



REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: 12th January 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 6 – HMIC Crime Inspection

SUBJECT: a) MASH Resources and Processes

Background

The HMIC Crime inspection report published on 27th November 2014 made the following comment:

“Lancashire Constabulary should review immediately the resourcing and process for prioritising tasks coming from the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). By January 2015, the Constabulary should begin implementing a plan to improve the prioritisation and timeliness of these tasks”.

Both the Lancashire and Blackburn MASH went live in April 2013, followed by the Blackpool MASH in May 2014. During the first eighteen months of operation there has been an almost 100% turnover of referrals staff, together with a workforce modernisation programme to reduce the numbers of sergeants, replacing them with a police staff equivalent team leader role.

This has meant that there has been an almost continuous recruitment and training process throughout the period and, by recruiting staff from other police departments, there was an obligation to honour pre-booked leave. All of the above factors have led to an ever increasing queue of referrals, which is what the HMIC reported on.

The workforce modernisation process is now complete and as of 1st December 2014, the last of the new Team Leaders was appointed. The MASH now has a full establishment of staff at all levels, save for the usual abstractions for sickness, maternity leave etc. In fact, the team currently has two additional Sergeants, whom it has been agreed can stay in post until March 31st, whilst the team leaders are up-skilled.

The current permanent staffing levels are:

4 x Detective Sergeant (One currently seconded on Temp Promotion)
6 x Team Leaders
21 FTE Referral Assistants

In addition to the above, there are currently:

3 x temp Detective Sergeants (cover for training agreed till March 31st 2015)
3 x Agency Referral Assistants (cover for long term absences)

As can be seen from above the Constabulary has demonstrated the desire to keep MASH fully resourced.

At the end of November the queue of unprocessed referrals was under the 300 mark, less than two days behind, **all of these referrals had been graded as standard risk by the reporting officers.**

However the Christmas period has seen this rise to 900 plus; this is due to a combination of the public holidays over the period and the last of the inherited leave. A plan is in place to bring the numbers back down to the 300 mark within two weeks.

As far as processes are concerned, MASH is constantly evolving as we move forward. Currently we only deal with police referrals and discussions are taking place about moving forward with phase 2, which will mean some referrals from other agencies will also be dealt with in MASH. A multi-agency group has been set up to drive this plan forward however it is possible that a move towards pooled budgets utilising shared staff and IT may be the best way to progress this so that all agencies may take full advantage of economies of scale.

In the meantime police processes continue to be refined and to this end MASH supervision and the futures team are meeting on the 21st January 2015 to examine all our processes in fine detail to try to safely streamline the operation.