaintance of the victim generate the majority of reports. As part of the on-going work to tackle this issue of rape in a domestic setting we are
 - a) Working with CPS around charging decisions
 - b) Ensuring that staff are fully alive to the potential for defendants influencing the victims to retract – assisted by rape teams / central ownership and governance of PPU
 - c) Doing further analysis of our categories of offences to establish the effect of DASH on figures and why complainants will not support prosecutions – this is to provide an evidence base to challenge assumptions and garner support from partners, as well as increasing our understanding of the problem
 - d) Develop interventions to be put in place with partners to keep complainants safe if they are in a relationship where abuse takes place
 - e) Linking in with partners to add support services, particularly around counselling and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) provision to better support victims

**** A Central Lancashire Project Board has been established to oversee the setting up of the Central Lancashire Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre during Year 1 of the Project – this resource will ensure victims receive additional care and support, in addition to the service provided through the Lancashire Sexual Assault Referral.